

## COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PLANTING MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

5:30-7:00pm, Cambridge City Hall

Present: Maggie Booz, David Davis, Florrie Wescoat, Kathleen Caldara, Johan Paulsson, Gitte Venicx, Emily Axelrod, Jonathan Lewis, Carolyn Mathews, Nancy Phillips, City Arborist David Lefcourt, Community Development representative Gary Chan, Catherine Woodbury

Minutes taken by Kathleen Caldara

The meeting was called to order by Maggie Booz at 5:35pm.

**1. FEBRUARY MINUTES:** were reviewed and approved.

### **2. ARBORIST UPDATES:**

Tree Pruning Contracts – should be out to bid soon.

Tree Planting – Within the next two weeks Dave expects to be tagging trees.

Emerald Ash Borer: Will be putting up EAB traps (purple & green) mid- to late-April. The purpose of the traps is to indicate a presence of EAB or the density of infestation.

Dave Lefcourt said he would look into the following:

Ash trees on private property... could they get purple traps?

Communicating with other large landowners such as Harvard and MIT regarding use of EAB traps on their property.

Should the traps be placed on the ash tree or a distance away?

It was noted that \$400/tree installed seems very inexpensive. At that price will the quality of the installation be less than desired? Dave says the technical specs need to be very good and precise. And the lowest qualified bidder is chosen for all contracts.

Tree Hearings: 305 Webster Street – 3 trees were approved for removal.  
316 Western Avenue – a Tulip tree was approved for removal.

Huron Ave – 140 trees are going in.

On average our inventory is growing approximately 250 trees per year.

There are 19,000 city trees.

Budget-Related: A suggestion was made -- why not try for a much larger tree-planting budget, and plant more trees each year? This would require a larger staff.

Dave Lefcourt spoke with Owen O'Reardon about needing more money for tree-planting than his \$25,000/year tree-planting budget. Owen said \$75,000 will be earmarked for tree-planting from a capital account for fiscal year 2016.

Discussion about how to appraise trees:

Dave said that for a 3.5" caliper tree he gets roughly \$1600-1700 paid into the tree fund. Is this fixed price outdated? Dave will look into this. Do other municipalities have formulas they use?

Florrie will forward a relevant article.

As was noted in the February CPP Meeting, members expressed concern about the \$25,000 tree-planting budget. Why not request a much larger budget?

Dave Lefcourt says there is potential to add 800 new trees (at locations with stumps or empty tree wells). It is his primary goal to fill all of these locations. Once this is done, then his secondary goal would be to do public outreach, creating new opportunities.

Included in the budget should be care of trees – bigger pits, enhancement of soil, watering for a full year.

Discussion about how to measure trees: Number of trees? Volume of tree material?

One 20” caliper tree replaced with twenty 1” caliper trees is a huge loss in canopy.

Should the CPP approach Owen to ask what is his strategy to pay for increase in trees? Maybe part of the discussion with Owen could be “Adopt a block” prototype.

Salt use needs to be looked at.

Action item: Letter to Owen. Maggie will compose the letter.

### **3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT UPDATES:**

#### **First Street PUD**

March 24 Preliminary Determination

March 31 Specific Development Plan

Could submit a letter to the planning board regarding recommendation of street trees. This letter would then go into the public record.

Webster Avenue Project: The preliminary plant list shows street trees (Pear). This project will come before the Planning Board on March 31.

If the sidewalk is wide enough we could suggest a linear planting bed for the street trees.

We should have a standard for tree wells.

Catherine Woodbury stated the minimum is a 16 square foot tree well.

We should write a letter regarding desire for 4’ wide planting holes.

Connect Kendall Square: Competition. Four teams will be presenting.

**4. DISCUSSION OF MISSION STATEMENT:** delayed

**5. ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015:** delayed

**6. DISCUSSION OF UTILITY PRUNING:** delayed

### **7. INTRODUCE NEW ROLLING CALENDAR FOR TRACKING PROGRESS ON ACTION ITEMS.**

Florrie will email us a template. If Googledocs, we each need a google account. Goes with the minutes.

An Eversource representative is coming for the April CPP meeting.