

## **Advisory Committee on Trees – July 18, 2017**

Call to order 7:00 PM

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

Review minutes for June 20, accepted with corrections.

Old Business:

1 – Continue Discussion of the “Urban Forest Master Plan” (also called the “Tree Master Plan”).

We were sent digital copies of the document, so this discussion refers to this document.

Reading the discussion on benefits (pages 4, 5, 6) the text and tables do not agree and are confusing. We agree with the benefits listed and find table 3 (page 9) especially useful. We have concerns about table 5 (page 18). We find the comparisons confusing. This table does not substantiate the need for an increase in the City tree budget. Brian explained that tasks such as brush removal and leaf removal are lumped into the tree maintenance numbers.

ACT did not think that the tree diseases Sudden Oak Death (Phytophthora ramorum blight) and Oak Wilt are major threats to Maryland Forests. No concern was expressed about Bacterial Leaf Scorch of trees, a major emerging tree disease based on surveys of Maryland landscapes and forests.

We reviewed the section on Next Steps (page 20) and agree with most of the steps. However, on page 33 in the section on the update of the Tree Protection Ordinance, we find some of these may be difficult to enforce. ACT wonders how binding the suggestions for the future will be. ACT supports an increase in funding and staff for tree care.

In general we agree that the goals (in next steps) are achievable and workable. We are concerned that the proposed budget will limit reaching the short and long term goals.

2 – Sustainable Land Care Policy.

We reviewed the document and found serious problems with the section in Plant Care regarding the use of fertilizers. The city needs to abide by the State Nutrient Management laws. In many cases this can only be done using synthetic fertilizers due to the high levels of Phosphorus in most “organic” fertilizers such as compost and humus.

We had concerns about the Pest Management Section. We strongly object to placing “Northeast Organic Farming Association Standards” (aka NOFA) as the first choice above Integrated Pest Management Programs (aka IPM).

Overall we found the document well written, concise and useful. We understand that there will be further opportunities for review by all concerned Advisory Committees, and ACT plans to participate in these discussions.

New Business

1 – Damage to street trees during paving.

Several residents have expressed concerns to Public Works about severe damage to trees In East Greenbelt. Foliage is burnt in two strips across the canopy. ACT will visit the site at our next meeting to assess the damage and advise action.

Adjourn 9:50 PM

Next Meeting Tuesday, August 15 at 7 PM at Public Works.

Submitted by Ethel Dutky