

CAMBRIDGE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PLANTING

Wednesday, June 14, 2017
5:30-7:00pm, DPW, 147 Hampshire Street

Minutes

Attendees: Maggie Booz, Janet Burns, Kathleen Caldara, Paula Cortes, Chantal Eide, Dennis Jen, Carolyn Mathews, Nancy Phillips, Florrie Wescoat, City Arborist David Lefcourt, Community Development Representative Gary Chan, Ellen Coppinger, Kathy Watkins, Kara Falise, Jerry Friedman.

Minutes were taken by Kathleen Caldara.

The meeting was called to order by Florrie Wescoat.

Review of May Minutes - Reviewed and approved.

A couple of suggestions were made regarding CPP minutes – (1) that prior month's minutes be distributed to CPP members ahead of the meeting, giving more time for review, and (2) that the minutes should include name of minute taker.

Presentation on Huron Ave at Sparks Landscape Improvements – Ellen Coppinger

This area was used as an equipment storage area during the Huron Ave construction. Now new sidewalks are in, and a lawn is planted. But the intention is to make additional landscape improvements.

Ellen presented 3 conceptual planting plans to the group, and wanted feedback.

Plan A included Tupelo trees, with a Witch Hazel understory.

Plan B also included Tupelo trees, but with Sassafras instead of Witch Hazel.

Plan C included a River Birch grove.

Maggie liked the idea of including Tupelo trees (native and not often planted as a street tree). Florrie asked about getting rid of lawn areas and substituting another groundcover. Ellen said no due to increase in maintenance. Ferns seemed like a good idea; Lily of the Valley is invasive. A suggestion was made by Paula to plant 'minor' bulbs, those that will naturalize, such as specie crocus, snowdrops, grape hyacinth, scilla, chionodoxa. So the consensus was – leaning towards Tupelo. Plant in the spring. Simplify the ground plane. Also look for Franklinia.

Presentation on Inman Square – Jerry Friedman

The project started in 2014. A transportation study found that there were 69 total crashes in the intersection between 2008 and 2012. Safety is an issue for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians within Inman Square.

The geometry/layout of the intersection of Cambridge Street and Hampshire Street is the issue. The size and complexity of the intersection is challenging for all – drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. The city is currently developing plans to improve the intersection. The intent is to make the intersection safer and more efficient for bikes, pedestrians, cars, and buses. Also the intent is to provide a pedestrian plaza adjacent to

businesses, to accommodate truck traffic through the intersection, and to maintain the firehouse egress/access.

The city developed 3 concept plans, and a 4th option (roundabout) was developed outside and was included for consideration. They decided to go with a signalized concept plan.

Vellucci Plaza: The plan changes the existing Vellucci Plaza. Most people claim they don't use it now. There will be a bicycle lane through it, and the bicycle Hubway station will be expanded. Some of the existing trees will be removed – One Honeylocust tree on the Cambridge Street side, and two Honeylocust on the Hampshire Street side. The two existing raised beds of River Birches will need to be removed, possibly transplanted elsewhere (golf course or Fresh Pond area perhaps).

A new Vellucci Plaza will be created across the street adjacent to retail. The city is working with KMDG, landscape architects. The vision for the new plaza is for it to be flexible open space and storefronts. Want to use moveable furniture, and have it more social. Want to memorialize Amanda Phillips (and other people who have died in crashes here) using benches and/or planters.

Comments from the CPP members: A suggestion was made to look at Davis Square as a model. Carolyn would like to see more green in the new Vellucci Plaza – for softening. Florrie wants to see as much quiet, contemplative space set aside as possible, including retaining the original Vellucci Park in its entirety, and redesigning it to become an oasis of shade trees. All honeylocusts would be retained. She suggested reducing the number of lanes from four down to two. It is important to get as much shade created as possible. Example- the Science Museum has light hardscape and gives off a harsh reflection. Maggie: Overall theme – Less is more. Too much can take away from tranquility.

There will be a community meeting July 25 at the library to discuss the Vellucci Plaza design and listen to ideas. And then there will be a comprehensive meeting in the fall. Construction will most probably begin after the 1st of the year (2018-19). This is a \$6Million project.

Email Kelly Dunn, Community Relations Manager, to be put on her email list.
kdunn@cambridgema.gov

Arborist Updates – Dave Lefcourt

The tree planting is underway, with one-half the trees in so far. It is going well. A site supervisor is present, and the trees are being planted according to the specs. They are being watered 2x per week for the 1st 30 days, then once/week after that.

The tree planting should be complete in 2-3 weeks. DL is not overly concerned that the trees are being planted in June (late).

Under the tree planting spec, watering is done by the landscape contractor.

Public works in-house forestry crew is starting watering tomorrow, and water-by-bike interns have been watering for about a week. They keep track of which trees they water by using a tablet. This procedure has been in place for about six months.

DL is still looking for a tree inventory intern.

Florrie asked about London Plane trees being hit with Anthracnose. DL says they will recover and will look fine in 3-4 weeks.

What is the process of telling DL about a dead tree? The preferred way is using www.seeclickfix.com. Either go to the website or get the app to report a tree that needs attention or that is dead.

The planting of Sophora trees has been pushed to the fall. They are being held at the nursery.

380 trees in total will be planted.

DL opened up (concrete cutting) smaller tree wells where possible.

Discussion regarding Gator Bags: Duel gator bags – too expensive to fill both sides so only one bag is filled. The cost is \$600 to purchase and install a tree. It costs \$7.71 for each time the contractor visits and waters the tree.

Community Development Department Updates – Gary Chan

Planning Board meeting – Tuesday, June 27, 2017 at 6:30pm

Design review of Parcel W

Design modification to North Point Common

Design review of Parcel A Pump Station

Gary will send a link to us.

Videos of Planning Board meetings are available on CambridgeMa.gov website.

Planting plans for Binney Street Park, Triangle Park, and 249 3rd Street will be presented to CPP at our next meeting or another upcoming meeting. Dave Lefcourt needs to check on when presentations will be scheduled.

Envision Cambridge – There are a number of meetings coming up.

June 15 – Economy Working Group 9-11:30am

June 15 – Housing Working Group 6-8:30pm

June 19 – Climate and Environment Working Group 6-8:30pm

Maggie mentioned again that one of the Honeylocust trees planted near Star Market on Mount Auburn Street died, was removed, but was never replaced. DL will add that to his planting list for the fall.

Action Items

-DL will show us the map on the tablet - used for keeping track of when each tree is watered.

-Gary Chan will send a link to us regarding upcoming design reviews.

- DL will check on schedule of various planting plan presentations to CPP.

- DL will add Honeylocust (for planting by Star Market) to his list for fall planting.

Meeting adjourned.