

## CPP Notes – Meeting 6/12/13

Members and others present: Tom Flynn, David Davis, Michael Hanlon, Janet Burns, Chantal Eide, Emily Axelrod, Paula Cortes, Julianne Schwarzer, Gitte Venicx, Florrie Wescoat, Taha Jennings, Dave Webster, David Lefcourt, and Owen O’Riordan

City Engineer Owen O’Riordan attended the meeting to present plans and answer questions for the Massachusetts Avenue Demo Block (western side of Mass. Ave. between Shepard St. and Linnaean St.). The project has been in the planning process for several years, and the goal is to make the block as attractive and pedestrian-friendly as possible, including a healthy canopy of trees. Each tree is to be planted in 600 cu. ft. of structural soil, at an estimated cost of 4-5K per tree. The high cost of removing, hauling and disposing of the existing soil is part of the surprisingly steep cost. Other questions discussed with Owen follow:

Why aren’t any trees planted in the bumpouts? – No trees are being planted in bumpouts to preserve the possibility of raised bike lanes in the future.

Why isn’t there any porous paving in the tree zone? – The brick paving heaves unless set in asphalt or cement; porous asphalt is thicker and more expensive than the normal asphalt.

Can the tree trenches (drawn 4 x 8’) be enlarged to allow more rainwater and oxygen in the soil? – Owen will look into increasing the size to 4 x 10’. He also said that where possible he will try to increase the amount of structural soil per tree, while staying 6’ from buildings when excavating the tree trenches.

Can a lip be installed around the tree trench to prevent salt runoff? – Unresolved because of expense.

Can the City use a salt that is less harmful to trees? The less harmful salt is magnesium chloride or a vegetable based de-icer. Owen will request less harmful salt for winter de-icing.

An unresolved issue is whether or not tree grates will be installed, as opposed to having plantings beneath the trees. If plantings go in, they will need to be maintained by store owners adjacent to them.

The project is scheduled for installation fall 2013 or spring 2014. Halvorson Design is the Landscape Architect for the project.

David Lefcourt gave Arborist Updates:

A total of approximately 135 trees have been planted so far this spring, and 30 more will be planted, bringing the total to 165.

Approximately 130 trees have been removed so far this year.

Cambridge has been listed “Tree City USA” by the Arbor Foundation for the 21<sup>st</sup> time. Cambridge has also received the “Growth Award” for tree planting for the 6<sup>th</sup> time in a row.

Two interns have been hired to work with David this summer. They will work on the tree inventory and assist with the “Water by Bike Tree Ambassador” program. The trees that were watered regularly last year by Tree Ambassadors have shown superior growth and health.

David is continuing to send email messages to Cambridge residents to remind them to water newly planted trees in front of their homes or businesses. Emails are sent when the weather is especially hot and/or dry. There has been good response from residents to the reminders.

Pruning is continuing in Mid-Cambridge and will move to Area 4 next.

David Davis announced that he plans to step down as co-chair of the Committee for Public Planting in September, while still remaining active on the committee. Michael Hanlon agreed to stay another year as co-chair. David Davis asked for comments on the annual report that he wrote; the report will establish a pattern for the future.

Taha Jennings presented plans for new plantings for Alberico, Fulmore, and David Nunes Parks in Cambridgeport; all of these plantings are near completion. Rob Steck, the designer of many of the park renovations, would like to work with the CPP to develop a list of preferred trees for future reference.

We agreed to meet next on July 10th, and to take a field trip to the Alewife Reservation to see the constructed wetlands that have been built there. There will not be an August meeting.