

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas**

**Tuesday, July 1, 2008 4:00 pm
Conference Room B • L1FN
Dallas City Hall**

Attendees:

Sara Beckelman, Courtney Blevins, Dick Coupe, Phil Erwin, Michael Fitzgerald, Michael Hellmann, Steve Houser, Kurt Kretsinger, Eric Lerner, David Marquis, Amanda Popken, Jeff Quinters, Bill Seaman, Marjorie Webb

UFAC Chair, Mr. Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm and welcomed all Committee Members and guests. It was noted that Mr. Courtney Blevins, with the Texas Forest Service, was in attendance. He also noted that Ms. Lora Hinchcliff, our committee Secretary, will be out of town for the summer and will not be able to attend committee meetings during this time period. Mr. Houser advised that he had asked Mrs. Sara Beckelman to take the minutes of meetings in Ms. Hinchcliff's absence. The Chair then asked the committee members if there were any corrections or additions to the June meeting minutes. With none noted, the minutes were approved unanimously (Motion to accept – Dick Coupe, Second – Mr. Jeff Quinters).

Mr. Houser reminded the committee that the second briefing for the Quality of Life Committee will cover the subject of how department or office of urban forestry fits into governmental structure nationwide. A powerpoint presentation is ready and the briefing date was moved to August, 2008, with the exact date yet to be determined. Mr. Michael Hellmann, Dallas Park and Recreation Department, will have a companion presentation on how tree/forestry issues are currently handled.

Mr. Houser advised the committee that, in June, the PUC's Environmental Efficiency Committee reviewed the "Centerpoint Research Planting Project," which, in essence, provided research regarding the energy savings offered by planting trees. The PUC will encourage electric service providers (such as ONCOR, who had officials present during the review) to offer funds or rebates to clients of around \$65.00 per person. This consideration would effectively offer strong support for the Dallas UFAC tree planting and reforestation initiatives.

Mr. David Marquis advised the committee that the Green Building Taskforce is taking their recommendations to City Council in October, which will include an avenue for homeowners to plant trees to reduce energy usage. A multifamily developer may agree to provide money for this purpose.

In the absence of the committee's Office of Environmental Quality Liaison, Mrs. Nicole Cooper, the Chair reminded committee members that we still need volunteers/Citizen Foresters to help man a display for the Texas Instruments "Living Green Day" at the Fair

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Park “Grand Place” on Saturday, July 19th, from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm. Please contact Mr. Houser if you are willing to help.

Mr. Michael Hellmann, Senior Park Planner, was happy to report that he was able to obtain a release on the hiring freeze for the purpose of hiring an Urban Forester. He stated that ten applications that have made it through the HR Department will be reviewed and interviews will be conducted during the month of July. The Committee applauded when this was announced. Mr. Hellmann also advised that we should have a new Urban Forester by the end of July, even though a location for his/her office has not been established. Plans are in the works for leasing office space at a couple of locations if space cannot be found in other city buildings around town. The hiring of a new Urban Forester will be a great benefit to the committee and the Park and Recreation Department.

Mr. Phil Erwin, Chief Arborist for the City, reported regarding Article 10 on conservation easements, that there have not been many conservation easements established but requests to use this avenue to help protect development of wooded properties are increasing. In this program, landowners would donate land to keep in a wooded condition forever. Mr. Erwin was able to get approval for a three (3) acre plot on Illinois off Coons Creek. The owners are trying to get a non-profit to work with them to maintain the property for pedestrian day use only. To allow for contributions to the maintenance of two to four (2-4) acre pocket parks that are not contiguous, the City has suggested creation of a Public Improvement District. This seems to be a potential and viable alternative, in some cases, for conservation easements but requires further research.

In the absence of Mrs. Crystal Lee, Street Department Liaison and MOWmentum Program Manager, the Chair advised that he is pleased that Mrs. Lee is attending the current Citizen Forester class to learn more about trees. One question requiring a recommendation from the Streets Department is whether the department would support the establishment of an endowment for street tree maintenance with the Dallas Parks Foundation. This approach seems to help with the major problem of citizens not taking proper care of trees after they are planted or when the MOWmentum agreement expires in two (2) years.

The Chair reported that the Trinity Corridor Project office will soon accept/release the Trinity Forest Management Plan, which has 13,000 to 15,000 pages. There will be a 30 day review and comment period and the Chair suggested that members review it and consider responding. If something in the plan does not appear appropriate or further

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recommendations should be included, now is the time to note it in an official manner. It will then go to council for approval. Mr. Kilburn, Sr. Project Manager, mentioned the possibility of sending the executive summary and, if he does, the Chair will either email it to the committee or put it on our list serve with other official documents.

Mr. Houser reported that Ms. Hinchcliff has been working with the Office of Environmental Quality to help resolve the issue of burying wood waste in the landfill at McCommas Bluff. They are discussing setting aside storm refuse, using a grinder/chipper to reduce it to mulch and keeping it on site for use by the Park Department. This seems to be a good compromise to eliminate wasting this natural and beneficial resource and save landfill space.

Mr. Houser, in Mr. Salcedo's absence, reported that the hyper-spectral imaging negotiations are almost completed and the project should begin within a month or so. Part of the survey will use LIDAR images with one meter resolution. The hard part will be the species identification for the 20 square mile test plot. Additional information will be available in the near future.

Mr. Bill Seaman, Land Planning, Development and City Codes Team Leader, reported that there are "two trains on his track" – the Green Building Task Force (Integrated Storm Water Management (ISWM), which is waiting on a report from outside contractors; and the committee's Tree Ordinance recommendations. Mr. Seaman advised that a draft tree ordinance document will be ready to share with the committee by this time next month. He will contact the committee members to make sure he has all their input.

Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, Public Relations and Media Team Leader, reported on several items. The committee's MOWmentum contract on our showcase planting project at Skillman and Lovers Lane has been approved but the paperwork has not been received, as yet. The tree planting team has delayed the planting until fall as they felt fall is the most advantageous time for this activity.

It was also reported that Mr. Fitzgerald is working on a draft of media protocol for the committee to approve. It is desirable that each person on the committee respond only in their area of expertise when contacted by the media with questions. Any other questions should be referred to the Chair for a response.

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Mr. Fitzgerald advised the committee that an initial announcement about the Adopt-a-Median program was seen on Channel 8 News in the 5:00 pm time slot on June 13th. This was the 2nd or 3rd spotlight on the committee and its programs during June.

Additionally, the committee's website is undergoing a review. From the public's perspective, what content should be emphasized? Mr. Fitzgerald feels that our website should be restructured to emphasize past activities, goals for the future, the Citizen Forester program and the ABC's to Tree Planting guide. Any suggestions from the committee will be welcomed.

Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Tree Planting and Transplanting Team Leader, reported that a crucial component of our showcase planting – maintenance – has been taken care of. An individual has been contracted to maintain the trees with a grant from a remediation fund to which polluters have contributed. The committee was very pleased to hear that maintenance on the trees, as per our MOWmentum contract, had been arranged.

Mr. Kretsinger reported that the Dallas Park and Recreation Department had agreed to cover half the reprinting costs for the planting guide and almost 5000 copies of the guide have been distributed. A second printing of five thousand (5,000) copies should be ready for delivery soon.

Mr. Eric Larner, Citizen Forester Team Leader, reported that the Citizen Forester class began on June 11th and will run through November, with one class per month. He also announced that this class, which is only our 2nd, has 35 students and there are almost an equal number of prospective members on our wait list. He was very pleased with the media coverage and the response of the public to this program. He is also very interested in establishing a list of activities/projects for the Citizen Foresters for their required twenty-five (25) hours of volunteer service. The Chair advised that a meeting has been set for Thursday, July 5th at 11:00 am, with Mr. Hellmann and Mr. Larner for this purpose, as well as others. Mr. Hellmann said he would e-mail the District Managers and request a list of possible volunteer projects/activities from them. If he does not receive a response, he can set a meeting with the District Managers to discuss.

Mr. Larner advised that an article with a large picture in the Dallas Morning News Metro Section identified the Citizen Forester program as a north Dallas program rather than a city-wide program. However, he has received inquiries from all over the city.

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The Chair addressed Mr. Courtney Blevins, Texas Forest Service (TFS), regarding the hiring of a new Regional Forester for the Dallas area. It is expected that the new Regional Forester could be chosen by the end of the year. The Texas Forest Service's fiscal year starts in September. Mr. Blevins also advised that TFS has no grant funds available at this point; however a regional analysis shows the benefits of supporting advocacy groups promoting tree ordinances. These or other groups could apply to Pete Smith for possible "slippage" funds.

Ms. Marjorie Webb, Marketing Director with the Texas Trees Foundation (TTF), reported that they partnered with WFAA on their Project Green Promotion that ran this past spring. WFAA highlighted tree planting projects throughout DFW during this on-air promotion. WFAA designed a website educating the public on tree planting and identified projects on their website. Ms. Webb also reported that the TTF is in the planning stages of establishing a Roadmap for Planting Trees in Dallas. She suggested a possible joint activity with TTF and the committee on a tree planting project, which could include the Citizen Foresters. TTF is currently involved in utilizing GIS mapping software to create specific areas for projects. Ms. Webb advised she will be more involved in projects after July and will contact the committee with more information on current and future projects that we can do together.

Mr. Dick Coupe, North Texas Master Naturalist Liaison, advised that the conflict of reporting volunteer hours for Master Naturalist in the Citizen Forester program had been resolved. Master Naturalists in the Citizen Forester program will inform the Master Naturalist Chapter on their hours, which will then be forwarded to the Citizen Forester Team Leader for recording. All volunteer efforts for which Citizen Foresters receive credit will be approved in advance by the Citizen Forester Team Leader, Mr. Eric Lerner.

In response to a question asked about how the Master Gardeners are handling their Citizen Forester hours, Mr. Lerner, who is also the Dallas County Master Gardeners Liaison, advised that Master Gardeners are getting education hours for most of the classes. Any volunteer hours will be reported to the Master Gardeners and also to the city. The Master Gardeners in the Citizen Forest program will also enhance educational outreach to the public through tree talks. As an example, Mr. Lerner gave a water-wise tree talk in Addison three weeks ago.

Mr. Coupe advised that Texas AgriLife Extension and the County Commissioners are planning a type of Farm Day for the Dallas County Youth Village the 2nd week in August, which will be a week before school starts. It will be held in the gym with

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representatives of the dairy industry, horses, trees, etc. There are eighty-eight (88) youths, ranging in age from thirteen to seventeen years of age, and thirty staff people at this facility. Since August of last year, when Chuck Taylor was designated the Director of this program, courses have been taught by the North Texas Food Bank, El Centro (Food Handling Safety). Out of the eighty-eight (88) youths at the facility, all eight young people who took this class have passed the course and all eight now have jobs in food handling. One has a job at McDonalds and has been asked to go through their management program. The program has been a great success and Mr. Coupe gave credit to Mr. Fred Burrell, Natural Resource Agent for Texas AgriLife Extension, who is a supporter and advisor to the committee. The committee offered congratulations on the program advances at the Dallas County Youth Village.

Miss. Amanda Popken, co-Chair for UT Arlington's Green Roof Committee reported that their committee project was one of seven recipients of Environmental Leadership Awards from the Greater DFW Recycling Alliance. She advised that in a year or so they will be issuing a white paper with all the electronic data they have collected and the right plants to use for this part of the country for green roof projects. The Chair acknowledged that UT Arlington is a leader in the industry, as educators should be. He advised that it is people like Miss Popken who can and will change the world!

With no other items introduced, the UFAC Chair adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Beckelman
Substitute at the request of Chair, Mr. Steve Houser