

Advisory Committee on Trees – November 19, 2013

Present: Charles Jackman (chair), Brian Townsend (staff liaison), Bill Phelan (guest), Bob Trumbule (member), Ethel Dutky (recorder), Leanne Erwin (guest).

Call to order 7PM

Recent and Future Events

Charles reported that a tree tour was conducted on Oct.19 during the Fall Festival at Schrom Hills Park. Charles and Ethel led the tour for 3 citizens. We discussed not doing the Tree Tour in the fall due to the very small turnout. We may reserve the Tree Tour for Arbor Day. On October 26 there was a champion tree tour for Prince Georges County. Charles shared the big tree list, a very large list. Not all the trees were visited in a single day. Perhaps next year the ACT group should go on this tour

Bill Phelan suggested that ACT visit the USDA tree breeding lab/nursery (USDA South Farm, BARC-West) to see some of the new trees being investigated. We agreed this would be a useful field trip for spring or summer of 2014.

The draft copy of the Sustainable Land Care Policy document has been submitted to Cindy Murray and to Public Works. Brian explained that Public Works has put together a committee to review the document. Then it will be circulated other advisory boards and committees for their review. Bill advised that the Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA) provides a reliable outside source for pesticide information.

Changes in the Resolution that established the Advisory Committee on Trees

On November 25 City Council will likely consider our request to change the wording of the resolution to more accurately reflect the duties and activities of ACT.

Report from Charles on the Advisory Committee Chairs Meeting

This annual event gathers the chairs of all of the advisory committees and advisory boards. One topic discussed was to improve posting of dates of committee meetings on the city website. Charles will submit our meeting dates/time/location for ACT. Another issue was the procedure to make committee minutes available. Brian volunteered to inquire about this issue. Each Committee/Board has been asked to prepare a list/report on what the committee/board does including events sponsored, meeting frequency and criteria for new members. We agreed to come prepared to discuss this next meeting (in December).

Bob Snyder, chairperson of the Forest Preserve Advisory Board (FPRAB) has requested a meeting between ACT and FPRAB. We agree that this could be a useful meeting.

Brian showed us a copy of the "Policy and Procedures on Greenbelt Advisory Committees and Boards". Brian will provide all ACT members a copy to study.

Decline and Replacement of Roses on Southway

Bill Phelan noted that the established planting of red Champlain roses in the median of Southway are in decline and dying from the incurable virus disease Rose Rosette. Bill suggested that the diseased/dying roses should be pulled out and the median re-planted with American Elms. The cultivar 'New Harmony' is composed of all American Elm genes, and is highly disease resistant with an excellent form (vase shaped, arching). Another acceptable cultivar would be Ulmus 'Accolade'. Bill also suggested that some of the older 'Bradford' pears should be removed and replaced with American Elm cultivars. The American Elm is highly tolerant of difficult sites, salt and other site problems. Bill also suggested that a border of lily-turf (Liriope spp.) should be planted along medians and roadsides to protect tree root zones from salt splash. Perhaps ACT should prepare a report on the Southway site

with suggestions for more durable replacement for the failing trees and shrubs.

Brian Townsend Reports on Recent Events and Concerns

The new crape myrtle will be installed at the Municipal building on Friday, December 6. Eventually the large declining willow oak at the Municipal building will be removed, and another large crape myrtle will be installed to replace it.

Beavers are back in Buddy Attick Lake. At present the City policy on beavers is to co-exist with them. Public Works installs protection in the form of wire cages around the trunks of landscape trees. There have been complaints from some citizens about damage to landscape trees. There appear to be two beaver families settled in the lake. Brian provided an aerial map of the lake marked with the location of beaver lodges and other activity. Charles has also received a call from a concerned citizen regarding beaver damage to landscapes. Brian met with wildlife experts at DNR and shared with us information about beaver biology and how beavers improve the forest and lake ecosystems. Brian suggested that an education program should be developed for Greenbelt citizens on the topic of Beaver biology and management and prevention of damage to landscape trees. All ACT members agreed that this would be useful.

The Army Corps of Engineers has noticed some problems with the dam at Buddy Attick Park. No trees are allowed on the dam. Public works will remove all trees growing on the dam and monitor the area to keep it free of trees. The wire cages placed around the trees near the lake need to be monitored and replaced as the tree grows to prevent the tree being girdled by the cage. Another action advised by the Army Corps of Engineers is to clear some vegetation near the spillway. Muskrats are also returning to the lake and can cause damage to the lake banks and dam. Public Works will monitor the situation and propose action as needed.

Brian met with the Baltimore Washington Partners in Forest Stewardship, of which the City of Greenbelt is a member. They have done a mapping project for the region on wildlife hubs and corridors. This information will be put on the GIS system to aid in planning and development of the region to avoid development in important wildlife areas.

Status of City Street Tree Inventory

Brian reports that the first phase of the street tree inventory is done. The teams of staff and U.MD students have entered the data. Public Works has obtained funding for new computer equipment for the program. A lot of work still needs to be done, but a lot has been accomplished.

Adjourn 9:45 PM

Next meeting Tuesday December 17 at 7PM at Public Works.

Submitted by Ethel Dutky