

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas**

**Tuesday, December 2, 2008 4:00 pm
Conference Room 'B' • L1FN
Dallas City Hall**

Attendees: Sara Beckelman, Eli Baron, Fred Burrell, Dick Coupe, Pablo Davila, Philip Erwin, Michael Fitzgerald, Michael Hellmann, Lora Hinchcliff, Steve Houser, Kurt Kretsinger, Eric Lerner, Ann Lee, Jane Lerner, Jacqueline Lee, Gene Morrissey, Brandon Pollard, Susan Pollard, Jeff Quinters, Bill Seaman, Richard Smart, Bert Vandenberg, Karen Woodard.

UFAC Chair, Mr. Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed all Committee members and guests. Ms. Jacqueline Lee was in attendance and is completing her senior thesis on urban beautification and reforestation. Dallas Master Gardeners and recent graduates of the Citizen Forester program, Mrs. Jane Lerner and Gene Morrissey, were introduced and welcomed to the meeting along with Pablo Davila, Public Works & Transportation (PWT) Environmental Specialist working with the Water Quality Group. Mr. Davila was referred to the UFAC due to his strong interest in the Trinity Forest.

The Chair recognized Dallas County Extension Agent for Natural Resources, Mr. Fred Burrell and requested information on his recent award. Although slightly embarrassed, he explained that he was named as "Chapter Advisor of the Year" for the North Texas Master Naturalist program by state officials. In response, he also noted that Mr. Houser and Mrs. Sara Beckelman (both Master Naturalists) were recently awarded the "Presidential Service Award" for contributing over 5,000 hours of volunteer time. The Chair noted that he may be the first "treehugger" to receive the award which the committee found amusing.

Mr. Houser asked the Committee members if there were any corrections or additions to the November meeting minutes. With none noted, the minutes were approved unanimously (Motion to accept – Mr. Jeff Quinters, Second – Mr. Kurt Kretsinger).

The Chair provided a tree survey pilot project update. Delivery of the data from the flyover has been delayed and is expected in about four weeks. The National Urban Forest Advisory Council (NUFAC) is considering grants for hyper-spectral image research projects, and while still in the conceptual stage, our research results may help convince them of the validity. This move would be welcomed by the Committee, as it could provide a means to recoup some of our invested costs to date. Additionally, recent conversations with regional officials have left the Chair optimistic about the potential to enact regional management plans for urban forestry and the potential for a future regional tree inventory project. A basic argument remains for the need of a regional tree inventory both private and public in order to fully quantify how all regional trees affect our air quality, storm water runoff, energy savings, and much more.

Mr. Houser along with Mr. Michael Hellmann, Sr. Park Planner, Ms. Karen Woodard, Dallas City Forester and others recently met with Jill Jordan, Assistant City Manager, to discuss the opportunity for the city to claim carbon credits. The market is just emerging

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and the basic management of a city program is not yet clear and could take anywhere from 6 – 24 months to be fully resolved. Ms. Jordan explained the city has looked at carbon credit opportunities in the past but officials were concerned it could encourage or support others who are carbon polluters. However, the United States has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol (an international environmental treaty produced during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) and those purchasing credits are primarily international companies that pollute in other countries which signed the protocol.

If the USA ratifies the treaty in the future, American based industries as well as states, counties, cities and others will need to calculate their carbon 'footprint' and work to reduce it. If one of the entities exceeds their carbon emission cap, they could sacrifice some of their existing carbon credits or purchase credits from the market. If the USA ratifies the treaty in the future, there will be a 'cap and trade' system which is a complex issue. It is clear that the City of Dallas will need a public as well as private tree survey and forest management plans to assist with such a future 'cap and trade' program.

Ms. Woodard, Dallas City Forester, reported training modules are set for the city parks department crews. The east and west divisions will be trained separately with three sessions scheduled in the spring followed by three in the fall. The intent is to expand educational efforts to other departments in the future. The Dallas urban forest children's programs will start in the fall of 2009. Furthermore, Ms. Woodard is working on a budget proposal for a tree survey (or tree inventory) which stemmed from the joint discussion with Ms. Jordan. The Chair noted the importance of a city wide tree survey (a top committee priority) which led down the road to the need to develop a proposal which will be submitted for the 2009 fiscal budget by Ms. Woodard and Mr. Hellmann. Approving a full inventory (public and private) would provide vital information about the possibility of tapping into renewable residues from trees and forests (biomass). Biomass generation can help reduce greenhouse emissions and air pollution plus lower our dependence on fossil fuels.

The Chairman offered praise to Ms. Woodard who has 'hit the ground running' and recognized her efforts and actions since being hired as Dallas City Forester. Mr. Houser informed the Committee, Supporters and Citizen Foresters of the "Regional Choices" report recently released by Vision North Texas. The report is an incredible compilation of data including the just released Dallas Heat Island Effect maps, local landfill life expectancy map, impervious cover map and it notes that the DFW carbon footprint is greater than the entire state of New Mexico. The complete report can be downloaded from www.visionnorthtexas.org.

Chief Arborist for the City, Mr. Phil Erwin, offered additional kudos to Ms. Woodard for her work since coming on board as Dallas City Forester and offered an update regarding the Little Forest Hills issue. The group is considering the ramifications of a Conservation

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District or a Planned Development (PD) to accomplish numerous objectives. The tree ordinance is currently going through revisions to provide incentives for sustainable development and conservation practices. Mr. Erwin announced the irrigation requirements recently established by the state are going forward with water conservation as the primary issue. Open trench inspections will begin January 2009. How this will affect tree protection is unknown at this time. Mr. Erwin will be attending the 'Reinventing Community' conference, a sustainability conference, December 17, 2008.

Mr. Bill Seaman, Land Planning, Development and City Codes Team Leader, distributed a draft copy of the UFAC recommended revisions to Article X and requested committee members to review and compare the draft to the existing ordinance. Comments regarding the draft should be emailed to Mr. Seaman at wm.seaman@tx.rr.com as weekly meetings are being conducted to review and revise as necessary. Meetings with representatives from the development, building and construction industry have been conducted for over a year. Proper protocol will be followed in an effort to submit a final draft to the Mayor and City Council. The intent is to turn the ordinance into a policy that rewards good development and resolves existing concerns expressed by public and private sectors.

Public Relations and Media Team Leader, Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, reported the Skillman tree planting project has moved to January 10, 2009 to allow for fine tuning of the details for the project. Additionally, Mr. Fitzgerald is drafting preliminary text for the UFAC website and relevant parties and may therefore be contacting various committee members for insight and input. Our website is our primary advertising tool.

Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Tree Planting and Transplanting Team Leader, reminded the committee and guests to put the January 10 tree planting event on our calendars. Additionally, Mr. Kretsinger is in contact with Lincoln Property Company in an effort to ask them to partner with us on our next median planting. Lincoln Property Company has asked for rezoning for a development on Lovers Lane.

Citizen Forester Team Leader, Mr. Eric Larner, provided a brief recap of the Preston Ridge Trail tree planting project held a few weeks ago. He also reported the Citizen Forester program graduated thirty (30) new Citizen Foresters this year. A group of thirty five (35) new Citizen Foresters are already signed up for next year so the next order of business for Mr. Larner is to work with Ms. Karen Woodard to begin planning for the 2009 class.

Mr. Michael Hellman, Senior Park Planner informed the committee that the implementation of the Great Trinity Forest Plan will need to be determined in the year to come. How the day to day function of the management plan is implemented (including staffing and funding) may be the catalyst for establishing a division or office of urban forestry.

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The Chair noted a recent meeting with Mr. Larner and Councilmember Angela Hunt that was called at her request. The primary focus was on planting more trees in street medians. The Chair stressed the importance of the Adopt-a-Median Program and the need to establish standards for sustainable median landscape designs as well as a recommended species list. As a result of the discussion, Councilmember Hunt will schedule a meeting with the Chair and the Assistant City Manager for Streets, Ramon Miguez.

Mr. Dick Coupe, North Texas Master Naturalist Liaison, reported the NMTN 2009 class will host an open house January 13, 2009 at the Texas AgriLife Extension office located on Walnut Hill at Marsh Lane. Mr. Eric Larner, Dallas County Master Gardeners Liaison, reported the Gardener Class of 2007 has completed the required volunteer service hours for their intern year and graduate tomorrow, December 3. Mr. Larner is looking for candidates within the group to join the Citizen Forester program.

The Chair requested additional comments or questions. With no other items introduced, the UFAC Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Hinchcliff
Committee Secretary