

Advisory Committee for Trees – January 19, 2016

Called to order 7PM

Present: Charles Jackman (chair), Brian Townsend (city liaison), Ethel Dutky (recorder), Bob Trumbule (member), Erin Josephitis (Volunteer Environmental Coordinator).

Minutes from November 17, 2015 reviewed and approved with corrections.

Jan 18, 2015 volunteer work day – Erin reports.

In spite of the very cold weather, over 50 volunteers showed up!! Great Work Erin! Activities included removal of English Ivy from woodland trees in Buddy Attick Park along Crescent Rd. near St. Hugh's. We expressed concern for the increased hazard of exposure of volunteers to poison ivy in winter brush clearing. We made several suggestions (disposable gloves, hand washing) to reduce severity.

ACT Field trip to Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show, Jan 7.

Charles and Bob went to the MANTS trade show with Brian and other Public Works colleagues. It was huge and very interesting. Several new nursery sources were found for street and park trees.

Tree Planting, Tree tour events coming soon.

Greenbelt will celebrate Arbor Day with a tree planting event in Schromm Hills Park of Saturday, April 2 at 10AM. Right after the tree planting, ACT will take one bus load on the Greenbelt's Significant Trees Tour. Some changes/corrections need to be made to the tree tour brochure. The tree planting will consist of planting Loblolly and Short Leaf pines in an open, sunny area near the tennis courts.

American Chestnut Planting Project.

City council has requested that Public works select sites to plant Blight Resistant American Chestnuts provided by the American Chestnut Foundation breeding program. This idea was presented to City council by a Greenbelt citizen. The American Chestnut was an important part of our east coast forests until a fungal disease (Chestnut Blight) appeared in 1904 and by the 1930's had destroyed the American Chestnut throughout its natural range (Canada through Florida). In order to obtain the trees Public Works must complete an application and submit it to the Foundation for delivery by April 15.

We discussed the requirements for establishment of American Chestnut which include deep fertile slightly acid soil, full sun, reliable moisture supply, at an elevation above 1,000 feet. We don't have all of these conditions in Greenbelt, but should be able to find or create a sunny site with good soil and irrigate the plants, thus giving the trees a good chance for establishment. The Foundation expects reports on the survival of the trees. The American Chestnut is a large forest tree and is still present in Maryland forests as short-lived sprouts from roots of blight girdled trees. These are easy to find in the Forested areas in BARC, and in many other sites including Southern Maryland (American Chestnut Land Trust), so there should be no problem in Greenbelt being approved to obtain these blight resistant selections, even though Greenbelt lacks sites at elevations above 1,000 feet. However, ACT did not think that there is enough time to find the ideal site to have a planting event this spring. It would be good to provide information (publicly) to the community and encourage community participation and awareness of this project. We would like to attempt this project as a fall event (such as Public Lands Day in October), or for Arbor Day 2017.

Election of ACT Officers.

Bob nominated Charles Jackman for Chair. Ethel seconded the nomination. Charles accepted and was nomination by acclamation. Ethel agreed to continue as Recorder.

Greenbelt citizens continue to be concerned about tree removal.

Charles shared another letter from the News Review complaining about PEPCO tree removals.

Agenda Items for the next ACT Meeting:

1 – Big Tree list. We will work on this and add more trees.

2 - Re-visit addition of specific budget items for tree care in addition to funds reserved for tree planting.

3 – ACT wants to provide input for the Greenbelt Master Plan for Trees. This task was the reason that ACT was established.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 at 7PM at Public Works.

Adjourn 9PM