

CCV Tree Committee

Minutes

Meeting 4/3/08

At 4020 Everett Street

The meeting convened at 8:15 pm. Rachel Ritvo, Chair, Marcia Keppel, and Jule Crider were present.

Absent: Marty and Jack White, Celeste Parks.

The minutes of the 2/14/08 meeting were reviewed and accepted. The relevant minutes from Rachel Ritvo's report to the CCV Council on March 26th were reviewed.

Responses to letters notifying residents of spring planting: Jule Crider noted that one recipient had commented to her on the cost of the certified letters (\$5.25 per letter). Of the 18 letters sent 4 resulted in communications from the recipient. There was also an email from a homeowner who was not scheduled to receive a tree pointing out that they have two private trees abutting the ROW and would not want a ROW tree as well. Rachel confirmed that our arborist concurs. One homeowner welcomed the tree but wished to discuss choice of the variety to be planted. Three homeowners requested not to have trees planted. One because they had placed a pump in the ROW and feared the roots would interfere. One cited the fact that the trees had been declined from the developer and they bought the house because it didn't have trees. One felt the tree that had been removed a year earlier by the town was ugly, its roots interfered with their lawn, and the branches interfered with the utility wires. This homeowner was unaware that the trees belonged to CCV and thought that PEPCO or the county had removed the tree.

The committee discussed the need to increase public understanding of the ROW and the town's role in maintaining trees there. Action Item: Marcia Keppel volunteered to research the concept of a Right of Way as well as reviewing the definition given by Mr. Podolsky from the December 2007 council meeting. ("The town manages and maintains the public right of way in trust for the public. The abutting property owner owns the land under the right of way below the amenities installed and maintained for the public. The right of way is 50 feet wide.") She will report back to the committee.

The committee felt that the town should not allow homeowners to veto the replacement of trees that were removed by the town. There is a strong public interest in maintaining the ROW trees as they have traditionally been planted in Chevy Chase View

Where there is no history of a tree having been in the ROW and the homeowner has made significant plantings that might be disrupted by the planting of a tree even though they would not make the site unsuitable from the point of view of the health of the ROW tree the committee recommends that the planting be placed on a Postponed Plantings List. This list would be revisited periodically and particularly at such time as the property changes ownership or undergoes major renovation.

Regarding impediments placed in the ROW by homeowners, Rachel expressed concern that these be recorded on the town database. There does not seem to be any process at this time for doing so. The committee wondered whether this would require action by Council. Should the town be given notice before impediments are placed in ROW?

Jule brought to the committee's attention that Garrett Park places a sign on ROW trees that are to be removed giving the neighborhood notice. Rachel had heard from Phil Normandy that an alert towns person in Garrett Park had notified authorities when the wrong tree was tagged. The committee has not received any take down recommendations from Myers and Law or Phil Normandy but could consider this procedure in the future.

Action Item: Rachel will prepare a recommendation for Council. As Rachel will not be able to attend the next council meeting Jule and Marcia will present the recommendations to council.

Tree Database: Rachel shared with the committee the email from Steve Jones to Jana Coe of March 24th describing the product that CPJ offers to add to the Town's GIS database to maintain the tree inventory. Jule asked whether the product offered by CPJ could export and import data to other programs? The committee brainstormed how the database might be used beyond simply marking where trees are and when they were planted. For instance would it be possible to track maintenance costs for particular trees?

Budget: Rachel pointed out that a budget meeting will precede the next council meeting. Her preference as Chair of the Tree Committee is to leave budgeting in the hands of the Councilmember for trees. (Rachel is not good with numbers.) Jule pointed out that the effects of last summer's drought are likely to be felt by some of our older or stressed trees so we may be losing more ROW trees and need to be prepared to replace them. This may effect budgeting.

Master Plan Development: Rachel reported that Phil Normandy has all the information he needs to give us a street-by-street recommendations for planting but has not sent it yet. Discussion focused on how to convey both the environmental and aesthetic value of Chevy Chase Views traditional urban tree plan. Rachel shared "Protecting Cultural Landscapes" #36 Preservation Briefs from the Department of the Interior written by renowned landscape

preservationist, Charles Birnbaum. The committee will review this document as well as the materials provided by Marti Mitchell from the Maryland Municipal League. A time-line is to work on drafting the Master Plan in late May and June hopefully to present a draft to the council in June and to the community over the summer. Action Item: Jule and Rachel will schedule a time to begin drafting plan.

Public Outreach: Marty and Jack were not present to report whether any progress was made in designing an arborist event. Jule suggested that perhaps we were not ready to undertake such an event. She felt that homeowners are learning more about our ROW trees from the council meeting minutes. The town picnic in the fall is a time when the whole community gathers. The committee could host an information table at the town picnic. Jule and Rachel were particularly eager to find a way to share with the town information from the town archives. Rachel expressed concern that the documents not be lost or damaged. Perhaps photocopies would be used. Action item: Council will be asked for support of bringing informational material to the community picnic.

The next meeting was scheduled for May 1, 2008 at 8 pm.
The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Minutes submitted by Rachel Ritvo.