

Albany Tree Task Force meeting, October 15, 2008

1. Call to order, 7:12. Members present: Richard Trout, Bob Jones, Suzanne Arca, Ed Adams, Carl Wilmsen

Staff present: Tony Wolcott

2. Approval of minutes -- none

3. Public comment: Valerie Risk of Adams Street asked to have fruit trees planted on the greenway. She argued that public gardens have a long tradition in American cities. During WWII some 40% of fresh produce in the U.S. was from victory gardens. The fruit could be used by the schools, food banks, etc. Clell Hoffman, executive chef at AUSD, wrote a letter in support of fruit trees along the greenway.

Concerns:

Vandalism – garden at school in Richmond has not had as much vandalism as expected. More damage has been done by gophers.

Responsibility for picking and pruning – There are gleaning organizations that gather public fruit for shelters, etc. Need to start a program for maintenance.

Rodents.

Toxins – Brownfields division of EPA says that fruit trees don't transpire heavy metals. More toxins are airborne in dust, so the whole area should be mulched.

Pests – for example the light brown apple moth could migrate to commercial growers. The department of ag. will inspect for free.

If the point is to produce fruit for the school kids, perhaps the trees should be grown at the schools where there is already an institutional structure in place.

We also need to make sure that we do not have an overabundance of trees in any single tree family (Rosaceae) because that increases the risk of disease epidemics.

Apricots suffer from brown rot, so unless you are spraying your trees, you get a good fruit set only about once every 8 years.

Fruit trees that are successful around here are apples, plums, pears and persimmons.

4. Announcements -- none

5.0 2009 meeting dates

We will ask Robin to schedule meetings every third Wednesday of the month. The first meeting in 2009 will be the third Wednesday in January (the 21st).

5.1 City forester's report

The Ohlone Greenway plan is in BART's court. Gates put our requests for specific plantings on corners in the plans. The remaining plantings will be determined.

Mr. Wolcott is doing a lot of root pruning to address raised sidewalk problems. On Pomona they put in pavers and crushed granite instead of cement. They will be doing a different treatment on Tevlin as well.

October 26 is the next big planting. On Evelyn. Almost all will be Crepe Myrtles. That block has raised enough money to pay for all plantings.

UC has said they will only allow use of the Gill Tract for a nursery with certain conditions. So, we are looking into other options including the old interstate onramp at the base of Cleveland Street.

5.2 Tree list revisions and additions. This was approved at the last meeting.

5.3 Allocation of Task Force Funds

Proposals:

Jump start block plantings with free trees.

Establish a nursery.

Pilot plantings for site improvement demonstrations.

Demonstration of corner trees. We would need grates for this.

Website development for the Tree Task Force.

Educational materials.

Each of these things requires a person to make sure that the project goes forward.

We should do promotional flyers now. These can include a fundraising pitch. Ms. Arca moved to have Mr. Trout make a draft flyer for the task force to consider for approval at its next meeting. Mr. Wilmsen seconded. Motion carried.

6. Future agenda items.

Fruit trees on the greenway.

The next Tree Task Force meeting is in 4 weeks. Check the website for exact dates.

Meeting adjourned at 8:58.