

Advisory Committee on Trees meeting on December 14, 2010

Present: Charles Jackman (chair), Lesley Riddle (City liaison), Ethel Dutky, Bob Trumbule

Meeting started at 7:30 PM in the Public works Conference Room.

The minutes from October 18 were read. Corrections included: 1 - deletion of the entire paragraph about "Possible Unusual Introduction of Oak Wilt fungus disease in nursery stock" because the trees in question were found to be free of the oak wilt fungus. Damage was due to insect pests and neglect. And 2 - Correct the spelling of Mathew Street to have only one "t" in Mathew. Charles moved to approve the minutes with these corrections. Minutes approved.

Report from Lesley Riddle

Most of the removals mentioned in Oct 18 meeting have been accomplished. Stream Valley pruning and storm clean-up was done by Adirondack Tree Inc. They also did more pruning on the declining Willow Oak at the Municipal Building on Crescent Road. Work will continue throughout the winter on storm damage clean-up. A special re-evaluation of trees in all playgrounds will be performed from a safety perspective. The City is doing a renovation of the playground at McDonald Field. Lesley requested that ACT schedule a spring workshop/afternoon tour of the city playgrounds to evaluate the large trees. Work continues on storm damage from the series of severe summer microburst storms. Another unusually strong storm came through Greenbelt in November. Extensive areas of wind damage to large trees were seen on both city and private property.

We discussed the problem in coming years of replacement of damaged tree canopy. Concerns have been expressed to Lesley by City Manager Mike McLaughlin that there is a perception that there has been a lot of tree removal and not enough trees planting. Lesley has submitted a formula for tree replacement where one new tree would be planted for every 10 feet of canopy lost. Many dangerous trees have been removed, but more remains to be done during the winter.

Two stumps were removed along Mathew St. In this area it was found by digging out the dead and dying trees that many had been improperly planted. The nursery stock had been planted without removal of the plastic "burlap" root ball wrapping. This material will not rot away, so it restricts the growth of the roots into the site. This explains the failure of these trees. The soil is also very poor in much of this area. The re-planting plan will rely on using a more diverse mixture of tree species. Removal of failing trees will continue. Buried utilities in the planting islands inhibit efforts to do extensive soil amendment. On the positive side, the planting plan started in 2010 in Empirium Village (now re-named Franklin Park) has been completed.

Bob mentioned ACT participation in development of an extensive planting plan for the Hanover Road area more than 5 years ago (this pre-dates Lesley and Ethel's involvement in ACT). ACT should look this up and review it as a basis for suggestions for future plantings. This area runs into the Ora Glen Drive pond area. Discussion of the

jurisdiction for this area revealed that this is a county park, not a Greenbelt City park, so the county will do the work.

Lesley has applied to take the International Arborist exam. Lesley is now a member of the Mid-Atlantic ISA Board and recently attended her first board meeting.

Beavers in Buddy Attick Lake

Lesley related the beaver situation in Buddy Attick Park. At least one beaver is now established in the lake. There have been a number of questions/complaints from homeowners near the lake about beaver activity damaging landscape plants. The beaver activity has resulted in more water in the fore-bay area (near St Hugh's) which is beneficial to control storm water and transfer of silt and debris into the lake. ACT supports acceptance of beavers as an interesting and beneficial part of our forest ecology.

New Business and Reports

Lesley and Ethel attended a one day conference on Tree issues in the Baltimore Washington corridor held at the Patuxent Wildlife Refuge Visitor's Center. The conference was sponsored by the Baltimore-Washington Partnership for Forest Stewardship, an entity composed of diverse partners including the USDA Beltsville Agricultural Research Center; US Army Fort George G. Meade; NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center; USFWS Patuxent Research Refuge. Other Greenbelt people attending included members of the Forest Preserve Advisory Board. The meeting was very informative. Topics included Threats to Forest Ecosystems; Urban Heat Islands and Human Health; Assessing Ecological Systems in Urban Areas; Urban Forest Management; and other topics related to restoration of Forest Ecosystems in the Baltimore-Washington corridor. We learned about programs which support tree planting and wildlife habitat restoration projects. Greenbelt has the highest tree canopy coverage of any town in the region (over 65%).

Lesley suggests that ACT work with the Forest Preserve group to encourage plans for invasive species management in the Forest Preserve. Volunteers could be trained to do some work days. Activities could include tree planting, weed removal, and other projects.

Ethel shared an idea from the GHI Woodlands Committee to create/improve a park to celebrate Greenbelt's 75th Anniversary. ACT supports cooperation between the city and GHI on such a new park.

At our next meeting Lesley suggested that we get to work on development of a list of preferred street trees. Also, we should talk more in depth about recruitment of volunteers and other educational and outreach programs. One site for a city/GHI sponsored project would be the area adjacent to the COOP Supermarket where there are some declining cherries. Water from the COOP roof is discharged into this small area. This excessive water is killing the cherries. Perhaps a rain garden would be a good project to provide a solution for this problem area.

Lesley suggests that we plan several field trips for Spring 2011. One should focus on playground trees; another should tour one or more parks; another could examine and make suggestions for the Callery Pear plantings in decline along Crescent Road. We discussed replacement for the Callery Pears. It was agreed that disease-resistant crab

apples would be a possible good choice. Crab apple was one ornamental tree included in the original plans for historic old Greenbelt. Improved cultivated varieties (pest and disease resistant) would be sturdy and attractive. Bob requested that we take some time to tour storm damage in the Woodland Hills Park (caused by 2010 summer storms).

Next meeting will be Jan 18.

We adjourned at about 9 PM