

### **Attendance**

Carolyn Matthews, Chantal Eide, David Davis, David Lefcourt, Debbie Cheng, Florrie Westcoat, Gary Chan, Jill Schulman, Jonathan Lewis, Kathleen Kelly, Kathleen Caldara, Maggie Booz, Melissa Miguel, Nancy Phillips, Sarah Ruth

### **Review of Minutes**

Notes from the February CPP meeting were reviewed and approved.

### **Harvard Plympton Street Project / Gore Hall**

- Alexandra Offiong, Chris Candiello, and Emily Mueller De Celis presented a renovation project being undertaken by Harvard University on Plympton Street.
- AO explained that the proposed Gore Hall addition would extend Hall into existing buildings (Winthrop East) on Mill and Plympton Streets. City wants houses at 101 and 111 Plympton to be preserved. Extensive new foundation is needed to shore up 101 Plympton. Project has been approved by City Zoning Board and Historic Preservation Commission. CC said the project would involve removal of the single street tree (Callery pear) on the west side of Plympton, because 101 Plympton needs to be raised so that a new foundation can be slid under the house. Developers also need room for construction crane that will be parked adjacent to 101 Plympton. EMD added that there are currently three honey locusts on east side of Plympton. Harvard's proposal would replace the Callery pear with 5 female Kentucky coffeetrees on the west side (one in the current location of the pear, two more on each side).
- Existing pear tree is 13" (caliper); after construction, replacement trees will measure 16" in total. Northernmost three trees would be 4", southernmost two trees will be 2".
- Structural soil will be used in a linear bed that runs continuously under the sidewalk; irrigation and aeration will be built in. The surface area in tree pit would be decomposed granite, which is air/water permeable and ADA compliant. DD and MB asked whether the fact that the surface is ADA compliant means that the pit could be bigger. EMD and DL said that city requires 4' of solid sidewalk. MM clarified that ADA guidelines are the minimum requirement, and that Cambridge policy is to require full 4' of hard surface; she expressed doubt that City's ADA expert would consider crush granite to be an adequate surface within the travel area. MB asked why decomposed granite is used if it is not necessary for ADA compliance or travel? EMD and MM responded that it is relatively easy to maintain, nontoxic, easily accommodates tree growth, attractive (vs flexipave), less susceptible to trampling, and protects against compaction. A similar approach was used at Binney and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street—same pit surface, continuous linear beds, coffeetrees (as well as pin oak and sephora). (Unlike the Plympton Street project, however, the Kendall Square project does not have irrigation or aeration.)
- At Plympton Street, sycamores on adjoining section of Memorial Drive have been air spaded by Harvard and will be treated again after the project is complete.
- DD asked whether a sidewalk bump-out like the one at DeWolfe/Mt Auburn would be used at Plympton; doing so would allow for a larger tree at that corner. AO responded that the Plympton/Mt Auburn intersection sees less pedestrian traffic, so less basis for a bump-out.
- MB pointed out that the building does not necessarily need to be moved laterally; it could be lifted. CC said that the house would have to be lifted 30' to accommodate subterranean construction.
- MB, FW, and KK objected to the aesthetics of the pit surface and said they would prefer dirt, but appreciated the choice of coffeetrees as a replacement for the pear tree.
- MB proposed that the next steps for the CPP would be a letter likely supporting the project.

### **Arborist Update—David Lefcourt:**

- At the Smith Center, Harvard has removed all of the trees on the Holyoke Street side of project.

- City has two planting contracts: one that is tied to the standard forestry department budget, and another funded by the participatory budget allocation.
- DL's planting list is nearly finalized. DL identified and stickered 110 locations for participatory budget plantings, and has received some feedback from residents.
- Harvard planting fund contribution has not been received yet.
- No objections were raised at the Feb 23 tree hearing. A red maple on New Street will come down; other three trees at issue will be preserved if possible (hearing provided City with authorization to remove the other three trees if necessary).
- FW asked for more detailed description of the upcoming plantings, which DL responded could be done if contracts are done.
- Contract bid will be sent out soon. DL can't pick nursery or tag trees until the contract is awarded (and DL learns which nursery the winning contractor uses).
- DD suggested that DL specify the nursery in the contract and tag the trees now; DL will look into it, and whether 'soft tagging' will impact planting costs.

#### **Community Development Department Update—Gary Chan:**

- Project at 399 Binney was granted a special permit pending additional staff design review.
- Project at 95 Fawcett (5 stories, 44 units) will be considered at the March 15 planning board hearing. Plans are available on CDD website.
- Project at 95-99 Elmwood (34 units) will be considered at the April 19 planning board hearing. Plans will be posted on CDD website in the next few weeks.
- Envision Cambridge meetings are scheduled for March 24, March 31, April 2. GC noted that CPP could engage as an entity.
- DD noted that the 95 Fawcett tree study (which indicates that no street trees are to be removed) is helpful, and mentioned that it would be great if CPP saw more of these. DL agreed to look into providing more tree studies, but noted that the trees are on private property.
- CPP will review over next few days and decide whether to provide input.

#### **Revision of Urban Forestry Brochure**

- FW suggested that CPP form a subcommittee to work on a revision to the Urban Forestry brochure. KK/CM volunteered; the rest of the committee would be fleshed out over email.
- MB noted that at a recent neighborhood meeting residents expressed confusion around if/how they are supposed to care for street trees, and wondered if the relevant information could be circulated to residents in the form of a door hanger? DL responded that the City stopped distributing door hangers because it found they were ineffective. MB suggested that the brochure or some version of it could be sent out with tax bills and other City mailings.

#### **Cambridge Chronicle Letters Addressing Memorial Drive Project**

- FW expressed concern about misinformation in two recent letters published in the Cambridge Chronicle objecting to the Memorial Drive renovation plan (e.g. that DPW is responsible for DCR property) and asked if DL responded. DL replied that he had raised it with others at DPW; DPW management would be fine with a response from CPP response, but has no plans to respond itself. FW pointed out that the letters were addressed to the City/DPW, not CPP, so DPW should respond.

#### **Review of CPP Work and Discussion of Goals for Coming Year**

- FW will request feedback on a document reviewing the CPP's work over the past year and outlining what the committee wants to achieve this year.

Meeting adjourned.