

Advisory Committee for Trees – Minutes for April 6, 2010

In attendance: Charles Jackman, Bob Trumbule, Ethel Dutky, Lesley Riddle, Bill Orleans (visitor)

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM

Mr Bill Orleans had a concern to discuss with ACT. He wanted to know if the work plan for tree planting, pruning and removals along Springhill Drive was presented to and discussed with the “Greenbelt West Residents Association” and with ACT? Lesley Riddle addressed the question. Yes, the proposal was discussed with ACT prior to the presentation to City Council. There was no meeting with the “Greenbelt West Residents Association” aka “Springhill Lake Residents Association” because this group is defunct and has not met in several years. ACT members discussed the proposed work planned for the Springhill Drive area. The goals include improved penetration of light (daylight and street light) through tree canopy, removal of declining trees, re-planting with smaller ornamentals (such as Crape Myrtle and Amur Maple) more suitable to the site. Benefits include improved safety and attractiveness of the site. Mr. Orleans stated that he was satisfied that his questions had been answered and excused himself from the meeting.

Labor Day Festival Committee concerns about the ACT Report to city Council (Jan 15, 2009) regarding concerns about damage to trees by labor Day Festival activities (Carnival Rides, vehicle movement and parking) in the mall area between the Library and the Community Center on Crescent Drive. ACT met with the Labor Day Festival Committee on March 24. We reached agreement on several actions that should help prevent damage to the trees and protect the tree root zones. ACT reviewed a summary of the meeting and approved it. Charles Jackman will send a copy of the report to Cindy Murray (Greenbelt City Council) and to Linda Ivy (Labor Day Festival Committee Chair).

Further discussion about the impact of the labor Day Festival on the city included concerns about the high costs that fall on Public Works to build and set up booths, pay overtime wages and clean up after the event. Lesley suggested that an analysis of cost/benefit for the event would be useful. Lesley will meet with Linda Ivy for further discussions on Thursday, April 8 at 11 AM. Ethel Dutky agreed to attend the meeting (but was unable to do so).

Tree City USA Growth Award to Greenbelt.

Charles and Lesley explained that Greenbelt has been awarded recognition for its commitment to excellence in planning and management of its Urban Forest. This includes setting standards and specifications for tree care and maintenance of wildlife habitat; creation of the position of Professional Tree manager; Environmental improvement and higher levels of tree care. The Tree City USA program is sponsored in cooperation with the Arbor Day Foundation, the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service.

Earth Day and Arbor Day Activities

Act discussed the planned Earth Day and Arbor Day activities planned for Saturday, April 24 at Buddy Attick Park. There will be a tree planting and construction of a small Rain Garden in the area near the new restrooms at 10AM. A Nature Walk/Tour will follow at 11AM. ACT discussed trees to be planted in the area cleared during construction of the new Public Works building. Suggestions include: Shadblow (*Amelanchier canadensis*); Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea* and other species and cultivars); Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*); Chestnut Oak (*Quercus prinus*); Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*); Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*, and/or *H. vernalis*); and Eastern Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*). These native plants should thrive in this site which has a moist, somewhat heavy soil. They provide food for wildlife, attractive fall foliage and flowers. Lesley will obtain the plants. There will be a meeting with City Council Monday, April 12 about this event.

Meeting of Advisory Board and Advisory Committee Chairs

Charles reported on his meeting on March 15 of Advisory Committee/Advisory Board Chairs with City Council. There was discussion about referrals of issues to Advisory Committees and Boards (AC-AB) and the procedures for AC/AB to report back to the City Council. There was consensus that improvements should be made to this process. A Report Tracking form was presented for consideration. It was mentioned that every AC/AB is required to send copies of their minutes to the City Council. Charles inquired about the request from City Council several months ago to add additional members to ACT. It turns out that an ACT member had mentioned that it would be useful to add additional members to ACT during his re-appointment process. ACT agreed that we could benefit from one or two more members with a commitment to tree issues.

City Ordinance on Trees

The issue of a City Ordinance on Trees was brought up as an outstanding referral. We agreed that it is not feasible to try to enforce a City Ordinance on Trees with our present staff and budget. ACT advises that although an ordinance could be an excellent tool for improvement of tree care, having regulations that are not enforced is not useful. Charles will bring us up to date on this issue by sending us copies of the Feb 7, 2003 Memo on this topic submitted to City Council.

Ethel Dutky invited ACT to have a summer meeting at the Community of Scientists Cliffs in Calvert County to see the many State Record and Champion Trees in the community. Ethel would like to donate cuttings from the MD State Champion *Cyrilla racemiflora* (aka Swamp Cyrilla, Swamp Titi, Leatherwood) located in her garden. This small native tree or large shrub (to 15 to 20 feet) would be a nice addition to the Greenbelt landscape. It is native to swampy sites, and adapts well to urban sites. It flowers in late summer, is semi-evergreen and has a bright red fall color.

We will meet again on Tuesday, May 4 at 6 PM at Public Works. Our meeting will consist of a tour of areas in Greenbelt with interesting tree projects and problems.
Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM