

To: Tiffany Giacobazzi
Cc: Don Wortman, Beth Collins, Merrill Dudley, Jamie Pauline, Sean Reynolds
From: Lynn Nybell, Richard Wieland,
Re: Bryant Neighborhood (Tract 4056) Equity Tree Planting Project
Date: August 1, 2022

On Thursday, July 21, 2022 Richard Wieland, Jamie Pauline and Lynn Nybell met Sean Reynolds at the Bryant Community Center. During our hour and a half meeting, we focused on:

1. Learning from Sean about how he has approached the Office of Sustainability and Innovation tree planting process in Bryant neighborhood;
2. Seeking to identify what factors are helping to make Sean's efforts successful;
3. Walking the neighborhood together, using Jamie's early mapping of possible tree planting and removal sights as a guide;
4. Discussing the successes and failures of earlier tree planting efforts in the neighborhood.

Background

The Bryant Neighborhood is located just south of I-94, on the east of Stone School Road in the City of Ann Arbor. There are approximately 259 homes, built between 1969-1971, and approximately another 100 newer townhomes along Stone School Road. Bryant neighborhood falls into three areas known as Stony Brook (single family homes), Forest Homes (townhouses), and Braeburn Circle/University Townhouse. (See attached neighborhood description).

According to the "Local Wiki" on Bryant neighborhood, the area was originally a wetland. Developers dealt with that by building drainage ditches, also known as swales, in many backyards. In 2011 the City of Ann Arbor invested in a water main project in Bryant, but this was not expected to address problems with water accumulating in residents' backyards.

Walking the neighborhood

Based on Jamie's map, we walked the area of single-family homes called Stony Brook. We focused mainly on public tree planting sites on extensions that are public right of way. We did not observe backyards or other areas of private property. We walked Arbor Oaks Park, a city park and playground proximate to Bryant School. We didn't walk Bryant School grounds, though that is something we might consider going forward. We observed a number of children in the neighborhood, particularly coming and going from the Bryant Community Center, along with a small number of adults walking or biking in the neighborhood. Overall, we did not witness much neglect of existing trees or properties.

Identification of tree planting sites

Our walk took place on a hot, sunny morning—a good situation for observing the tree canopy.

The Stony Brook section of Bryant Neighborhood (Tract 4056) is laid out around three principal, curving streets (Champagne Drive, Shadowood Drive, Hemlock Drive) each with multiple short courts extending from them. We walked these three major drives and observed or walked many of the courts. Arbor Oaks Park, Bryant School and Bryant Community Center are located in the center of the neighborhood of mainly single-family homes.

Some courts have a canopy of locust trees that appear to have been planted in a single time frame. The three major streets have more diverse tree plantings on the right of ways. We used Jamie's map to look at the vacant sites and stump removals that she identified from the City inventory from which she originally identified 20 tree sites and 4 stumps. We identified other possible tree planting sites and Jamie recorded them along with one additional possible stump removal.

There also appear to be tree planting possibilities at Arbor Oaks Park. Sean pointed out a small fruit forest that has been initiated in a large open field at the park, and suggested it could be expanded. In playground area, the picnic table and the bench nearby were not shaded. The playground area looks like it would benefit from tree planting. The City is in the process of placing a water spout in the park that could be used for tree watering to supplement the rain barrel that is presently there for that use.

Recruitment of community participation

Sean reported that he worked with the Community Action Network (CAN) program at Bryant Community Center. CAN advertised the program and developed a list of homeowners that were interested in trees. Sean reached out to discuss tree planting with the homeowners, including placement and species of tree. This process worked well. So far the majority of planted trees appear to be thriving. He recommends continuing to work with CAN. Bryant School staff and the PTO could be another avenue to recruiting participation in tree planting and maintenance.

Sean will have an intern in Fall who may be able to assist us with homeowner follow-up.

Possible next steps

- Jamie will work on whether the additional sites we identified are, in fact, vacant tree planting sites when she returns to the City in Fall. City staff will need to help determine whether there are barriers to the use of the sites we identified (for example, underground utilities, traffic hindrances, etc.).
- The Dean Committee should discuss whether it is possible and advisable to plant at Arbor Oaks Park and Bryant School, if sites are identified there.
- The project budget will be refined;

- Outreach will be made to CAN and, if we think it is a good idea, to Bryant School to help recruit homeowner participation;
- Outreach will be made to homeowners on tree planting sites;
- Trees will be planted in fall

Overall Conclusion

The Bryant Neighborhood was the top priority identified in the Equity Tree Planting Project. Pending Jamie's revised and updated tree planning and stump removal sites, it appears that with an additional dollar investment, to be determined, above the original estimate of \$7,025 for 20 trees and \$1,420 for 4 stumps removal we could complete tree planting in this area and still remain within the original \$40,000 that was approved for the top three neighborhoods identified. Bryant could possibly serve as a model way forward to complete the second and possibly third priorities identified in the \$40,000. This could be an appropriate long-term investment if a realistic plan to maintain the trees planted could be identified and implemented that would increase the likelihood the trees planted would prosper long term.