

Cambridge Committee on Public Planting Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2017

Attendance

Maggie Booz, Kathleen Caldara, Gary Chan, Paula Cortes, David Davis, Chantal Eide, Dennis Jen, David Lefcourt, Carolyn Mathews, Owen O’Riordan, Johan Paulsson, Cynthia Smith, Florrie Wescoat

Minutes

April meeting minutes approved

Welcome, Sophia

- Guest attendee and volunteer involved in Envision Cambridge Energy and Environment Working Group
- Trained as a landscape architect and works at GeoAdaptive on large region planning

Presentation of final landscape plans for King Open School presented by Copley-Wolff Design Group

- Project takes place between Willow and Berkshire Streets and is conceptualized as a “school within a park” and is expected to be completed in September 2019
- Overview: buildings are in two masses, library garden will be replaced, green spine between the buildings, enclosed courtyard with glass enclosure
- Trees and planting beds will be irrigated and managed through the school
- LEED Gold is targeted
- Rain gardens will collect surface water and from leaders run to them
- 560 caliper inches are taken away initially with the goal to replace all DBH taken
- Final canopy is anticipated to be greater than what was removed
- More street trees will be added overall with a preference to plan back of sidewalk rather than in tree pits
- 0.5 acres of green space will be created by moving parking underground
- In total, 135 new trees will be added, 18 unique species of shrubs, 33 unique species of ornamental grasses and perennials
- Sycamore measured at 51” and three large honey locusts (around 18”) remain with an arborist from Barrett Tree Service reporting on them monthly
- Entrances
 - Differentiated by tree selection with pin oaks for the school and red maples for the library
 - Two rain gardens (including winterberry, ironweed, culver’s root) will go in adjacent to the entrances
- Eastern part of the library:
 - Northeast area will include red maples, heritage river birch, star magnolia
 - Street trees on the outside of the garden include morton elm, swamp white oak, sweetgum, etc.
- Northern part of the library:
 - Retaining wall with bocce court will be installed
 - Plants include: English ivy, oak leaf hydrangea
 - Beds are 6in curbed
- Berkshire Street trees include zelkova and pin oaks
- Southeast corner adjacent to Donnelly Park (next to basketball courts)
 - Children and adult pools will be installed
 - Plantings include: ironwood, white fir, green gable tupelo
 - Fire lane sits between the basketball court and pool, which is flanked by evergreens and rain gardens
- Southwest corner
 - This is where the preserved honey locusts are currently located
 - Fire lane path (which is asphalt) continues here and is flanked by grass
 - Hardscaped play area is here

- Northeast area
 - Main play area is located here with birches in the little kid area and no trees in the big kid area (they'd climb on them)
 - Trees include swamp white oak and magyar ginkgo
 - Plants include coneflower, russian sage, bee balm, coneflower, catmint, etc. (chosen to take a beating)
- Center (a.k.a. Green spine)
 - Location of one large rain garden which include japanese pieris, blue angel hosta, lady fern, bee balm, etc.
 - Three bridges will span the garden
 - CitySprouts will be located here as they prefer being enclosed for storage
- Johan brought up that the current selection of plants include many heavy pollen producers and that some thought should be paid to this
 - OPALS allergy index scale can be used to assess plant selection
 - Suggestion that female plants be chosen to reduce pollen

City Arborist David Lefcourt updates

- Spring planting has begun with bare roots mostly planted and balled and burlapped (B&B) starting next week, for a total of 400 trees installed this spring.
- Sizes: Bare root at 1.5" and B&B at 2.5"
- Bare root trees are being tested out in different areas around the city with contractors planting the trees, and the trees themselves are tracked in the DPW inventory

State of the Master Plan

- This topic wasn't part of the agenda and is in response to a question Florrie asked
- Owen says that the initial starting point would be to contract with an entity specializing in urban settings to understand how to best encourage participation on private property, maximize space constraints, and address heat islands
- \$500k has been allocated to the budget to address climate change issues
- Furthermore, the master plan for the Cambridge public cemetery will take place this fall and the CPP is expected to be consulted

Tree Task Force (TTF)

- This wasn't part of the agenda and is in response to general concerns and questions from the CPP
- Owen reiterated that the TTF is moving forward and the expectation is that the CPP will work together with the TTF
- The current thinking is that a consultant will be needed to help form the TTF, define the mission with TTF working through the master planning effort; however, the TTF and master plan remain two separate entities.
- Ultimately, the TTF's recommendations will feed back to the CPP
- Comment from CPP: Harvard and MIT are looking into urban trees and could be tapped to contribute to or join the TTF

Envision Cambridge Energy and Environment Working Group – Maggie Booz

- Purpose of the group is to address climate change of which Maggie and Sophia are both members. The range of topics are quite broad, e.g. transport, heat islands, trees, etc.
- The CPP wasn't listed as one of the citizen groups included in the initial packet when the group kicked off.
- Maggie asks how this working group collaborates with the tree task force.
- The CPP is lacking clarity in how to reconcile the outcomes of Envision Cambridge with the work that CPP is pushing forward.

Action Items

- Chairs will plan a tour of the bare root trees targeting the July meeting