



**AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR GREENSPACE
REGULAR MEETING**

**April 12, 2016
7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

Members present: Brad Jones
Dee Merriam
Jennifer Pindyck
David Sacks

Members absent: Steve Sanchez

Item No. 1 Meeting Called to Order

Item No. 2 Adoption of Agenda

Item No. 3 Review of Tree Canopy Report

A preliminary summary of the Tree Canopy Study findings, from Mike Edelson at Interdev, had been emailed Dee Merriam and forwarded to the Committee members. He indicated that there was essentially no change in the City's total amount of canopy cover between 2009 and 2015 (53.5% in 2009 versus 54.0% in 2015). A full Report will be submitted to the City soon, and Interdev can make a presentation to the BOMC in May, if desired.

Item No. 4 Discussion of Draft Tree Ordinance

The Committee went through the draft ordinance one final time and agreed on final details of wording so that it can be passed to the BOMC.

- "Specimen" trees will be defined as healthy trees 36" DBH (if pines), or 30" (all trees other than pines).
- Applicability to properties "pending sale" or "recently sold" was deleted.
- Restrictions relative to "boundary trees" were deleted.
- Other minor word-smithing and corrections were made.

It was agreed the following should be added:

- A 1-page overview/summary explaining in plain language what the ordinance does and does not do.
- Typical site plan sketches.
- Sample forms.
- Standard tree protection details.

It was also discussed that the Committee should recommend to the BOMC that the City pursue:

- Revising the Commercial district's Tree Ordinance
- Updating its public works standards/streetscape standards to better accommodate trees over the long term (based on latest/recent research and best practices).

Item No. 5 Review of Acceptable Trees & Canopy Sizes for Ordinance

Brad Jones had prepared a list indicating certain tree species to be counted as providing 500 square feet of canopy (for purposes of applicants submitting a "tree replacement/conservation plan" as called for in the draft ordinance), and other species to be counted at 300 square feet. The list was drawn from the City's approved tree list. Other species not listed would also be allowed, subject to the approval of a City tree official or plan reviewer. The Committee endorsed the list.

Item No. 6 Potential Next Tasks for the Committee

The Committee discussed completing its site visits of all of the City-owned open space within the next couple of months, and reporting back to the BOMC with our observations and ideas about ways that the City can get the most public benefit out of these greenspaces.

The Committee members also discussed that some kind of overview or assessment of the recreational needs and preferences of Avondale residents would be worthwhile. Jennifer Pindyck noted the shortage of flat open areas for informal (or organized) active play for older kids, and that many areas of the city do not have a park or playground within easy walking distance. Every City resident should be able to walk to a park of some sort. The Committee discussed how existing City-owned properties and possibly other undeveloped lands (such as stream buffers and easements) probably offer significant opportunities to address some of these needs. Also, that other publicly-owned properties such as Avondale Elementary School should be considered - perhaps weekend usage of its open space could be negotiated. Helping the City to develop its ideas about greenspace in the redeveloped downtown was also mentioned.

Item No. 7 April 23rd Site Visit

The site walk will begin at the Kensington/Berkeley pocket park at 12:30. The Committee estimated taking two hours to review this site and the nearby pocket park between Kensington Road and Covington Highway. Brad Jones will let the City know about this, and arrange for access. He will also suggest that the City send out letters to abutting property owners, let them know when the Committee will be there to look at these sites, and that we will be happy to gain any input from property owners about what they think of the space and how it could be used, or not used.

Item No. 8 General Discussion

No topics other than the above were raised by the Committee.

Item No. 9 Public Comment

Lisa Shortell (6 Clarendon Pl.) stated that the Committee deserved kudos for completing the recommended draft tree ordinance: it was obviously a lot of hard work and the Committee did a great job, and she hopes the public receives it positively. Regarding other greenspace, Lisa also suggested that improved oversight of Willis Park would be very beneficial and that perhaps that is something the Committee could look at. A group of park neighbors have been reaching out to the BOMC and will be meeting several times with BOMC members after the park opens. The renovations will be a huge improvement, however some gaps or concerns remain, e.g.,:

- Some park rules (e.g., hours, pavilion usage) are inconsistent when City ordinances from Municode are compared to other City documents such as applications to rent the pavilion;
- Since it is a small park serving the whole city, will there be any limitations on programming? There may be safety issues such as possible conflicts when the field is in use for lacrosse, while people are walking immediately adjacent on the paths.
- Safety concerns also re: charcoal grills that can be brought into the park: what requirements are in place to make sure hot coals are safely disposed of?
- Neighbors have safety/security concerns if the gate is not locked at end of day. There have been incidents of vandalism in the past.
- Will commercial activities be allowed in the park without limit?

Dee Merriam stated that it was good that members of the BOMC were going to be meeting with neighbors around the park. Dee noted that in her years as a park planner for the County, the Department always made sure to get a lot of input from neighbors abutting a park site, as they typically had valuable and unique insights about park issues relative to programming, maintenance, security, etc.

Item No. 10

Adjournment at 9:00 p.m.