

## Advisory Committee on Trees – November 18, 2014

Called to order 7PM

Present: Charles Jackman (chair), Brian Townsend (city liaison), Ethel Dutky (recorder), Robert Trumbule (member), Lola Skolnik (guest).

Minutes from October 28, 2014 approved with corrections.

Discussion of the status of the Management Policy for Invasive Species.

Lola Skolnik (chair of PRAB (Parks and Recreation Advisory Board) presented her understanding of the management policies being debated. We provided her the ACT Report on Invasive Species Management. PRAB is in the process of revising the Lake Park Master Plan. Bob Trumbule will attend the PRAB meeting on Wednesday Nov. 19 to provide input especially on technical issues on invasive plant management and to answer any questions and explain the ACT revision of the 2011 “Sustainable Land Care Policy” draft document prepared by Lesley Riddle.

City Council work session on the Forest Preserve Maintenance and Management Guidelines held Monday, Nov. 17.

Ethel attended this work session and summarized the flow of discussion. All ACT members had in hand the material provided for the work session. Mayor Jordan opened the session and emphasized that the work session would focus on the issues of management policy for the Forest Preserve. Celia Craze opened the discussion with a summary of the establishment of the Forest Preserve and made four recommendations:

- 1 – Direct city staff to review the city code and recommend amendments.
- 2 – Allow continued intervention and management of invasive species in all wooded areas of the city under the direction of city staff. Any action planned within the Forest Preserve should be reviewed and approved by the city manager prior to implementation. The FPAB (Forest Preserve Advisory Board) shall be notified of any projects or programs within the Forest Preserve.
- 3 – Establish a Task Force with broad representation from city boards and committees, as well as state and local jurisdictions to draft a comprehensive plan for management of invasive vegetation within all wooded areas in the city.
- 4 – Direct the FPAB to initiate a review of the Management and maintenance guidelines (MMG) and prepare a list of recommended changes to the City Council.

Mr. Snyder (chair of Forest Preserve Advisory Board) was invited to present the views of the FPAB. He expressed concerns about the harmful effects of invasive species removal and that harm is more likely when removal projects are done in “a hasty, impromptu manner”. Mr. Snyder disagreed with the characterization of the MMG as “broad”, rather he thinks the guidelines are very specific.

When asked by Mayor Jordan if the FPAB has since inception prepared an assessment of the Forest Preserve condition or health, Mr. Snyder said the FPAB did not have the expertise to do this, and would like to have a professional “Forest Ecologist” do this task. Mayor Jordan asked for more specific details about where to find such a qualified professional Forest Ecologist. There was no mention made of a recent assessment of the Forest Preserve entitled “Forest Stewardship Plan” done by a licensed Forester, a Wildlife Biologist, and a Heritage Ecologist, all from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Snyder concluded his presentation with the statement that management of invasive plants must be done only using mechanical means and that no chemical insecticide, fungicide, or herbicide controls could be used in the Forest Preserve.

In further discussion the City Council made it clear that the final decision on what methods and activities would be allowed in the Forest Preserve would fall to the City Council.

Comments from the audience were invited. Ethel Dutky made some comments regarding the rich variety of resources available in Greenbelt to implement invasive species management including students, citizen volunteers and youth (e.g., Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and others). Other audience members expressed frustration with current regulations and lack of effective control of invasive plants. English Ivy was mentioned by several speakers. One speaker is planning to attend the Maryland Invasive Species Council meeting to gather more information. With one exception, the discussion was conducted in a calm and courteous manner. Only one speaker was strident and rude and shouted at Ms. Craze and Mr McLaughlin to “Obey the Law”, giving the assumption that they were in violation of the law. This speaker left the meeting before it was adjourned.

#### Tree Work Report by Brian Townsend

The large willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) at the Municipal Center was removed. This week a large 30 ft. crape myrtle will be installed. It will match the one installed last year to replace a pine tree. Tree pruning (removal of dead branches, canopy thinning and raising the canopy) continues in East Greenbelt along Frankfort, Morrison Drive and Greenbrook Drive.

Brian continues to search for affordable sized trees to fill vacant areas. ACT suggested that Public Works consider obtaining small liners and grow them to planting size at Public Works.

Next Meeting. We decided to skip the December meeting. On January 15 Bob and Ethel will join Public Works staff and attend the Mid Atlantic Nursery Trade Show in Baltimore. The next ACT meeting will be on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015 at 7 PM at Public Works.

Adjourn at 9:30 PM

prepared by Ethel Dutky