

Committee on Public Planting
Department of Public Works, City of Cambridge, 147 Hampshire Street

Minutes of Committee Meeting – Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

David Lefcourt, City Arborist

David Davis, Cttee Co-Chair

Janet Burns

Paula Cortes

Florrie Wescoat

Emily Axelrod

Nancy Phillips

Tom Flynn

Tom Lynott

Madeline MacDowell

1. Review Minutes of April Cttee Meeting

The minutes were approved.

2. Update – CPP Sponsored Forestry Publication

As to the brochure, revisions were made, per recommendations of the Cttee and with additional work by Lefcourt, and 1,000 brochures produced in early May. The Cttee expressed universal approval for the finished product.

Lefcourt expects to have the brochure included on the city's website by May 25th along with supportive information on other topics touched upon in the brochure such as the Junior Forester Program. Lefcourt urged Cttee members to note on the back of the brochure the introduction of a new shortcut to the web site for those in a search of information about trees. (www.cambridgema.gov/tree)

David Lefcourt passed out approximately 100 of the brochures at the Saturday, May 7 Cambridge Science Festival. At the Festival, Lefcourt set up 1 table, with 2 computer presentations. One showed a rotating power point video with information about trees; the second computer allowed individual access to the Tree Inventory of all city trees developed over the last few years by Lefcourt.

In addition, Lefcourt put up 3 'static boards' with information about (1) new trees planted in the city, (2) information on major trees in the city (trees of 20" diameter or more) and (3) a close up view of the neighborhood around city hall.

Additional 'static boards' encouraged support for the new Junior Forester Program for individual children ages 5-13 to 'adopt' a newly planted tree in the city and care for it during the trees' vulnerable first year(s).

At the Festival, Lefcourt also passed out 100 Kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) seedlings which had been purchased by the city in honor of Arborday. The city's purchase price of less than \$150 for the 100 seedlings was paid to the Mass. Tree Wardens Association who use such funds to support scholarships at UMass Stockbridge.

The remaining 900 brochures will be made available for distribution at DPW headquarters at Hampshire Street and also through the city's branch libraries and city hall.

3. Tree Ambassador/Water by Bike Program –

Modeled on a program in Washington, DC., plan is to have a summer intern – 8 candidates have submitted resumes – and maybe individuals from the mayor's youth employment program water trees in need throughout the city, all the while dependent on bicycles to get around. The city's Water Dept will help train the interns in how safely to access hydrants throughout the city.

4. Tree Hearing on May 19, 2011

A wounded red maple and Amelanchier (Shad) on Bent and Charles Streets respectively are slated for removal to make way for new housing construction. Major point in support of removal is that contractor's replanting will substantially surpass in diameter what is removed.

Conversation at meeting considered question of bark damage on northside of trees.

5. Arborist Updates

- i) Lefcourt to attend Springfield, MA program to honor Tree City USA recipients of which Cambridge is for the 19th time an award winner. Cambridge is one of 351 cities and town.
- ii) Lefcourt particularly interested in receiving another Growth Award won by communities with demonstrated ability in several named categories. For more on the Growth Award criteria, see:
<http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/growthAwards.cfm>
- iii) Reference made in general discussion that the Tree City USA only requires qualifying expenditures of \$2/capita where Cambridge spends close to \$14/capita.

Discussion followed regarding understanding another potential qualifying program, the Heritage Tree Program.

Discussion then moved to a Tree Tour Programs of which two had been proposed from within the Cttee, one by Florrie Wescoat (“Knowing the Tree”) and a second by Mauricio Gomez (“I See Trees”). Florrie’s application to DCR was not acted upon. Its focus was to produce and attach labels on trees, information about which could be accessed by cell phone with brief recorded talks by a local celebrity about a given tree.

Lefcourt to supervise 3 interns this summer. One for Tree Ambassador program, a second from the Society of Municipal Arborists and a third for Tree Inventory Program that was so successful last summer. For the Tree Inventory Program, Lefcourt has 26 applicants, one of whom is ISA certified (Int’l Society of Arboriculture). The intern from the Society of Municipal Arborists is a recent graduate from Virginia Tech, and will work for 10 weeks. Seven of those weeks will be in seven different areas of focus specified by the intern’s program directors.

Spring Planting – Thus far 125-130 trees planted

6. Agenda for June 8 Meeting

Approval of suggestion for early start to June 8 meeting at 4:30 pm. in order for DPW Director Lisa Peterson and City Engineer Owen O’Riordan to address the Cttee on threats to existing trees due to comprehensive Sewer Separation Project. Request by co-chair that Cttee members and others submit to David Davis (ddavid7777@comcast.net) questions for Lisa Peterson well in advance of the meeting.

Request by member that Cynthia Smith present to the Cttee her power point talk on the Mass. Ave. tree planting project on which she has been working.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.