

Cambridge Committee on Public Planting Minutes
March 13, 2013

1. Chantal Eide presented preliminary sketches of the site plan for the O’Connell Library renovation. Discussion included the following points:
 - It is important to maintain street trees along sidewalk frontage
 - If sidewalk width is restrictive for planting, it would be possible to reduce the pedestrian pathway in front of the library to 4’; 5’ is not needed.
 - Reducing the pedestrian pathway to 4’ would also allow more extensive planting
 - Outdoor lighting for the library and new landscape was suggested
 - Additional planting in parts of the parking lot was suggested

Action Item: When the plan is further developed CPP would like to review and comment.

2. Cambridge Garden Club proposes to plant 5 American Linden Trees in Cambridge, in honor of their 100th anniversary. Two will be planted in Cambridge Common, and one in Black’s Nook at Fresh Pond. The Club is seeking additional locations for the other two. Lowell School Park, Whittemore Ave. area, were both mentioned.

Action Item: The Committee suggested East Cambridge locations, and Dave Lefcourt will investigate that area and report back to the Committee.

3. Catherine Woodbury from DPW presented the Huron/Concord Area sewer separation plans to the Committee including the construction of a stormwater wetland in the Alewife Reservation. Upon completion of the separation work, many sidewalks will require reconstruction, and some areas have received waivers from ADA requirements in order to maintain mature trees that impinge on the sidewalk.

In Huron A, 77 new trees are planned, and in Huron B additional trees are planned. A walkthrough is planned for the Concord Area for May. These areas drain into the Alewife Brook and Little River, where a new storm water wetland has been constructed to filter the water before draining into the Little River. Over 100,000 wetland plugs and 3800 upland plants. This is built within a DCR owned reservation. All plants and the design were approved by them. It is already having positive results, attracting wildlife into the area.

Tom pointed out that Belmont and adjacent towns still have raw sewage outflows into the area which need to be corrected. There was also discussion on the problem of silt build up in the Little River, and no way to flush it out due to the low water flow and velocities.

Catherine also mentioned the proposed construction of porous pavement and 5 Rain Gardens in the “Huron A” area. These will provide storm water collection points to treat runoff and will be demonstrations of “best practices”. Similar systems are used in other areas of the country, including Seattle “green streets”. The Committee questioned the value of these small installations, as they are very costly for very little water catchment. Tom suggested that private developers be required to install these sites in the future.

4. Taha reviews special permits granted in the last few years in C2-B; Business B-1, and Business B-2. He found only two—the Veritas Hotel, that should have come to CPP, and 303 3rd St. in Kendall Square. Taha noted that a new software system, Entergov, is being installed for project review

and will automatically trigger the appropriate reviews including CPP, so that projects that should come to the Committee will be required to. Timing of Entergov is still unclear, however.

Taja also presented site plans and landscape plans for 130 Cambridge Park Drive.

Action Item: It was agreed that members should review the detailed plans on the CDD web site, send comments to Mike Hanlon, and Mike will draft a memo to the zoning board for the **April 9** hearing on this project, for which a special permit is required.

5. The tree species discussion was tabled until next week. Meeting was adjourned at 7 pm.