

Advisory Committee on Trees, meeting October 18, 2010

Present: members Charles Jackman; Ethel Dutky; Bob Trumbule; guest Bill Phelan; City liaison Lesley Riddle.

Meeting started at 7:30 PM in the Public Works conference room.

Minutes from the August meeting were read and approved with minor corrections: Schrom has only one "m".

The September meeting, scheduled for September 28 was cancelled.

Report from Lesley Riddle

Due to storm damage, there have been a number of pruning and tree removals. In Stream Valley Park several large dead trees were removed: one Sweet Gum (*Liquidamber styraciflua*); one Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*); one Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*). Because all of these trees were dead, ACT was not notified prior to removal. Crown elevation (pruning to remove lower branches and open the canopy to permit better light penetration and improve visibility) was done on a number of trees along the paths. Our contact person for The Care of Trees, Melissa Lawler, has resigned. The replacement person has been unresponsive to requests for pruning needs. In several cases it took as long as three weeks to obtain a response to Public Works' request for safety pruning. This is not acceptable. Lesley has contacted several tree companies to find a replacement for Care of Trees. Adirondack Tree Care submitted a good proposal, so they were selected to perform much of the storm damage work in Stream Valley and today (10/18/10) they removed dead and damaged wood from the large declining willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) at the Municipal Building.

The two large dead chestnut oaks (*Quercus muehlenbergii*) in the park/playground at Ridge Rd. and Lastner Lane will be removed soon.

Lesley and Mike Fox did a detailed "drive around" and have made an extensive list of damaged and dangerous trees. Work is in progress to remove the most dangerous trees first. Lesley requests that ACT begin work on a list of preferred replacement trees. Ethel contributed a Moon Nursery catalog which has useful diagrams showing branch patterns, shape, mature height and spread of all trees in stock. Lesley will request catalogs from additional nurseries. During their "drive around" Mike and Lesley took note of the Lindens on Mathew St. (Greenbelt East). Soil tests confirm very low cation exchange and very high calcium and high pH. The plan is to remove the worst trees, then amend the soil, and replace with new Lindens. This is a difficult site due to buried utility lines which limits extensive digging to allow for replacement of the poor soil. Planting is continuing in Empirian Village to complete the improvements in street plantings.

Lesley announced an upcoming stewardship workshop on October 28. This event is sponsored by the Baltimore-Washington Partnership for Urban Forest Stewardship to develop plans for a contiguous riparian Forest. Sponsors/participants include Ft. Meade, NASA, BARC, The University of Maryland and others. The title of this workshop is "Threats to Urban Forest Ecosystems".

Discussion about the declining large willow oak at the Municipal Building

Factors believed to have contributed to the decline of this large tree include: 1) replacement of the sidewalk leading to the building entrance; and 2) a possible lightning strike in 2009. Bill Phelan suggests that when/if the tree is scheduled to be removed, consider taking the trunk out in long enough lengths that it can be taken to a sawmill. Willow oaks often have beautiful wood grain, so the lumber would be valuable. Bill also suggested that the site would be desirable for a memorial tree. ACT should develop a plan for the tree species/cultivars for replacement. ACT should provide City Council with an Advisory Committee Report suggesting a plan for the landscape. It is unlikely that a replacement tree should go into the same spot. Some ideas for possible replacement include Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) cultivars and European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) cultivars.

Replacement of declining “Christmas Tree” at the Community Center.

A Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) was planted to replace the damaged conifer at the Community Center. This tree will be decorated each winter.

Discussion about hazard trees

Lesley informed us that PEPCO is adopting a new policy of much more extensive tree removal near power lines. This is not being done (yet) in Greenbelt, but it may be useful to confer with PEPCO to determine if there are plans to greatly widen power line right of ways within Greenbelt.

Next Meeting

The next ACT meeting is scheduled for November 30 at 7:30 PM at the Public Works building.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM