

CCV Arbor Committee
Minutes
Meeting 7/17/08
At 4020 Everett Street

The meeting convened at 8:08 pm. Rachel Ritvo, Chair, Marcia Keppel, Jule Crider were present.

Absent: Celeste Park, Marty White and Jack White

The minutes of 6/12/08 meeting were reviewed and accepted without changes.

Report from June 18 Council Meeting: Rachel reported to the committee regarding the items she had taken to council: the picnic, the census at 4230 Everett, the draft Master Plan and Block by Block Planting Suggestions, and changing the committee name back to Arbor Committee. The Council approved the name change. They decided re: census that it is best for us to continue to focus on ROW trees. Issues of preserving specific trees on private property is not a topic the town wishes to undertake at this time. The Council plans to study the Master Plan.

Report from the July 16 Council Meeting: Rachel reported that tree related items at the Council meeting included: a report by Peter Roman on a drive-around with Tom Law and the State Forester. There is a split Maple at 4101 Franklin Street. The cost to keep it going is close to cost of removal and then would mount. The Council agreed to removal. Peter Roman recommended moving the sidewalk on Summit Ave. at the Myersberg/D'Albora house to give the zelkova more room. Council approved this change. Rachel informed council and committee that this was a change that Phil Normandy had recommended when Chandler Wiegand was council member for the trees.

New Business at the council meeting was the database for the trees. CPJ had given council some suggestions for what might be in the database. Rachel had not seen these before the meeting and was not prepared to comment. Council dismissed some items. Rachel couldn't remember if any were added. The council was concerned that data in the database might cause liability for the town. Peter and Jana would handle getting back to CPJ.

At the conclusion of the council meeting it was announced that the council will hold a work session on the Master Plan for ROW Trees on Monday, August 25th. Rachel will be out of town that day. The council decided that they will hold a second session with the consulting arborist and the committee to ask the questions that get raised at the work session. Jule and Marcia will each keep August 25th on their calendars and hopefully one will be able to sit in so we can understand the council process and prepare for the meeting with consultants.

The discussion continued regarding the town's use of consultants such as the street lighting consultant and the lawyer. The town arborist's role is not identical to either but is more a continuous role than the street light consultant and thus more like the lawyer. A consulting arborist would have advice to give several times per year. While the maintenance arborist, currently Tom Law, focuses tree by tree, the consulting arborist oversees the design and health of the town's trees as an aggregate. This role is conceptually new for the council and it will take an effort to have it recognized and seriously considered.

Database: All three members present were concerned that this very expensive database will not be adequately designed to use its expensive features effectively. The committee wondered how to encourage the council to have the arborists, Tom Law and Phil Normandy, give input into the design of the database. It would seem important to know what sort of reports will be needed if we are to have the database planned appropriately. All members are concerned that this expensive database will not be anymore useful than a much less expensive spreadsheet. Rachel agreed to call members of council and suggest that consideration be given to having Phil consult on the database and Tom Law also if possible.

Discussion of Process: Committee members were concerned that the communication within the tree team (Council, Councilmember for trees, town administrator, Arbor Committee and our arborists) is breaking down. It was decided that having the council member for trees attend committee meetings several times per year is important to keep the team working as a team. Peter Roman will be asked to attend the next committee meeting. August 14th is first suggested date, August 13th as second date.

Pruning, watering and other maintenance: Rachel clarified with Peter Roman that Myers & Law will only water in the event of a drought. Peter would like the committee to organize the placement of gators on the newly planted trees and enlist as many homeowners as possible to water the trees. Rachel had asked Peter for written guidelines. He remembers that some guidelines were written for homeowners back in 2003. He also said he will get information from Tom Law. He has not yet given Rachel permission to use any of Phil Normandy's time for guidance on maintenance. Jule will find the old instructions and the committee will recommend that both Tom and Phil comment on it by email if possible.

Rachel provided Marcia with a list of the trees planted Fall 2007 and Spring 2008. She will remove gators from any other trees and will ascertain whether any trees on these two lists already have gators. She will let Peter and Rachel know how many gators are needed. Once instructions for homeowners are clear they will be contacted to determine if any are unable to help with watering.

The following questions were raised:

1. Do trees planted in the fall need gator bags and watering? If yes, are these placed in the fall or the spring? Does the amount of spring rain determine this year by year or is there one answer for all years?
2. What is the proper use of the gator bag? How does a homeowner know if it is functioning properly?
3. Anything else homeowners need to do?

CCV Picnic: Marty White had emailed 6 powerpoint slides for display at the picnic. The committee worked on edits. Marcia agreed to forward the edits to Marty. Rachel will email Marty re date (Sept. 28th) and contact person Suzanne Scarff, 4201 Franklin, 301 942 0169.

The next meeting will depend on Peter Roman's availability. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.