

Attendance

CPP: Maggie Booz, Chair, Kathleen Kelly, Jonathan Lewis, Michael Hanlon, Paul Cortes, Chantal Eide, Janet Burns, David Davis, Nancy Phillips

City: Owen O’Riordan, David Webster, David Lefcourt, Melissa Miguel, Jennifer Letourneau, Gary Chan

Observers: Jan Devereux, Costanza Eggers, Susan Ringler, Marilyn and Phil Wellons, Martha Sterns, Sandra Fairbank, Vanessa Boukili,

1. **Meeting Minutes** for CPP meeting of December 9, 2016 were read and approved
2. **City Arborist Update**
 - a. **Smith Campus Center** – no action has yet been taken by the City as to whether to approve or deny Harvard’s application to remove 32 significant trees from around the former Holyoke Center located in Harvard Square. O’Riordan stated that he is due follow-up with Harvard (i) to obtain tree planting specifications from Harvard, (ii) to provide an explanation of the ‘chill water’ pipe’s placement and its late appearance in Harvard’s plan drawings, (iii) to recommend provision in the landscape architects’ plans for increased bike parking particularly where wall mounted bike hooks are to be removed as part of the new plan and (iv) a formal written commitment by Harvard confirming an understanding reached between CPP and Harvard at CPP’s November meeting with respect to Harvard’s reconfiguring its planting plan for Mt. Auburn Street to include three shade trees . O’Riordan also assured the CPP that no action will be taken by the City until the CPP has been provided with up-dated information and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the City’s decision.
 - b. **Linear Park path and Tree** – Linear Park is the pedestrian/bicycle path that runs from Davis Square in Somerville to the Alewife T Station in Cambridge. The former Fawcett Oil site abuts Linear Park and is being developed into multiple residential units accessed from Massachusetts Ave. A condition of the Planning Board’s issuance of a Special Permit to the developer is that he construct a pedestrian access path from the development to Linear Park. The developer has approached the City with the request to remove a tree that blocks the optimal route from the developer’s perspective for the path. Discussion followed regarding the feasibility of rerouting the developer’s planned path. O’Riordan explained that irregularities of the terrain complicate creating an alternative route and increase developer’s costs. There will be further discussions between DPW and the developer.
3. **Memorial Drive Demonstration Project Phase II** –(up-date by Owen O’Riordan and by Cambridge Conservation Commission Director Jennifer Tourneau). Brief history of project began with Year 2000 Masterplan for the Charles River Basin which was followed by The Historic Parkways Project in 2006-2006 the objective of which was to address drainage into the river, examine users and their number, adapt to demand and overall enhance users’ experience of the parkway. Phase I of the project was carried out between 2004 and 2006 during which time park land was increased by 2 acres in the Basin area. Phase II was permitted by the Conservation Commission in 2009 although the project was unfunded. In October 2015 an up-dated tree inventory was done under the auspices of the project’s landscape architects, Brown, Richardson & Rowe, cataloguing all trees in the area by DBH, species and condition.

Last Public Meeting regarding project was in 2009. Only today was project activity put on DCR website. Also press release regarding project issued today clearly in anticipation of community questions about tree removal along the river.

Present planting plan provides for the removal of 146 healthy trees of which 101 are within the 100 foot buffer zone. The plan provides for the planting of 316 new trees of which 242 will be within the 100 foot buffer zone. Newport Construction, the contractor for the job, anticipates completion of the removal and planting by the end of the 2016 construction season. Removal began this week.

There followed discussion about the species of trees to be planted, a list of which was referenced but not presented to the meeting. O’Riordan observed that among the problems with state contracts such as this is lapse of time between planning and construction, which in this case is almost 15 years. In that interval views have changed substantially as to what trees should be planted particularly where new pests and diseases have emerged.

Recognizing that DCR is under no obligation to heed recommendations from the city or the CPP, Booz suggested nonetheless and meeting members concurred that the CPP write a letter to DCR asking that DCR reconsider its species list in light of changes since the list was originally drawn. Janet Burns volunteered to draft such a letter to DCR.

Further discussion by observers followed regarding DCR’s plans, their implementation and their apparent indifference to City of Cambridge. Major theme of discussion is choices of trees to be removed, their size as mature trees and the prospect of their replacements being considerably smaller trees, which offer few of the benefits of the mature trees in terms of shade, carbon sequestration, etc.

Non agenda comment re Unauthorized Removal of Significant Tree at site of Porter Square Hotel Construction - by observer Costanza Eggers regarding removal within last few weeks by contractor of significant tree without authority at site of Porter Square Hotel. O’Riordan asked for photos, which Eggers will provide, and promised to follow-up. Comment that penalty under the law of \$500 might not be sufficiently high to act as disincentive to unauthorized removals.

4. **Tree Ordinances** – a summary sheet of ‘Tree Ordinances of the City of Cambridge’, prepared in December 2015 by the Office of Councilor Craig A. Kelly was distributed. A brief discussion followed in which it was suggested that in its summary form, the sheet was of only limited utility. Nonetheless, the summary showed that there are instances where the City Arborist can have jurisdiction on private property where the boundary between public and private property is covered by the canopy of a “significant” tree.

With respect to Chapter 8.66, which is the Tree Protection Ordinance for the city, provision is made calling for a Tree Study, certified by the City Arborist. The question was raised as to when and under what circumstances such a Tree Study should be brought to the attention of the CPP.

5. **Lowell Park update by Janet Burns and Maggie Booz** – Lowell Park is a DCR property comprised of two pieces intersected by Fresh Pond Parkway. The larger piece fills the southeast corner of the Brattle Street –Fresh Pond Parkway intersection. It is that piece for which restoration work has begun this week. The restoration follows upon a Cultural Landscape Report completed in August 2014 by DCR, which owns and has full jurisdiction over the park. The restoration includes removal of trees which threaten to undermine the four foot high brick wall that forms the perimeter of the park on Brattle Street. Tree removal work was begun last week. In addition, restoration of the wall itself will be done.

Question was asked by an observer as to whether or not street trees could be planted along Brattle Street outside the park wall between the sidewalk and the curb within the full jurisdiction of the city.

6. **CPP Annual Report** – discussion postponed by Maggie Booz until later meeting.
7. **Miscellaneous** – (i) Chantal Eide called attention to the removal of a Sycamore on Concord Avenue about which a neighbor had questioned her. David Lefcourt responded that there had been a Tree Hearing approving its removal. (ii) David reminded the meeting that there will be a Tree Hearing regarding the proposed removal of a tree on Erie Street.
8. Booz adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm.