

**City of Cambridge Committee on Public Planting**

Meeting Minutes – April 9, 2025 - 5:30-7pm

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom & at DPW - 147 Hampshire St.

**Attendance** (\* indicates virtual attendance)

CPP Members: Ahron Lerman, Cindy Carpenter, Chantal Eide, Cynthia Smith\*, Gretchen Friesinger, Ray Fahrner, Robb Johnson, Ruth Loetterle\*, Sara Cohen\*, Sophia Emperador  
[Members not in attendance: Archana Venkataraman, Maggie Booz, Sandra Fairbank, Tracy Orr]

DPW/City of Cambridge: Kevin Beuttell\*, David Lefcourt, Andrew Putnam, Kristen Kelleher, Cortney Kirk (CDD)

Guests & members of the public: Sara Adkins (Green Cambridge), Charlie Teague, Joanne Kelleher

Meeting notes submitted by: Ahron Lerman

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**Agenda Items:**

- 1. Review previous meeting minutes
  - 2. Updates from City Arborists
  - 3. Discuss history and context for the Urban Forest Master Plan Task Force
  - 4. Design Reviews
  - 5. Other Business and Announcements
  - 6. Public Comments
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**1) Review prior meeting minutes.**

- a. Sophia reviews previous meeting minutes
- b. No edits or questions.
- c. Cindy motions to approve; Ray seconds it.

**2) Update from Urban Forestry Team (Dave, Andrew, Kirsten)**

- a. Andrew planting updates: they have an approved construction permit from DCR to plant trees. Sites will be finalized and approved by DCR arborist. Includes removing and replacing standing dead. Lots of opportunity.
- b. Dave updates: he tagged 300 2-2.5" B&B trees at the nursery in New Jersey; crew and contractor started planting and preparing pits. Total goal still 600 total, not all B&B's need to get planted this spring.
- c. Andrew again:
  - i. Abby will be returning soon
  - ii. May plant at Danehy Park after stump grinding, coordinating with gas company for monitoring

**CPP Comments:**

- d. Cindy: How many trees? Andrew: 165, starting on Cambridge Parkway, near Kendall; also along Charles River, Memorial Drive, Mass. Ave, Ringe and Alewife area, especially @ Folk St. Dave adds: Mostly fall planting for DCR
- e. Sophia: Any nursery updates, regarding species? Dave: nothing sticks out. Added fringe tree to the species list. Ahron: Any concern with Emerald Ash Borer? Dave: Not sure, but we only ordered 10

**Items for further/future discussion:** None specified.

**Action items:** None specified.

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**3) CPP Website**

Summary: Kristen shows website.

- a) New button to more easily find posted meeting minutes.
  - b) Updated partner links
  - c) Added events section and discussed upcoming postings with Green Cambridge, tree walks, and more.
  - d) Send more nice photos, as you take them, please!
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**4) Arbor Week**

Cindy and Dave say we need more people to sign up. Cindy says it's easy, the table is well-supplied with handouts; See your emails—there will be a prize for most newsletter sign-ups! (It might be yard waste bags, and this excites the room, though murmurs later question this incentive.)

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**5) Urban Forest Master Plan w/Andrew**

- a. No contractor hired yet, but will be getting new UVM satellite data for spatial analysis
- b. 5 year update for plan coming up: working with CPP and Envision Cambridge Plan for Documentation, Evaluation, and Goals
- c. "Healthy Forests/ Healthy City" plan — update— assess previous report's estimated 73 action steps
- d. Then: Review new data, Conduct outreach, Strategize, Make New Recommendations, and Finalize
- e. Excited to get a contractor on board soon

**CPP Comments:**

- f. Chantal asks: How can we better assess private property changes? Answer from Dave and Andrew: We will use the new UVM data. Tech has vastly improved since was last done, with a much finer grain. Gretchen: when was the last flyover? Andrew: 2020 had an update, and we will be using 2024 data. City regularly pays for leaf-on imagery every few years, too. Dept. of Homeland Security does free flyovers, but mostly leaf-off only, which is not preferred.

- g. Ruth asks-online chat: How often will CPP meet with City and UFMP consultant? (Not answered?)

**Conversationally:**

- h. Cindy continues: Referencing Chantal’s comments, more emphasis on reducing canopy loss on private property—hearing anecdotally people not incentivized to protect, and maybe tree protection laws discouraging planting due to fear of not being able to remove later. Also, can forests be defined to not only include trees? Let’s look to supporting tree ecology too.
- i. Sophia: If these can’t be part of the UFMP, should still address understory and ground layers. How will zoning changes affect trees?
- j. Cindy: Community engagement is important!
- k. Chantall: How to contribute/compile UFMP ideas?
  - i. Difference in canopy %s
  - ii. Shared streets
  - iii. Are current goals adequate? Need adjustment?
  - iv. Major corridors—shadier
  - v. Heat islands
  - vi. City dept. coordination
  - vii. CPP—more teeth?
- l. Gretchen: Interested in ROW trees on sidewalks.
  - i. More trees in bigger wells
  - ii. How did the goal of 60% canopy over major corridors come about? Is that actually possible?
  - iii. Loss of setbacks (due to zoning changes) may negatively impact trees
- m. Robb: Really wondering about zoning; how to model possible change? Interested in how a smart consultant would approach
- n. Sophia: Great candidate for scenario planning—talk to Land Institute?
- o. Cindy: (We) talking to Ellen (?) Who else? Andrew answers: Yes, and CDD, and others. Imagine zoning board, too.
- p. Sophia: can we see the RFP? Andrew answers: Yes
- q. Cindy: Previous iteration didn’t take in all the factors. How do we get all those this time, for better integration into the city? Andrew answers: We will try! Good chance for CDD or Public Works’ “House Doctors” office (on-call contractors on a 3-year term)
- r. Ray suggests: Start with existing report for better comparison
- s. Ruth: Previous plan did not acknowledge benefits of native trees.
- t. Sarah: Highlight repaving and understory development; match up to what’s happened
- u. Ray looks forward to Maggie’s input
- v. Sophia: Send in your thoughts!

**Items for further/future discussion:** None specified.

**Action items:** None specified.

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## 6) Other Business & Announcements (Cindy)

- 1) Participatory Budget Update: native plants and pollinator gardens moving forward!
- 2) Outreach: Sign up for Arbor Day/week tabling. Also,
  - a) Stay tuned for Fresh Pond Day on 6/14
  - b) RiverFest on 6/21—interest in tabling? (Ray says yes.)
- 3) Sophia: Recycling group will be at RiverFest and Danehy Day (Sept. TBD)—our kinda group. Should join. Danehy Day has good cross-section of Cambridge, plus site of Miyawaki Forest—good to promote.

## 7) Additional Comments

- 1) Gretchen: Canopy Crew (Green Cambridge)—use them more for outreach?
- 2) Cindy: Go to their meeting? Talked with Kathy Watkins; use Mayor's newsletter—youth programs? Many logistics.
- 3) Sophia: Let's talk about figure it out—go to meeting if allowed. Asks Gretchen about "Reveal and Celebrate" meeting for Mass. Ave.
- 4) Ruth: let's get more updates from CDD about previously reviewed projects, like Raymond Park.

## Public comments:

- 1) Sara Adkins (Green Cambridge): Yes, Canopy Crew can help promote!

**Next meeting:** Our next Zoom meeting will be held on May 14, 2025 at 5:30pm and will be advertised to the public in advance.

*NOTE: The foregoing represents our understanding of the discussions and decisions made during this meeting. The CPP requests permission to quote or reference these notes.*