

## **Advisory Committee on Trees – Tuesday, October 18, 2016**

Call to order 7:10 PM

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

Minutes from September 12 approved with corrections and accepted.

### **Old Business**

#### **Public Lands Day, Sept 24 at Turner Cemetery**

Erin reported that 19 volunteers, 5 Public Works staff, the mayor and city council, members of the Community Relations Advisory Board (CRAB) and the Advisory Committee on Trees (ACT) participated in this event. Invasive trees, shrubs and vines were cleared from one area and the area raked clean. Some additional old grave markers were found. A memorial tree was planted and a protective rope boundary fence was installed. Public works had dug the post/planting holes and had all material in place, so each task went smoothly. Plans are underway to coordinate work and maintenance on all three Historic cemeteries in Greenbelt.

#### **Mulch Issue over Labor Day Weekend**

Brian reported that Public Works received several complaints that excessive mulch had been placed around trees near the Community Center. Brian explained that root zone protective fences and about 2 to 3 inches of mulch had been spread around the large trees in the area to protect the roots from injury during the Labor Day Festival. ACT agreed that this amount of mulch would not damage the trees and would be beneficial in conserving soil moisture and protecting the roots from compaction. ACT supports this practice by Public Works.

### **New Business**

#### **Public Works staff attended the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Urban and Community Forestry Workshop in Westminster**

Brian Townsend, Dan Hall, and Erin Josephitis attended this educational event. They found the session “Soil for Trees Under Pavement” presented by Jim Urban especially interesting. New research indicates that previously recommended “structural soil mixes of gravel, sand and soil” do not perform as well as had been thought. He described an alternative using a large perforated tree planter box for each tree. This method should provide improved stability and enhance tree root establishment in the site. ACT expressed an interest in attending this workshop next year.

#### **Champion Tree Tour, Sept. 24, 2016**

Charles reported that he had attended this tour of Champion Trees in Prince George's County. He shared the tour brochure. ACT discussed taking a field trip to view some of the trees on the tour. ACT also discussed the advantages of providing signage for the large trees on Greenbelt's Significant Tree Walk and pictures in our brochure.

#### **Plans for Upgrades of Parking at Buddy Attick Park**

Brian showed us plans for an upgrade of the parking at Buddy Attick Park. The new plan will incorporate water retention areas to control storm water runoff, increase the number of parking spaces to 99, and improve the entrance lanes for safety. So far this project is in the preliminary stages. ACT is interested in having some input into the trees selected.

### **Greenbelt Station Planting Plan**

Brian showed ACT the plans for development of a city park in the new development “Greenbelt Station”. Tree planting is now underway in this park which features a large rectangular turf field surrounded by rows of trees (willow oaks, maples and sycamores). Other sections of the park include a smaller seating area, and a possible outdoor stage and seating area. Further plans include paths to connect Greenbelt Station to the Metro station and to Cherrywood road. These paths present problems due to their length, poor lighting and other safety concerns. Due to the density of the housing in development, this park will be heavily used.

### **Greenbelt Forest Preserve Health Assessment.**

This document is available on the City web site. In addition, a second document “Goals and Recommendations for the Forest Preserve” is also on the web site. There will be a walking tour of the Forest Preserve on Saturday, October 22 starting at 10AM at Observatory Hill. The walk will be led by a contractor from Morton Thomas. It is scheduled to take about two hours.

### **Next Round of PEPCO Tree removals.**

Brian explained that in the next few weeks PEPCO will start removing the trees identified and approved for removal in 2015.

### **Ethel reports on a good speaker and interesting book.**

Ethel attended a talk at the Takoma Park Community Center given by Dr. Doug Tallamy. The topic was designing landscapes to have a healthy ecosystem which supports the songbird population by providing plants which host many caterpillars. Birds feed soft-bodied larval insects such as grubs and caterpillars to their young. Dr. Tallamy is the Chairman at the University of Delaware Department of Entomology. His book describes landscape ecosystems and gives very specific advice on plant selection to increase biodiversity and provide ideal food for breeding songbirds. Erin is planning a conference in March 2017 and may invite Dr. Tallamy to speak. Ethel loaned Erin the book.

Next meeting: Tuesday, November 15, 2016 at Public Works at 7PM.

Submitted by Ethel Dutky