

Advisory Committee on Trees - June 14, 2011

Present: Charles Jackman (chair), Mike Fox (substitute City liaison), Ethel Dutky, Bob Trumbule.

The meeting started at 5:30 PM. We met at the Public works building. Mike Fox led us on a field trip looking at recent tree work throughout Greenbelt.

Greenbelt East

We observed London Plane Trees in the process of being “raised”. That is, the lower branches are being removed to create a higher canopy. We observed a continuing problem of Lindens showing decline. Other Lindens (only a few) and some London Plane trees have a large number of sucker shoots coming from the base. These should be removed.

Shcrom Hills Park

The large longleaf pine is being irrigated during this hot, dry period. It looks good. We stopped and entered the woodland to examine some pines which had been uprooted during the winter and are still blocking the path. The plan is to cut them so they are resting on the ground and not hanging over the path. The trunks will be left to decay. The tops will be chipped or removed. We observed many plants showing drought stress. The trees planted on Arbor Day need extra irrigation as soon as possible.

Reminder – Ceremony for Greenbelt joining the Forest Stewardship Group.

There will be a ceremony including a tree planting to celebrate the City of Greenbelt officially becoming a member of the Baltimore-Washington Partnership for Forest Stewardship at 10 AM on June 23 (Thursday) in front of the Community Center. ACT will endeavor to have members attend.

Franklin Park plantings

The recently planted Muskogee Crape Myrtles and Hedge Maples are looking good. They have “Gator Bags” installed to keep the root balls moist during this critical period and protect them from drought injury.

We also looked at the area near a playground which was the site (in probably 2001) of the first Act Arbor Day Planting. The trees look healthy, and have grown well. These include a Wye Oak, some crape myrtles and some other trees and shrubs.

Buddy Attick Park Woodland

We viewed the area of devastation in the process of being cleaned up to prepare for re-planting. Mike estimated that about 300 trees were blown down by severe storms last year. Some were large. The plan is to leave many logs on the ground to rot in place and provide habitat for woodland reptiles and amphibians. The highly flammable twigs and brush have mostly been either chipped or removed to reduce the fire hazard. Planting will proceed as weather permits. One plan discussed in our previous meeting was to select a variety of native understory trees for re-planting the site. They will establish faster in the sunnier conditions. Then, allow the surrounding large forest trees (oaks,

hickories, beech, gums) to seed into the site. Extra attention will be needed to remove invasive exotics (such as Ailanthus, Lonicera species, Bittersweet, Multiflora Rose) during this period. ACT members volunteered to assist with the tedious hand removal required for this task.

Emerald Ash Borer issues

Bob shared with us that additional sites (in Howard, Allegany, and Anne Arundel Counties) have been found infested by Emerald Ash Borer. We suggest that the large, historic Ash trees within Greenbelt be put on a protective insecticide program. Several of these trees are state or county record trees. A systemic insecticide can be applied to specific valuable trees and provide excellent protection for one year.

Declining Crape Myrtles near Roosevelt Center and Swimming Pool/Fitness Center.

Mike said that the consensus is that the damage (extensive failure of large shoots to leaf out this spring) was caused by winter salt applications. Some portions that failed to leaf out on time are now showing signs of life. ACT suggests that these medians should be irrigated as much as possible. The water can do no harm, and will “wash out” the residual salt and may permit more of the plants to leaf out on damaged portions. Give the plants time to show signs of recovery before large portions are pruned out.

There are several areas in the parking lot medians where London Planes had been removed. ACT suggests consideration of re-planting these bare spots to provide shade for the parking area. Perhaps try London Plane again.

Approval of May 3 ACT minutes

We reviewed the May 3 minutes and approved with corrections.

Next Meeting

We will meet on Tuesday, July 19 at the Public Works building at 5:30 PM for another field trip.