

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas**

**Tuesday, October 6, 2009 4:00 pm
Conference Room 'A' • L1FN
Dallas City Hall**

Attendance: Stan Aten, Mary Ayala, Sara Beckelman, Raymond Crawford, Bob Curry, Phil Erwin, Joseph Fielding, Michael FitzGerald, Timothy Herfel, John Hunt, Steve Houser, Kurt Kretsinger, Eric Lerner, Janette Monear, Jeff Quinters, Stephanie Saunders, and Bill Seaman

UFAC Chair, Mr. Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. welcoming all committee members and guests. A warm welcome was extended to Ms. Stephanie Saunders, who is a LEED Certified Architect with Bloc Design Syndicate and is in the current Citizen Forester Class.

Mr. Houser asked the Committee members if there were any corrections or additions to the September 1st meeting minutes. With no corrections noted, a motion to accept was made by Mr. Raymond Crawford and a second by Mr. Jeff Quinters. The minutes were approved unanimously.

The Chair announced that Mrs. Sara Beckelman recently agreed to be our Assistant Secretary. Also, Mr. Stan Aten agreed to be our Liaison for the Oak Cliff Earth Day Event and Mr. Patrick Boyd agreed to be our Liaison for the Jefferson Median Beautification Project. The Committee gave a hearty round of applause for these volunteers.

Mr. Houser noted that unfortunately, Ms. Lora Hinchcliff and Ms. Karen Woodard could not attend the meeting and requested that Mrs. Beckelman record the minutes. Ms. Woodard advised that she did not have a report for the October meeting.

Mr. Micah Pace, Regional Urban Forester with the Texas Forest Service recently mentioned to the Chair that he is looking for a new location for his office. If someone can assist, please contact him on his cell at 214-384-8673. The Chair recently requested that the Turtle Creek Association tree inventory data be run through the STRATUM computer modeling program by the Texas Forest Service. Mr. Larry Hochberg, Turtle Creek Association Liaison and Mr. Pace recently agreed to complete the analysis. The Committee will be advised when the report is released by both groups.

Also, Mr. Houser noted that Mr. Matt Churches, City of Arlington City Forester and ISA Certified Arborist and Utility Specialist, is organizing the first UFORE analysis in the region and needs help with gathering the tree information. Please contact Mr. Churches at 817-277-0434 or matt.churches@arlingtontx.gov if you are interested.

The Chair recently requested the opportunity to brief the Quality of Life Committee and the Transportation and Environment Committee on the urban heat island final report, Dr. Fang Qiu's research pilot project and our recommended changes to the tree ordinance. The request notes that it will be weeks before the tree ordinance recommendations are complete but he wanted to get our recommendations in line to be on the agenda. It is quite likely that Dr. Qiu will provide a briefing for us in November regarding our research project.

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It was noted that Councilmember Angela Hunt scheduled a public meeting with ONCOR officials on Monday, October 12th, in Arlington Hall, 3333 Turtle Creek, in Lee Park, at 6:30 pm. Mr. Ramond Crawford, President of the Kiestwood Historical Homeowners Association will be one of the speakers and present his petition to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). He will also discuss problems they encountered as well as solutions. Mr. Matt Churches will also be a part of the panel to answer questions and the Chair will offer a presentation on problems and potential solutions found in researching the subject. Mr. Houser also handed out a copy of a letter to the editor from Mr. Crawford which was recently printed in the *Dallas Morning News*.

The Chair noted he was able to meet with Mr. Kelly High, Director of the Dallas Street Department regarding the potential removal of trees on the Trinity River levees. Briefly, the city is awaiting a final response from the National Corps office regarding the requirement to remove trees within 15` feet or up to 50 feet of a levee's "toe".

Mr. Bud Melton, Save Open Spaces (SOS) Board Member, as well as Texas Trails Foundation (TTF) Board Member, and the Chair will be speaking on October 8th for the League of Women Voters at 11:30 in the Oak Corner Room of the Center for Non-Profit Cooperation, 2900 Live Oak. Mr. Melton will be speaking on "day lighting" creeks and the Chair will cover our recommended changes to the tree ordinance.

Mr. Bob Curry, Committee Vice-Chair reported that he has been spending time on community gardens as the city is getting interested in changing the ordinance to make the existing gardens legal. There is one city sponsored community garden in Lake Highlands that has 96 plots. The City of Detroit previously made a concerted effort in establishing community gardens in their downtown district. Community gardens help reduce our environmental footprint by using locally grown produce. Usually a part of the produce from these gardens goes to the local Food Bank. Mr. Eric Griffin, Director for the Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ) and others are working on potential ordinance changes. Any ideas on community gardens should be sent to Mr. Eric Griffin as he is the point person for the City on this subject.

Mr. Phil Erwin, Dallas Chief Arborist, reported that the reforestation program plans are moving slowly as the price agreement with local nurseries has not been approved by the city. However, Mr. Erwin is putting together order for trees this month. The first in line is the Jefferson Median Beautification project.

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Regarding the sidewalk/tree conflict issue discussed in our last meeting, Councilmember Allen requested that the issue be resolved without taking down trees, if possible. While looking for alternatives, Mr. Erwin found a new concept – Neighborhood Management Plans (NMP). These would be programs that the city would help to establish in order to manage neighborhood trees. The plan could be for 3 years to 10 years and start out as a Forest Management Plan to take care of dead or declining trees on vacant lots. The plan could help deal with parkway and alley conflicts, utility conflicts, organize the neighborhood to monitor construction sites and help organize them for tree planting programs. Once a plan has been established, the city would be able to deal with the property owners on a neighborhood basis, rather than an individual basis. This plan could also help the property owners with cost sharing or coops for maintenance on newly planted trees and other trees that property owners are not able to care for by themselves. This resource could be available when neighborhoods want to organize. If they are under a NMP, property owners could escape code fines. If this could be put in place, it could help make a healthier urban forest for Dallas. Mr. Erwin asked that the committee consider this plan and give him feedback. It was suggested that a template be created with a check list of what options property owners might have. . There was a suggestion that taxes for TIF districts could be raised to help pay for tree maintenance. Mr. Erwin advised that Mr. Micah Pace, Committee Liaison for the Texas Forest Service, is interested in helping with the template. Additional input was requested from committee members. A quick response was requested from committee members as Mr. Erwin needs to start moving on the program.

Mr. Stan Aten, Committee Liaison to the Oak Cliff Earth Day Event, suggested that the city consider piloting the Neighborhood Management Plan program in 3 neighborhoods; in particular, he suggested Oak Cliff, South Dallas and West Dallas or East Dallas. Ms. Janette Monear, Executive Director of the Texas Trees Foundation, advised that a program similar to this was established in the worst area of Minneapolis. In this four block area of older homes, educational workshops were given to the homeowners and a neighborhood tree inventory was taken. They worked with the housing department for weatherization of those homes still occupied. This helped to create strong voices and advocates for trees in the area and eventually the neighborhood created a tree nursery for their property owners.

Ms. Mary Ayala, Committee Liaison for the Trinity Watershed Management Office, advised that the training and maintenance event in the Trinity Forest was cancelled due to the weather. She advised that the Trinity River Project name was changed to the Trinity Watershed Management Project and Mr. Kelly High, formerly the Director of the Street Department, is the new Department Director. The chair requested an update on the new city department names and directors.

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Ms. Ayala advised that the Student Conservation Association (SCA) is scheduled for a work day in the Trinity Forest on October 24th, weather permitting. She will touch base with the Citizen Foresters on potential dates for invasive species removal efforts. Mrs. Beckelman, suggested that Mr. Jim Flood be contacted for the application of a chemical herbicide as he now has a chemical application license (as required by the city). Ms. Ayala advised that would be a good idea since the SCA is not allowed to apply chemicals.

Ms. Ayala also updated the committee on the ADA trail that she reported in the last meeting which was in need of repair. The trail was repaired but now needs to be repaired again due to damage from the recent rains. Mrs. Ayala advised that the Trinity River Audubon Center (TRAC) is open to the public on the 3rd Thursday of each month, free of charge. Night time events are scheduled for these days. Anyone in their same zip code (75217) is allowed to attend free of charge on any date.

Mr. Bill Seaman, Team Leader for Land Planning, Development and City Codes, reported that the Tree Ordinance Task Force is still meeting on a weekly basis with one more meeting scheduled. The results of the Task Force should be released soon after the next meeting. Once they are released, the committee can complete our final recommendations and brief the Mayor as well as City Council. In the long term our recommendations will go to the Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee (ZOAC), and the public can access the document through City Secretaries Office. Therefore, it is not legally necessary for another public meeting for stakeholders. Mr. Seaman hopes to have a copy available for the committee possibly by the next meeting.

Mr. Houser advised he is working with Mr. Jeff Quinters, Committee Liaison for ONCOR, on potential recommended changes to the tree ordinance for tree and power line issues. Mr. Quinters efforts are greatly appreciated by the committee.

Mr. Mike FitzGerald, Team Leader for Public Relations and Media, reported that all the new website text was recently uploaded. Aesthetic attributes are now being generated by our webmaster. Mr. FitzGerald has also been working on the publicity campaign for the Adopt-a-Median program to let the citizens of Dallas know what is available. The big kickoff for this campaign will be scheduled for sometime this fall.

Mr. Houser advised that Mr. Kurt Kretsinger authorized a donation of \$250.00 for the Jefferson Street Beautification Project which was forwarded to the Dallas Park Foundation for payment.

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Mr. Kretsinger, Team Leader for Planting and Transplanting, advised that a work day for tree maintenance on the Mockingbird planting and on the committee's Skillman project will soon be scheduled. Mr. Larner noted that the Citizen Foresters will be glad to help when notified of the date. Mr. Kretsinger advised he has been trying to get corporations to donate funds (sponsorship) for the maintenance of our Skillman trees. He noted that we will need to replace 3 of the trees that did not survive.

Mr. Eric Larner, Team Leader for the Citizen Foresters, reported that the 2009 class has four more classes and 2 field trips before their training is complete. The Citizen Foresters have manned many booths and tables in the past month. The "Tree Talkers" in the Master Gardener program provided presentations for the recent home and garden show. The Citizen Foresters will also have a booth at the Trinity River Audubon Center on October 10th and are looking forward to some tree planting events where they can get their hands dirty. The designing and ordering of name badges for the Citizen Foresters are in the final stages.

Mr. Tim Herfel, Committee Liaison to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), reported he has more information regarding levee vegetation. He received an e-mail from the EPA in Region 9 (San Francisco) on a project on the American River. The Corps created a framework or "basic tenants" for levee vegetation. He also reported that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) request for proposals is out and we have 45 days to apply for a grant. The next opportunity will be in 18 months. TCEQ receives \$5,000,000 per year for grants and is looking for more urban projects. A matching grant of 60% to their 40 percent is required. He advised that the Chair has been discussing a Clean Water Act, NPS pollution grant to demonstrate the viability of using trees for the purpose of removing pollution from a watershed. The committee was very excited about this possibility.

Mr. Eric Larner, Committee Liaison for the Dallas County Master Gardeners, reported that the 2009 Master Gardener class is almost complete. He will have a table at the last class, to attract additional "Tree Talkers" from this group.

Ms. Janette Monear, Executive Director, Texas Trees Foundation, reported that they spent a lot of time last year to redesign their organization. As a result, they are just now coming out of hibernation. They will have a new logo and stated mission - "investing in trees for a healthy community".

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Ms. Monear reported that they have presented their "Road Map" program in California, San Antonio, and Minneapolis and the program should be completed in 2 weeks. They found that the city has a 30% tree canopy, including University Park and Highland Park. They have been able to break out tree information by Councilmember district. For instance, Oak Cliff has a 26% canopy cover and Harry Hines has 8%. They are also working with the City of Dallas in various departments to find projects on which they can work with the city. They are working on templates so they can present to the committee at the request of the Mayor's office.

The "Road Map" involves mapping and planting on private land, in cooperation with ONCOR. They are also working with DISD for programs for middle and high schools and have received corporate funding for 3 schools. When a question was asked about maintenance of the trees, Ms. Monear advised that the Texas Trees Foundation will maintain the trees for the 1st summer and will be getting the parents of the students to adopt the trees at their school and maintain them after that. TTF has national funding and local sponsors for this program.

Ms. Monear announced that a celebration event for Father John Stack, who has been planting trees in the area for the last 25 years, will be held at Vines High School on Sunday, November 22nd. The committee was glad to hear that Father Stack is being honored for his work and his passion for trees.

Mr. Stan Aten, Committee Liaison for the Oak Cliff Earth Day Event, advised that the Earth Day event will be held on Sunday, April 18, 2010. Those wishing to register for a space can start in early November. He suggested early registration as they filled their booth space area early last year. There were 8,000 attendees last year and they expect more this year so it is an excellent opportunity to advise the public on trees.

Mr. Aten also noted that he observed that in public spaces and private development that most of the trees used have been of the same species. This includes city property. He asked if there was anything the city could do to increase diversity. Mr. Seaman advised him that Dallas has always had a one-tree-species idea. There has also been major marketing from nurseries identifying the "perfect tree", which we usually find at most nurseries. This situation is addressed in the matrix, which is included in our recommendations for the tree ordinance.

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Ms. Monear advised the committee that she attended the Texas Urban Forest Conference, at which the attendees were advised research shows that most people do not apply mulch correctly and they are therefore they are not advocating the use of mulch for trees. In nursery production, trees can get girdling roots. The committee members were advised to take the plant out of the pot to check for girdling roots before they purchase a tree. Ms. Monear suggested we google Bonnie Appleton and/or Ed Gillman to get more information on the mulch application presentation given at the conference.

Mr. Jeff Quinters with ONCOR, advised that he attended the ISA convention in St. Louis and reported that it was an excellent conference. There was a presentation on the Missouri Streambed Project, which was very interesting.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Beckelman
Assistant Secretary