

Minutes
Committee on Public Planting
5:30-7:00 Wednesday 13 September

Members: Maggie Booz, Chantal Eide, Dennis Jen, Kathleen Kelly, David Lefcourt (City Arborist), Paula Cortes, Carolyn Matthews, Nancy Phillips, Florrie Wescoat
Guests: Sophia Emperor, Alex Marchinsky (Stoss Landscape Architecture), Tim Wilson (Stoss Landscape Architecture)

Minutes of July meeting amended and approved.

A committee member wondered if the City had met with residents of Langdon St.

The Committee reviewed the Request for Proposals for Services City of Cambridge Urban Forest Master Plan, designed, in general, to establish policies and best practices for maintaining city trees and on how to respond to changing conditions that would have an impact on the urban forest.

The committee discussed ways to streamline the document and clearly establish priorities and desiderata. At the moment, the draft document is confusing in that it seems to conflate a Request for Proposals for Services and a Request for Qualifications. It was emphasized that it was important to make a distinction in the document between street trees that contribute to the urban tree canopy and those trees on private land. While the City has an interest in attending to trees on private land and persuading homeowners to invest in the urban canopy by supporting City initiatives and committing to planting shade trees on their properties, the City's primary mandate is insuring that the city increase its tree inventory. Maggie Booz volunteered to write up suggestions for revision.

Stoss landscape architects presented their proposal for the "Triangle" at Binney and First Street, which is now empty except for a number of trees that were planted by a private citizen (a few red oaks and pin oaks, plus a dogwood). The site was initially contaminated, but has since been mitigated. It was then used for staging for construction. The City requires that most of the rain and snow that would fall on the site be managed according to strict guidelines. Moreover, the location of underground utilities pose a problem. It is a challenge for design. The proposed design includes a berm along Edward Land Blvd and lush plantings, as well as a small ramp that rises among trees at the extreme pointed end of the site.

The design calls for a number of trees to be removed: of the 16 trees, it is proposed to remove 9 and keep 7, replacing the trees long one edge so the berm can be put in place and planted with trees, the edge. Pitch pines, quaking aspen, sassafras, and sweet gum are to be added to supplement the pine oak and red oaks, with an emphasis on providing fall color. Discussion focused on ways to keep the mature trees on the site, as well as reducing hardscape.