

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas**

**Tuesday, September 2, 2008 4:00 pm
Conference Room C • L1FN
Dallas City Hall**

Attendees:

Sara Beckelman, Dick Coupe, Philip Erwin, Michael Fitzgerald, Matt Grubisich, Kurt Kretsinger, Eric Lerner, Gretchen Luedtke, Kassandra McLaughlin, Janette Monear, Bill Seaman, Marjorie Webb, and Mr. Bert Vandenberg

UFAC Chair, Mr. Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm and welcomed all Committee members as well as guests. Mr. Bert Vandenberg introduced himself as a Dallas City Attorney who was interested in the Tree Ordinance briefing on the agenda for our meeting. The Chair welcomed Mr. Vandenberg to our meeting.

Mr. Houser asked the Committee members if there were any corrections or additions to the August meeting minutes. With none noted, the minutes were approved unanimously (Motion to accept – Mr. Matt Grubisich, Second – Mr. Bill Seaman).

The Chair advised that the second briefing for the Quality of Life Committee to cover the subject of how a department or office of urban forestry fits into governmental structure around the country, may be scheduled for September 9th. As soon as he is provided a final date, he will advise the members.

It was announced that the Friends of Reverchon baseball game between the Dallas Fire and Police Departments, which is being held on September 13th at 3:00 pm, is free to the public. A handout was provided.

Mr. Houser requested volunteers to attend a Committee booth for Pollution Prevention Week on either September 18th or September 20th for the Office of Environmental Quality. He also noted that we need volunteers in order to attend these events and educate the public.

Our Chair will be meeting with the Texas Forest Service representatives to interview the final two applicants for the Regional Forester position on September 10th. The applicant chosen will be taking Matt Grubisich's place as the Dallas area representative for the Texas Forest Service.

Mike Hellmann was out of town but requested that the Chair report that the Dallas Parks Department made an offer to one of the Urban Forester applicants and we will soon know if it was accepted. If accepted, the new Urban Forester could be hired by mid to late September. Also, our Chair mentioned the potential for gas drilling in our parks but did not ask Mr. Hellmann about the details. In Mr. Houser's opinion, it is consistent with our

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purpose to ask that the committee be involved in the planning stages of any potential project that may affect any city trees and to advise the city on ways to minimize the affect to any trees or significant natural areas.

Mr. Houser noted that he hopes to complete the hyperspectral field work in the near future and finalize the schedule for the flyover to acquire the images. It will take two to four weeks to receive the data and at least another month to extract the basic data starting with Turtle Creek and Reverchon Park. The recent outstanding coverage by WFAA offered the public a small tidbit of the complex nature of the research project.

The Fort Worth forestry program was recently threatened with deep budget cuts. A copy of a recent article was passed around to those in attendance. It was the hope of the committee that the budget shortfall in Ft. Worth could be remedied without reducing their outstanding forestry program.

The Chair noted that a list of training programs for forestry crews was forwarded to Mr. Steve Worden, District Manager for Region 3, and Mr. Mike Hellmann to be purchased by the Dallas Parks Department. The Committee hopes to re-establish a complete training program with a minimum schedule of meeting once a month with all forestry related staff for basic training.

Mr. Phil Erwin, Chief Arborist for the City, reported that the city is educating our arborists regarding rain-free sensor issues. These are recently established permit requirements; however, some run through Mr. Erwin's office to review the protection of trees involved. It is illegal to trench within the drip line of trees plus rain sensors are required on new irrigation systems.

The Chair reminded those in attendance that the final stakeholders meeting before the Great Trinity Forest (GTF) Management Plan goes before the City Council is on September 9th in the auditorium of conference room area on Level 1FN, at 6:30 pm.

Without further delay, the Chair introduced Mr. Bill Seaman, Land Planning, Development and City Codes Team Leader. Mr. Seaman handed out the first draft recommendations for the Dallas Tree Ordinance. Mr. Seaman suggested that members get on the internet and pull up the current ordinance to see how the suggested changes could be enacted and forward comments or additional suggestions to him. It was noted that in 1993 and 1994, the city had no tree ordinance and therefore no protection for any trees. Our current ordinance is approaching 15 years old; therefore, there are many issues

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to be considered. The question was posed if it would be better to scrap the current ordinance and write a completely new one. Mr. Erwin noted that it wouldn't be practical to rewrite the entire ordinance because it would overwhelm the general citizenry, developers and city staff. Revising the document carefully and with a great deal of thought regarding the consequences of each action is the more practical approach. Mr. Seaman reported that the team is focusing on moving some things out of the ordinance and into reference tables that are not part of the ordinance because it would be beneficial to have the flexibility to make changes to the tables without going to the city council for approval; i.e. adding or deleting species of trees to the tree replacement list.

Mr. Erwin suggested that inadequate and erroneous tree surveys are creating additional workloads for the City Arborist's office and it would be advantageous to have requirements for qualification to provide tree surveys. Mr. Seaman noted that the subject of how surveying is done to meet the requirements of the tree ordinance is open for review. Any suggestions or concerns should be directed to Mr. Seaman and the Land Planning, Development and City Codes Team for review.

Mr. Seaman asked that members contact him in the next couple of weeks with suggestions or comments on the draft Tree Ordinance recommendations. He also advised that a copy of the report is available via e-mail for those who did not attend the meeting. The Chair expressed the appreciation of the Committee for the hard work by Mr. Seaman's committee.

Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, Public Relations and Media Team Leader reported that he and our webmaster, Mr. Doug Pierson, are discussing changes to the committee website to better explain who we are and what we do. He also advised that he is working with the Tree Planting and Transplanting Team Leader, Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, on another showcase tree planting project. The Street Department recently advised that they were ready to approve the first showcase planting project. It was agreed that the pecans would be swapped out for Caddo Maples or Chinese Pistache (male only). Mr. Houser noted that further discussion was needed regarding the various recommended trees and proper spacing for different sized medians.

The Chair noted that the group of members involved in the showcase project discussed with the Streets Department the advantages of having a standard list of tree species, including large trees, medium trees and small trees, along with planting distances for each size. Good information would help the public to make educated choices for future

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median plantings through the MOWmentum program. It would therefore be possible to reduce the time required for the public to get an approval for median plantings.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted that a very early draft of a “Media Protocol” document was developed and will be forwarded to the members as soon as it is finalized.

Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Tree Planting and Transplanting Team Leader, had no further report for discussion.

Mr. Eric Lerner, Citizen Forester Team Leader, reported that the 2008 Citizen Forester class is progressing very well. Mr. Richard Smart, Committee Liaison with the Storm Water Department, will be addressing the class during the September training on how we can protect our waterways by making sure that chemicals and debris are not washed down the streets and into our storm water drains. Mr. Erwin will be addressing the class regarding our tree ordinance.

Mr. Lerner reported that plans for the 2009 class are progressing, as well as establishing volunteer projects. He is working with the Parks Department District Managers on this subject. Current projects include:

1. Irving’s BioBlitz: The committee will have a display booth and Citizen Foresters will also participate in leading groups of children through the forest to identify trees, plants, animals, amphibians and insects. This event is being held on September 20th.
2. Pecan Grove Park in Rowlett: Our Citizen Foresters are identifying trees for the Rowlett Park Board so identification markers can be put on the trail to educate the public about the trees in the park. A follow up visit to the Park is being planned.

Mr. Lerner advised that the only item for his Master Gardener report is the upcoming Home and Garden Show at Market Hall. He will be providing short ten minute presentations regarding trees.

Ms. Janette Monear, Executive Director of the Texas Trees Foundation (TTF), updated the Committee on the kick-off event for their “Roadmap to Planting in Dallas”, which will be held on November 14, 2008, in city hall. It was noted that a presentation by the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Texas Forest Service (TFS) on what’s happening across the nation and the state involving trees will be included.

In working with many organizations, companies, schools and maps, they have identified 5 sites over 385 square miles for tree plantings in Dallas. Mr. Matt Grubisich, with

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Urban Renewal, Inc. has been sub-contracted to guide the project. This project will be a model that the Foundation, in partnership with Urban Renewal, Inc, can use regionally. It is the intent that once this model project is completed, the TTF, in partnership with the City of Dallas, will put together a city-wide initiative. Through their new business plan, the TTF is expanding their focus in a more regional direction, starting in Dallas. Their goal is to plant 25,000 trees by 2012.

Ms. Marjorie Webb advised that TTF will be looking for additional partners to help plant trees. Mr. Erwin recommended the Student Conservation Association (SCA) as an excellent source for help with planting. He advised that the City worked with the SCA to create a trail in the Great Trinity Forest and they were excellent to work with. .

Mr. Dick Coupe. Liaison for the North Texas Master Naturalist program did not have a report for the meeting.

The Chair requested additional comments or questions. With no other items introduced, the UFAC Chair adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Beckelman
Substitute Secretary for this meeting