

Minutes

Committee on Public Planting

Wednesday, 13 November 2013

Present: Emily Axelrod, Paula Cortes, A. David Davis, Chantal Eide, E. Thomas Flynn, Michael Hanlon, Taha Jennings, Kathleen Kelly, David Lefcourt, Jack McGrath, Nancy Phillip, Cynthia Smith, Florrie Wescoat

- Minutes of 9 October 2013 accepted.
- It was requested that action items be listed on future agendas.
- The October UMass Extension newsletter, *Hortnotes*, was distributed.
- Arborist Updates:
 - Area 4 pruning ongoing, with a detour to Massachusetts Ave. between Bigelow and Vassar; the cemetery and golf course are planned for the winter. Approximately 163 trees have been planted.
 - As part of the update discussion, the issue of limbing up trees in Green-Rose Heritage Park was raised; Arborist Lefcourt explained it was a public safety issue, and that pruning now while the trees are young is preferable to later.
 - In addition, the Committee discussed 1) encouraging, or requiring, contractors to backfill tree wells with good loam; and 2) how contractors might be made more accountable with respect to replacement trees by increasing the warranty time by a year to two years. It was reiterated that paying attention to weather conditions is crucial to the survival of young trees, especially, as was noted, considering this fall's dry and windy conditions.
 - The question of requiring that contractors to be accredited by the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) was raised.
 - The Arborist described three proposed winter projects: developing and promoting a "champion tree" list, both public and private; developing a proposal for attending to the Ash Borer problem (after attending a conference in December); and developing a Forestry Master Plan for the city.
- Two multi-unit residential projects were discussed (10 Essex St. and 75 New St.), and the Committee expressed its interest in being kept apprised of planting plans and lists for comment in the future.
- The O'Connell Library planting plan was discussed, and the Committee expressed its interest in seeing the proposed plant list at the appropriate time. It was noted that the trees in front of the library are ash trees.
- Cynthia Smith, along with guest Ron Axelrod, updated the Committee on the Massachusetts Avenue Streetscape Plan (Waterhouse Ave. to Upland Rd.). The Committee discussed bump-outs, redirecting foot traffic at street crossings, parking, and plans for various gathering points with seating and plantings. The Committee reaffirmed its recommendation to enlarge tree wells, particularly in the "demonstration block" (Linnaean St. to Shepard/Wendell and to Garfield Sts.) as a model for the rest of the project.