

Advisory Committee on Trees – December 20, 2011

Present: Charles Jackman (chair), Ethel Dutky (recorder), Robert Trumbule, Lesley Riddle (City liaison). Meeting started at 7PM at the New Deal Cafe.

Minutes for September and November

Minutes were reviewed and approved with corrections.

Modification to ACT Proclamation

City Council reported that they have received the document from ACT with the revised wording for the ACT Proclamation. City Council will respond to Charles (ACT chair) after further consideration.

Alternatives to rock salt for ice melt in the Roosevelt Center area.

Charles prepared a document advising restricting use of rock salt in the Roosevelt Center area. Lesley reported that soil tests from the planting beds where several London Plane trees died (in Roosevelt Center) showed very high sodium levels. This supports the theory that these trees were damaged by rock salt. ACT suggested that Charles incorporate this soil test evidence in the ACT document suggesting restriction on use of rock salt and suggesting alternative ice melt products for use in Roosevelt Center this winter. We had an active discussion on ice melt alternatives and the possibility that future regulations (perhaps under clean water regulations) will require less usage of rock salt due to the ecological and biological impacts from salt runoff.

Lesley will meet with City Manager Mike McLaughlin and discuss this issue. Additional equipment may be required to utilize alternative ice melt methods such as pre-treatment of pavement with brine prior to precipitation.

Willow Oak in decline

Lesley requested in August that ACT look at a very large willow oak in park next to the Library/Community Center parking. ACT advised removal due to extensive decay and decline. The tree has not yet been removed, but will be taken down soon.

Buddy Attick Park repairs/renovation work in picnic area.

Lesley reported that the picnic area has been closed for renovation and repairs and the work has started. Eroded areas will be protected using rock and river stone and plantings. All of the picnic tables have been removed during this work.

Master Plan for Buddy Attick Park.

Lesley will be working on this document through the winter. She will also be engaged in finding and applying for grant funding for some improvements.

Earth Day 2012

Earth Day events will include planting rain gardens, and beautification projects at the Springhill Lake Recreation Center. ACT members are encouraged to participate. Earth Day 2012 will be on Saturday, April 21. Planting will start at 2PM.

Tree work in Franklin Park continues

Lesley reports that grant that supported renovation of street tree planting and pruning this past year in Franklin Park along Springhill Drive has been renewed for 2012. Similar removal of dangerous trees, thinning of canopy, raising canopy and replacement with Hedge Maples and Crape Myrtles will

be done in 2012.

Bad Pruning on trees on Parkway

Lesley will follow up with a letter or meeting with the management of the Parkway apartments to express our concern about the very heavy pruning of the old Hawthorns, and advise on more acceptable maintenance practices. The Hawthorns were planted in the early years of Greenbelt, but although they function as street trees, they are not on City land. We hope to encourage better pruning practices.

New Pests

Bob Trumbule reported that he was asked to diagnose pest damage (defoliation, decline) on Arrowwood Viburnums installed in 2009 and 2010. The plants came from the "Treemendous Trees" program. The pest was identified as the two banded Japanese weevil. This insect feeds as a larva on the roots of many landscape plants (herbaceous perennials, shrubs and trees); the adult insects feed on the foliage of these plants, producing small "notches" in the leaf margin. These insects cannot fly, so they spread very slowly and take years to develop to damaging levels. Severe damage on recently installed landscape plants indicates that the planting stock was infested. Eradication of this pest, once established is difficult due to its wide host range and the fact that the larvae are in the soil.

Another new pest detected in Maryland (but not yet in Greenbelt) is the Japanese Cedar Longhorned Beetle. For details on biology and pictures of adult and larval stages, see the USDA Pest Alert at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/Ipa/pubs/jclbpale.pdf> . The Maryland Department of Agriculture identified this pest causing top dieback on Cryptomeria in the landscape and is now conducting tracebacks and surveys for this new exotic pest. Unlike many beetles in the Cerambycid family which attack stressed and dying plants, this pest is attracted to healthy trees. It can attack many conifers including junipers and arborvitae. If this pest becomes established in our region, it will have abundant native plants to infest and build up to damaging levels.

MANTS coming in January

Bob Trumbule reminded us that the Maryland Nursery Trade Show will be held in Baltimore at the Convention Center in the second week of January. Lesley will arrange for any ACT member that is able to attend one day. We will carpool from Greenbelt. We decided to attend on Thursday, January 12. This field trip to the MANTS trade show in Baltimore will be considered the January ACT meeting.

Next ACT Meeting will be February 7 at the New Deal Cafe at 7 PM.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55PM.

Submitted by Ethel Dutky