

CAMBRIDGE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PLANTING

MEETING October 9, 2013 – Minutes

Present: Florrie Wescoat, Emily Axelrod, Kathleen Kelley, Janet Burns, Nancy Phillips, Gette Venicx, Chantal Eide, Maggie Booz, Michael Hanlon, Carolyn Mathews, Paula Cortes, Taha Jennings, Minka vonBeuzikon, Jack McGrath (tree inventory intern)

The minutes of the September meeting were accepted, with the addition of a list of those in attendance, all those listed above in addition to David Davis and with the exception of Janet Burns and Gitte Venicx.

Taja said that there were no updates for issues before the Planning Board for Special Permits. The 'Bob Slate building' in Porter Sq. is slated for a 3 story mixed use with retail. The Hurley St. Playground in E. Cambridge renovations are to start this winter.

Action: Taja will provide us with the preliminary design after the first public meeting. CPP will provide a preferred tree list.

There are also projects related to the Elm/Hampshire plaza, a sitting area at the intersection of Bishop Allen Drive and Main St., and Pacific St. Park, an off leash dog area.

Action: Emily will draft a letter related to Richdale Ave development, and will circulate among us for comment before submitting to Planning Board.

Arborist update: 160 trees to be planted this fall, to start in the next few weeks – Ch. 90 trees, Broadway, 14 or so in Harvard Sq. Mt. Auburn/Lampoon area will be planted except for 2 trees along the community garden. Pruning – Cambridge Landscape working in Area 4; Northern Tree to do parks and schools. The golf course will be pruned during the winter.

There was a discussion of backfilling of tree wells during new tree planting. It was suggested that new enriched soil be added. Typically no new soil is added during the tree planting process. Dave will look into adding amendments to the existing soil to be inserted in the new contract documents to start next year. Dave does not recommend fertilizing newly planted trees, however he will look into the extra expense of adding a 'root growth' fertilizer. M. Hanlon suggested fertilizing in the second year helps tree vigor. There will be a co-op student in the Engineering Dept. who will oversee this planting. Dave will give instruction prior to going out to supervise.

Weds, Oct. 16 will be a tree hearing for many trees along Huron Ave, the sewer separation project. Most are Norway Maples. The residents are generally welcoming new trees.

Discussion of tree watering: There was discussion of the water truck donated some years ago by the Cambridge Plant and Garden Club. It was earmarked for tree watering. Dave is not sure if the unit is still around. 2 trucks are dedicated to watering hanging baskets, typically done on overtime due to the need to use these personnel during regular hours on regular work, and also the truck is large and can disrupt traffic. Watering by bike intern was discussed, as an effective program, and suggestion was made to adding an additional person.

1800 trees have been planted since Fall 2007. Gitte and Earthwatch have analyzed the data and hopes to answer the questions about how many survive and in what condition. She hopes to have this information this winter, for further discussion. It is hoped for an 85-90% "thriving" rate. Dave will also look at his data from the bike watering interns to see impact of water on tree survival.

Committee appointments: Dave could not find data but believes Oct. 2010 was the official appointment date, for a three year term. The DPW Commissioner will OK the advertisement for new/renewal appointments. Terms should be staggered. Dave will discuss with DPW staff.

Action: Dave will send an email to current members.

Item 6 from Agenda, O'Connell Library Planting Plan, was deferred to next month's meeting.

Elections: Dave Davis has expressed the desire to step down as co-chair. Action deferred pending a list of current/new members (1-2 months).

Western Avenue Plans: planting will not happen for 1-2 years. It was suggested that specific tree species discussion occur closer to planting date. Also, a walk of the avenue to look at specific tree locations would be useful. CPP members might walk on their own as well.

New item: Mass Ave update – Cynthia Smith would be invited to our next meeting.

Action: Michael Hanlon will contact Cynthia.

The meeting was adjourned at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Cortes