

Advisory Committee on Trees – May 23, 2017

Call to order, 7:05 PM

Present: Brian Townsend (staff liaison), Charles Jackman (Chair), Ethel Dutky (recorder), Bob Trumbule (member), Erin Josephitis (Environmental Coordinator).

Minutes for April 18 reviewed and accepted with corrections.

Old Business

1 – Review Tree Master Plan Vision statements.

We reviewed the Vision Statement sent to us from Rachel Comte and the Vision Statement Act prepared. We combined language from both, as follows:

“Our vision is to develop a Tree Master Plan for streets and other public areas in the city of Greenbelt. Greenbelt's trees are an iconic feature of this historic community, creating an urban oasis that provides a high quality of life to residents. This plan will provide for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, and replanting of trees. The tree master plan will also foster the sustainability of Greenbelt's Urban forest. Our goal is to maintain and expand upon this legacy both today and for future generations.”

2 – May 6 tree planting event.

Erin reported that about 40 volunteers (adults and children) planted 5 (large B&B) trees and remediated approximately 1,000 square feet of compacted soil in the areas along Breezewood Drive. Sixteen yards of compost was applied. Connor presented an educational demonstration of how vegetation and increased organic matter reduce erosion and improve soil water retention. A class of Fire Department volunteers helped in this project. In addition, the “Earth Squad” picked up 35 pounds of litter including many cigarette butts. It was a very productive project with a good turnout of volunteers, especially considering it was a cold rainy day.

3 – Tree Planting by PEPCO to replace trees removed.

Brian reported that he prepared and submitted a list of trees and suppliers for the replacement trees. A total of 278 trees will be planted. Brian brought the tree list and detailed maps where each tree will be planted. Planting will start now, and continue in the fall. ACT expressed concern that Magnolias and Crape Myrtles do not do well if planted in the fall, and suggested that they be planted as soon as possible this spring, or if the stock does not arrive in time for spring planting, to delay until next spring.

Brian explained that PEPCO will not do any maintenance on these trees, so Public Works will need to hire summer labor to drive the water trucks and fill the “gator bags” to irrigate the plants during hot, dry weather. This irrigation task will be nearly 80 hours for each irrigation. During very hot weather the bags will need to be filled each week. During cooler periods with showers, the schedule can be extended to filling the bags at two week intervals. This extra care to keep the root balls moist is essential for survival of newly planted nursery stock. All of these tree will be entered into the Tree Inventory. The smallest size trees are 1 ¼ inch caliper while the larger species will be 2 inch caliper. Brian expects the trees to be planted by June 1.

New Business

1 – Size of the Advisory Committee on Trees.

Charles prepared a Report for City Council on our discussion and decision to remain at our present size of three members. We reviewed and discussed the Report and made a few amendments. Charles will send the Report to City Council.

2 – Significant Tree Tour on May 20.

Brian reported that 22 citizens went on the significant tree tour. This large turnout required an additional bus. We made the tour somewhat shorter, but had good active discussion at each stop. Bob explained about the “Mystery” periodical cicada emergence of cicadas that should be emerging in 2021, but are coming out four years early.

Next Meeting June 20 at Public Works.

Adjourn 9:40 PM

submitted by Ethel Dutky