

Advisory Committee on Trees – April 21, 2015

Call to order 7PM

present: Charles Jackman (chair), Bob Trumbule (member), Ethel Dutky (recorder), Brian Townsend (city liaison), Bill Phelan (guest and emeritus member).

Minutes for March 3 meeting were reviewed and approved with corrections.

Arbor Day Events on March 28.

Brian Townsend and Erin Josephitis did a fabulous job recruiting volunteers for the Arbor Day planting event on March 28 at Buddy Attick Park. Over 60 volunteers plus ACT members, 2 city council members and staff showed up to work. Erin organized a nice reception (coffee and bagels) at Public Works prior to the tree planting. Mayor Jordan read the Arbor Day Proclamation and accepted the Tree City banner. Activities performed from 10 AM until noon included planting trees and shrubs; installation of fencing to protect trees from beaver feeding; trimming English Ivy off of trees.

There was also a good crowd for the Tree tour (1 to 3 PM), filling one bus.

Tree Farm project for Public Works

There is a problem finding certain trees at an affordable price. One economical solution for this problem was suggested by Bill Phelan. The trees could be bought as liners (small in size) and planted at Public Works for several years to grow into the 2 inch caliper size needed for installation on Greenbelt streets and parks. ACT is in favor of this idea. Brian will explore possible locations for this project and prepare justification for funding this in the next budget cycle.

Street Tree Inventory

We discussed the need to verify the data entered into the Street Tree Inventory by volunteers. The inventory also needs to show “skips” to be useful to help guide purchase of replacement trees. Brian will discuss with Erin Josephitis how to train ACT members and Public Works staff to use the inventory. ACT members are willing to help with checking for errors by walking the site.

Old salt damage to plantings in Roosevelt Center

The large crape myrtles and some of the plane trees in island plantings at the Roosevelt center are showing a failure to recover from injury caused by road salt in winter 2012-2013. Several actions can help these damaged plants recover. Bill suggested that Gypsum could be applied as a top dressing or in holes drilled in the root zone. Bill also advised that application of a product called Roots PHC (a mixture of both Ecto- and VAM mycorrhizal fungi plus rhizosphere bacteria) can help repair damaged roots by assisting root absorption of water and minerals. It could be applied along with the gypsum. During dry weather, the soil should be irrigated to flush away salt residue. The crape myrtles should be heavily “renewal pruned” to stimulate more vigorous growth and flowering. This is a big hand pruning job to remove the weak spindly top growth. One section should be pruned as an experiment to demonstrate how well it works and justify pruning the rest of the damaged plants. ACT strongly supports this strategy to help these damaged plants.

Ash Tree Protection

Brian told us that Bartlett Tree Experts will be treating the two large historic Ash trees to protect them from Emerald Ash borer.

Message from Erin Josephitis (MD Volunteer Coordinator)

Thanks for the tree tour on Arbor Day. ACT is invited to participate in a Bio Blitz on Friday,

May 22, to identify flora and fauna.

Earth Day, Saturday, April 18

Erin reports that there was a good turnout of 51 volunteers and 5 city employees to do a cleanup of Indian Creek Watershed. Collected were 25 large trash bags of recyclable materials; 23 bags of trash and 757 pounds of bulk trash. Thanks to the Alice Ferguson Foundation, the City of Greenbelt, the Chesapeake Education , Arts and Research Society (CHEARS) and Tru Green for their support.

Upcoming events

The Public Works Open House will take place all day Saturday, May 16, with lunch. It coincides with the “Celebration of Spring” at Springhill Lake.

Next year's Tree Tour.

Some corrections are needed for the Tree Guide. Another large Eastern Red Cedar should replace the one on the tour. We should consider having the tour a little later in spring, perhaps as part of Earth Day.

Update on PEPCO tree pruning/line clearing

Brian reports that the meeting to review the PEPCO plans for additional tree removal/pruning has been delayed for about a month. ACT is still interested in participating in review of the planned tree removals.

Next ACT meeting will be Tuesday, May 19 at Public Works.

Adjourn 9:15 PM

submitted by Ethel Dutky