**Committee on Public Planting**
**Meeting Minutes June 8, 2016**

**Review of Minutes:** May 11, 2016 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved
Present at meeting: Michael Hanlon, Tom Flynn, Jon Lewis, Dennis Jen, Florrie Wescoat, Carolyn Matthews, Kathleen Kelley, Gitte Venicx, David Lefcourt, Owen O'Riordan
Visitors: Vanessa Boukili, Jill Schulman

**Arborist Update**:
David said there were changes in the notes on the budget and provided the correct figures.
**Leahy Landscape:** Three contractors bid on Cambridge 'tree' contract which will be valid for the next 2 years. The lowest qualified bid was from Leahy Landscape. David reviewed their references and noted that they do a lot of work for the City of Boston. Leahy sources their trees from New Jersey. For the fall plantings, the trees will come straight out of the ground and, prior to planting, will be out of the ground for about 2 weeks
There was no spring planting this year because the contract was not completed in time. Therefore, there will be a large Fall planting which will exclude trees subject to dig hazards (e.g. Gingko Biloba + 9 or so other species). Prior to Fall, the department will continue routine maintenance, pruning, and stump removal.
The cost for new 2 – 2 ½ inch trees is $900 - $1000 (less than anticipated). Costs factored in include watering ($300) and police detail (e.g. to manage traffic during soil disposal). The Department is required to ask for police detail since installing or removing tree is classified as a public project. In cases where no police resources are available, the projects can be started anyway.
ADA: Requires a 48" passing space and all plantings have to be compliant. If a space becomes noncompliant, the department would need to present a reasonable alternative in the variance application.

**EARTHWATCH PRESENTATION** by Vanessa Boukili: (vanessa@Boukili.com)

**EXPLORING BOSTON'S URBAN FOREST** - 2014/2015 **FIELD REPORT**

THE FULL REPORT CAN BE RETRIEVED FROM EARTHWATCH:
**http://earthwatch.org/FieldReports/earthwatch-field-report-exploring-bostons-urban-forest-2015.pdf**

Urban trees provide various ecosystem services, including sequestering carbon, diminishing air pollution, mitigating flooding potential, increasing property values, improving health, and providing recreational opportunities. They are also aesthetically pleasing. Larger trees provide significantly more ecosystem service benefits than small trees. The Earthwatch research findings provide a better understanding of urban tree growth and survival. By informing land managers, we can improve the likelihood that trees will survive until maturity and grow to their full potential, and accordingly provide increasingly more ecosystem service benefits over time.

Although the phrase "right tree, right place" is common in arboriculture, the scientific knowledge base for making the best choices about which trees to plant where and how to best manage them is only just emerging. Urban environments are often highly stressful for trees, and thus species choice and tree care is a non-trivial matter

**Study Goal:** to improve our understanding of the primary factors influencing variation in tree survival and growth in urban environments. This type of information is vital for creating a more resilient urban forest that is able to withstand the threats of an urban environment, and will help to ensure the best possible urban forest management practices are being used. In our study we included various types of factors that may influence tree growth and survival, ranging from biological (e.g. species and biological characteristics), to environmental (e.g. impervious surface, surrounding trees, solar radiation, tree well maintenance), to socioeconomic/ community factors (e.g. neighborhood level human population and housing characteristics).

The City of Cambridge maintains a spatially–explicit inventory of the more than 19,000 publicly-owned trees in the City (https://www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/ourservices/urbanforestry/treeinventory). The inventory contains information about the location, species identity, and size (diameter at breast height, or DBH) of each tree, as well as characteristics about the site where the tree is planted, such as if there are wires overhead. Between 2012 and 2015, more than 4,000 trees in Cambridge's tree inventory were visited and re-measured. Each tree was visited 1-3 times during the four -year period. Combining these measurements with the original City of Cambridge tree inventory data resulted in 2-4 measurement time points from which to assess tree survival and growth rates

In addition to the tree measurements, Earthwatch used spatial datasets from the City of Cambridge and the State of Massachusetts to quantify environmental characteristics surrounding each tree. They also characterized the socioeconomic conditions of each neighborhood in the city
The results show that the survival rate of street trees in the City of Cambridge is on the higher end of scientific estimates in other cities. Survival and growth rates for young trees are higher in residential areas compared to industrial and office areas. Survival is also higher in areas of the city with higher owner occupancy rates, and growth rates are higher in areas with higher population density. Combined, these results suggest that tree growth and survival improves when the trees are cared for by the adjacent property owners or renters (i.e., abutters).

Most of these results will be included in the Urban Forest Management Plan for the City of Cambridge

**GARY CHAN - CCD:** There is nothing new at CCD

**Tom Flynn**: Tom raised concerns about tree issues in North Cambridge:

Empty tree well at the corner of Whittemore and Magoun St. which has been asphalted over instead of being replanted; D. Lefcourt replied that there is not enough room on the sidewalk to plant a replacement tree.

Very deep excavation (~5 - 6') by a private landowner which cut away much of the roots of public trees along Linear Path; O. O'Riordan said that City lawyer is involved in seeking remediation for public trees that were damaged.

**NEWSLETTER**: Florrie Wescoat and Dennis Jen showed a model for a newsletter and discussed possibilities for layout and distribution.