

Advisory Committee on Trees – May 6, 2014

Present: Charles Jackman (chair), Ethel Dutky (recorder), Bill Phelan (guest), Brian Townsend (city liaison), Alex Palmer (Volunteer MD Coordinator), Bob Trumbule (member).

Call to order at 7PM

Minutes for April 15 approved with corrections.

Arbor Day Planting Event

Congratulations to Brian and Alex for excellent preparation of the site for this event and rounding up the volunteers. All planting holes were pre-dug and marked with flags. Plants were transported to the site and placed next to each flag. A recent rain also helped soften the ground and make planting easier for the volunteers. Wire cage protection was installed at the end of the event. All Advisory Committee on Trees members and City Council members participated in the event.

Sustainable Land Care Policy

We discussed the status of the Sustainable Land Care Policy document. Should we request a City Council work session on this document? Bob informed us that the Greenbelt Garden Club has been asked to have a work session with Council on garden pesticide use.

Alex Palmer reports on volunteer work days

On April 24 Alex organized an English Ivy trimming day on the South side of Buddy Attick Lake. Volunteers cut back and removed English Ivy which was climbing up trees. Volunteers also walked the site and pulled and removed all garlic mustard found.

On Monday April 28 CHEARS held a Salute to Corporate Sponsors. Southern Management Corporation provided over 50 volunteers who worked over three shifts constructing and installing wire cages to protect trees from animal damage. More than 50 trees were protected with wire cages. Invasive exotic plants were removed from about 3,000 square feet of park woodland. A total of over 200 hours of volunteer time was contributed to these activities. This work day was a part of the Greenbelt Forest Stewardship Project. Alex will include this data in a report for the Greenbelt Forest Stewardship project. Alex envisions this project will eventually have stronger City support. There should be plans to make the Forest Stewardship Project part of a staff position to provide consistent management of the program. The Volunteer Maryland Coordinator position only has one more year budgeted. This position is funded by Americorps. ACT expressed support for continuation of the Greenbelt Forest Stewardship Project. The focus of this project would be existing Greenbelt Parks, but not the Forest Preserve. Bill Phelan mentioned that the Recreation Department has a program of "Greenbelt Forest Rangers" who were trained to patrol the parks. They were paid a modest wage for this seasonal work. Perhaps this "Greenbelt Forest Ranger" program could become part of the Greenbelt Forest Stewardship Project.

Alex has planned another work day on Sat. June 21 at Schrom Hills Park. This will be called the "Summer Solstice Bio Blitz". Alex is contacting local specialists. Each specialist will take an area of the park and train volunteers to map the sections. This inventory data will be compiled and used as a preliminary inventory to be developed into a more detailed biological inventory for the park. ACT suggested some local people to contact. Alex will look into using Smart Phone Apps to record data.

Tree Inventory Demonstration

Alex took us into his office to show us how to use the Tree Inventory. The screen showed a web map of the city with dots for each tree. Data recorded for each tree include Genus and species and other information. Places where trees have died or been removed (skips) should also be in the system.

It is possible to query the system, for example to ask for all “trees in poor health”. Such searches could reveal patterns in damage. It is possible to put in several search criteria.

Charles suggested that at our next meeting we should use the Tree Inventory to make up the annual tree maintenance plan required for ACT to submit each year. ACT could do a drive by survey of some problem areas and enter the “skips” into the program. Brian is engaged in using the system to correct errors and omissions. In some cases the signal was poor so data entered by volunteers and staff did not go through.

Tree Work

Brian reported that he is under a lot of pressure to order trees and use the funding from PEPCO. We had a very active discussion of sources for hard to find trees, one example was the Cherry 'Dream Catcher'.

Next meeting – Tuesday July 8, 2014.

Adjourn at 8:50 PM.

Submitted by Ethel Dutky