

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas**

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

Attendees:

Sara Beckelman, Fred Burrell, Philip Erwin, Michael Fitzgerald, Lora Hinchcliff, Steve Houser, Van Johnson, Eric Larner, Jeff Quinters, Bill Seaman, Karen Woodard.

UFAC Chair, Mr. Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed all Committee members and guests. Mr. Van Johnson with the Jefferson Median Beautification Project attended his first meeting and was heartily welcomed.

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

The Chair announced our new regional TFS Forester should be on board by the end of the year. His name is Mica Pace.

Mr. Houser recently contacted Jill Jordan, Assistant City Manager to request that the city look into selling carbon credits for public forests that are maintained, such as the Trinity Forest and Park Department property. Given the recent tough economic picture and current developments, it is a good time to explore this opportunity. Since the Chicago Climate Exchange was created only a few years ago, basic carbon offset protocol are not completely established but should be complete in the near future.

Last year the Chair was not successful in working with others to convince the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to accept biogenic sequestration as part of our State Implementation Plan (SIP) to improve our air quality; in part because officials know that trees emit Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) but also sequester other pollutants from the air. VOC's are precursors to the formation of ozone. What we did not have at the time was research regarding how each species of tree affects air quality individually and how collectively they work together in the urban forest; i.e. what is the full effect of all trees together in the forest regarding air quality? The State of California recently developed protocol that effectively establishes a baseline for GHG reductions and carbon credit offsets, which Mr. Houser forwarded to various officials. Additionally, a copy has been placed on the "members and supporters only" side of the website (www.dallastrees.org/lisfiles.asp).

The protocol includes calculations of carbon storage and emissions associated with tree maintenance, which has not been calculated in the past due to software limitations and the lack of research on the subject. In essence, the full effects of each species regarding air quality was researched regarding air quality and the information was combined using computer modeling which is now referred to as photochemical modeling. The results produce a more complete and accurate picture of what the forest provides relative to air

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quality. The California EPA and other officials are giving this serious consideration for the potential to meet federal air quality standards.

A discussion ensued regarding the requirements for Dallas and surrounding areas to sell carbon credits. Being a newly established market it will take time to develop basic procedures and management protocol. It appears we will need a very accurate and complete tree inventory that includes a great deal of baseline data to be able to quantify carbon credits and to properly manage the urban forest in the future. In Mr. Houser's opinion, the committee's role is to encourage officials to be poised to take advantage of the opportunity and provide advice in support of the effort.

Additionally there should be a complete tree survey that provides the critical baseline data necessary to work on photochemical modeling and to help guide future urban forest management. As an aside, carbon credit offsets are currently selling for \$5.00 to \$15.00 per metric ton and are expected to increase to \$50.00 or \$60.00 per ton by 2020. We also need to consider establishing protocol similar to those in California for the region and establish a volunteer registry of projects relating to trees and forests, at some point in the future.

The Chairman reported the *Dallas Morning News* will publish an article about our tree inventory pilot project in the coming week. There are several reasons why this media coverage occurred and why it is important. First, a number of media contacts receive emails to the committee which encourages coverage of anything sent to advisors, supporters, or Citizen Foresters. As a result WFAA was aware of the tree survey project and recently covered the story. However, additional coverage was needed before the story became 'old news' and it was preferable the coverage be in print explaining some details for our donors to the project and to educate the public. Additionally, such coverage shows we are working diligently and are wisely using donated funds. Second, the Committee is over budget and needs to raise at least \$22,000.00 in the near future. Media coverage is an immense help in offering credibility to this project and can therefore assist in raising additional funds. Last, this is cutting edge research that has caught the interest of others around the nation and it shines a favorable light on Dallas as well as the committee.

As a result of our past discussions with NCDC Imaging regarding our research with LiDAR and Hyperspectral images, others around the nation are considering the technology as part of their forest management strategy. Since NCDC is now promoting the imaging, Wisconsin recently started a research project to use Hyperspectral technology (among other tools) to track Emerald Ash Borer damage. Wisconsin also decided to take spectral signatures of several other trees to see if they can separate the species as a comparison for our research. This move was made because NCDC explained our project and they know what we are doing. Furthermore, Wisconsin printed an article on the subject in recent *Arbor Age Magazine*. However, they are using a

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bucket truck for field work, and we are using foliage to obtain spectral signatures. No one knows which one will work better until both of our projects are complete. Additionally, we are working with NCDC and others to encourage the National Urban Forest Advisory Council (NUFAC) to consider funding grants to develop the Hyperspectral technology. If they accept the idea, we will have the potential to recoup funds we spent plus a potential funding source for a city inventory in the future.

Ms. Karen Woodard, City Forester, inquired if the Committee had applied for a NUFAC grant. The Chair noted that any potential grant offering is still in the conceptual stage. However, our research results may help convince them of the validity.

Ms. Woodard and the Chief Arborist, Mr. Phil Erwin, will coordinate numerous tree planting projects. There will be a big planting at Commerce and Main and the city is trying to get all the trees slated for planting in downtown installed before the holiday lights are installed. Ms. Woodard noted that basic training is scheduled to begin in January for Park Department Maintenance crews, supervisors and project managers involved in construction near trees and eventually expand the training program to other city departments. She also noted that the Downtown Improvement District (DID) will be establishing structural soils test plots in downtown. The committee previously discussed some of the newer structural soils as a way to resolve the limited root space in the downtown area.

Ms. Woodard will contact Mr. Lerner, Team Leader for the Citizen Foresters with details for assistance with the upcoming tree plantings. The first, which is slated for November 15th and 22nd, is for a planting on Preston Ridge.

Mr. Phil Erwin, Chief Arborist for the City, reported that tree orders have been set back because a number of suppliers the city has contracts with are having problems. Mr. Erwin is still pushing for the Preston Ridge Project on November 15 followed by the Skillman and White Rock projects on November 22, but nevertheless is having difficulty procuring the specified trees. If there are substitute recommendations for Texas Black Walnut (2"-3" caliper) by the supplier, we can probably move along with these projects in a timely fashion. Nearly all other city related projects have been pushed into December. Mr. Erwin also informed the committee of two upcoming conferences. The first, Reinventing Communities, is sponsored by Sustainable Land Development International and will be held December 17, 2008 in Plano, TX. The conference includes topics such as Sustainability & Community Neighborhoods. The Trees & Utilities Conference will be hosted at the Fairmount Hotel in Dallas April 6-8, 2009 in conjunction with National Arbor Day. The conference will focus on the dual goal of growing and maintaining healthy community forests while providing safe, reliable utility service.

The Chief Arborist also scheduled a round table meeting with his staff this week regarding Article 10 (our tree ordinance). He will provide the committee a review

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following the meeting. The Little Forest Hills Conservation District is requesting changes to their local PD (planned development codes) regarding trees. A hearing is scheduled at 1:30 p.m. with a briefing Thursday morning, November 6.

Wood Waste Recycling Team Leader, Mrs. Lora Hinchcliff, reported that Mr. Rick White with the City Sanitation Services Department attended the Compost Advisory Council's annual Compost Camp last month. The event was held at Texas Organic Products in the Austin, TX area. The event was complete with equipment demonstrations as well as many industry and regulatory discussions. Sanitation Services Assistant Director, Mr. Ron White, requested attendance during the Camp to learn more about composting equipment in an effort to move forward on initiating a composting program at the McCommas Bluff Landfill. Such a program will be invaluable now that the city converted McCommas Bluff to a bioreactor landfill.

Mr. Bill Seaman, Land Planning, Development and City Codes Team Leader, informed the committee it may be December before the GreenTeam Task Force has their recommendations before the Council regarding ISWM. Mr. Seaman found some of the recommendations to be very interesting. Without providing detail, Mr. Seaman offered that the issue of a tree survey did not seem to be a major issue or area of concern. When reading Article 10 as it currently stands, there just doesn't seem to be a common sense approach in some areas. A brief example was provided regarding situations such as once the title of a house is transferred to the homeowner from a builder or developer there is no protection for trees existing on the property. Additionally, problems may arise when dealing with a tree that has roots extending into an adjoining property that are cut by the neighbor. These situations may end up in civil court.

Public Relations and Media Team Leader, Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, reported within the past month the Tree Planting Guide press release was distributed. Dallas Morning News Home & Garden section may also highlight the guide. The Signature Tree Planting Project is scheduled for November 22 and Mr. Fitzgerald had a question about the availability of the Texas Black Walnut. Mr. Phil Erwin, Chief Arborist, verified this species has been difficult to procure, and requested an alternative so he can have time to request a change from the supplier. Since this is a signature planting, and the design plan was to highlight autumn color, suggestions were requested.

As for other projects, Mr. Fitzgerald needs input on any activity about city wood chip recycling or any other potential wood waste recycling initiatives.

Citizen Forester Team Leader, Mr. Eric Larner, informed the committee that the last session on tree planting and maintenance will be led by Ms. Karen Woodard, City Forester. The class will actually plant a tree during the session. Additionally, Mr. Larner is working with the class in designing a logo for the committee. The Citizen Forester Program will proudly graduate a class of 30. Mr. Alex Picazo, Supervisor in District 5,

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helped to produce 22 safety vests and Ms. Woodard is providing the graduation certificates. On a separate note, Mr. Steve Houser has been talking to contacts at TxDOT in an effort to possibly engage Citizen Foresters in small tree pruning projects.

Mr. Fred Burrell, Texas AgriLife Extension Service - Dallas, recognized the extension office for its work in the community and all the volunteer hours that have been logged by the committee, Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Hinchcliff
Committee Secretary