

Attendance

CPP: Johan Paulsson, Kathleen Kelly, Maggie Booz, Chantal Eide, Mike Hanlon, Paula Cortes, Janet Burns, Florrie Westcoat, Jonathan Lewis, Wayne Marshall, David Davis, Nancy Phillips

City: David Lefcourt, David Webster, Owen O'Riordan, Melissa Miguel, Kathleen Caldara

Observer: Martha Stearns

Review of Minutes

Minutes from the CPP meeting held on November 10, 2015 were amended and approved.

City Arborist Report

- Fall planting has been completed. Lefcourt circulated and summarized materials that list the planted trees by location and species. 98 trees were planted, 37 of which were replacements of every planting that failed over the past 1.5yrs (previous three planting seasons). Data on species/location will be uploaded to DPW website.
- City is not planning to replace dead trees near Tobin School and MLK School until the renovations of those schools are complete. City does plan to replace trees at Peabody, Cambridgeport, Fletcher-Maynard, Haggerty, and Baldwin Schools.
- Tree stump removal, targeted for completion by end of 2015, will continue into 2016.
- CPP subcommittee on tree planting specifications plans to meet in December 2015. Deadline for finishing planting specifications is early February, so that revised specs can be included in new 2016 planting contracts.

Review of Proposed Amendments to Ordinance 12.16.030 (locking bikes to tree)

- City Councilor Craig Kelley supports an amendment to an existing ordinance, in order to disallow the locking of bikes and/or other conveyances to street trees. Councilor Kelley shared the amendment with CPP.
- O'Riordan reported that the city is currently collecting bikes that are locked to trees, following 72 hours of notice. DPW will report back to CPP on the state and city laws that guide the city's current approach.

Continuation of Discussion on Proposed Running Bamboo Control Ordinance

- Wescoat asked whether CPP members have views on a ban of running bamboo. Hanlon agreed to follow up with the proponent of the ordinance, City Councilor Craig Kelley.
- CPP discussed the problems associated with running bamboo, whether there is any precedent for banning species that are not presently classified as an invasive species, whether the proposed ordinance could be effectively enforced, and whether CPP should opine on ordinances that address private property.
- CPP agreed to draft a letter to Councilor Kelley that states that the ordinance is not squarely within CPP's purview, and encourages him to push for running bamboo to be listed as an invasive species.

Cambridgeport Neighborhood Alliance on Tree Removal Concerns

- Lefcourt reported that the tree removals discussed in a letter from the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association are part of a project managed by Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and as such outside of the control of the city forestry department.
- DPW will learn more about the project and report back to CPP at the January 2016 meeting.

Report on Smith Center Tree Hearing (held December 1, 2015)

- City held a tree hearing on December 1 tree concerning the proposed changes to Harvard University's Smith Center in Harvard Square. CPP members that attended the hearing reported that public comments at the hearing were unanimously opposed to the removals.
- Lefcourt stated that he plans to work with Harvard to make sure that there is no net loss in tree diameters. Based on precedent, an agreement between the city and Harvard would likely involve a combination of new Harvard-funded plantings in the area and a contribution into the city's tree fund. CPP members asked for specific information about the location, size, species, etc of the replantings.
- Paulsson noted that the caliper inch-for-caliper inch replacement approach fails to ensure that tree volume is fully replaced. The goal should be a full replacement of cubic inches.
- Davis asked that the terms of the agreement between the city and Harvard be vetted with the CPP, urged better notice of tree hearings in general, and shared a list of concerns about the University's recent and historical approach to tree planting, maintenance, and removals.
- Several members criticized the University's communications with the CPP and the city, particularly concerning information that was not initially shared about the placement of a chilling water pipe under some of the tree wells.
- Davis asked Lefcourt to report back to CPP about who will be responsible for the maintenance of the new trees at the Smith Center.
- O'Riordan asked if CPP could characterize the deficit between the current trees surrounding the Smith Center and the replacement trees called for in the plan (after 2 years). Paulsson explained the net loss in tree volume would be significant.
- Paulsson summarized a conversation he and others from CPP had with the project developer about selecting tree species that produce less pollen. Developer said it was unwilling to shift away from its preferred species due to concern that other species would not survive in that space.
- Booz led a discussion about the design of the proposed tree wells. Openings would be non-permeable, so trees would need to be irrigated and aerated in perpetuity. Hanlon noted that trees in Harvard Square face numerous and serious stresses, and suggested that non-permeable openings might protect the trees from salt.
- The CPP requested more technical detail about the project. DPW related that the development timeline for the Smith Center project is not clear, and agreed to provide CPP with additional information on: options for addressing the loss of trees in a way that is most advantageous to city and consistent with CPP concerns, post-project maintenance standards, and more information about the efficacy of the planned irrigation/aeration system. CPP will determine next steps based on the report from DPW.

Booz noted the City Planning Board is scheduled to review projects at 136 Cushing Street (involves removal of large Norway maple) and 9 Donnell Street.

Meeting was adjourned.