

MINUTES
Final
City of Dallas
Urban Forest Advisory Committee

Tuesday, June 6, 2006, 4:00pm
Park and Recreation Department Conference Room
Dallas City Hall

Attending Committee Members:

Michael Anderson, Michael Hellmann, Steve Houser, Chair; Cassandra McLaughlin, Councilmember Pauline Medrano, Councilmember Ed Oakley, Jeff Quinters, Luis Salcedo, Bill Seaman, Keith Thomas

Absent Committee Members:

Councilmember Leo Chaney, Jr., Chip Clint, Matt Grubisich, Wesley Harder, Frank Libro, Mayor's Chief of Staff; Gary Olp, Norm Strang, Michael Sultan

Attending Guests, and Team Leaders and Team Members:

Fred Burrell, Texas Agricultural Extension Service; Dick Coupe, North Texas Master Naturalists; Laura Fiffick, Director of the Office of Environmental Quality; Kurt Kretsinger, Team Leader; Beverly Guthrie, North Texas Master Naturalists; Jim Wagner, North Texas Master Naturalists; Jared White, Dallas Park and Recreation Department

Chairman, Steve Houser, called the June 2006 meeting of the Urban Forest Advisory Committee to order at 4:03pm. The Chair circulated the Sign-In Sheet, asking each attendee to record their attendance. He distributed copies of the meeting agenda noting that the agenda is prepared about a week prior to the meeting and that there may be changes to the distributed agenda leading up to the time the meeting is called to order.

Mr. Houser stated that copies of the May meeting minutes were emailed to all of the committee members for review and asked if there were any additions, revisions, or corrections to the May minutes. Being none, the Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Quinters made the motion to approve, and Mr. Salcedo seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair noted that the July meeting would fall on Tuesday, July 4 and ask for a consensus on an alternate meeting day. It was suggested the July meeting be rescheduled for the following Tuesday, July 11. Mr. Hellmann confirmed that the boardroom was available, so it was verbally agreed to that the next meeting of the Urban Forest Advisory Committee will be held in the Park and Recreation Boardroom at City Hall on Tuesday, July 11, 2006.

Mr. Houser noted that there were guests at the meeting and he asked that they introduce themselves to the committee. Beverly Guthrie, a North Texas Master Naturalist, and Laura Fiffick, Director of the City of Dallas' Office of Environmental Quality introduced themselves to the committee. Mr. Houser welcomed them and thanked them for their interest in the committee and for attending the meeting.

Mr. Houser asked the meeting attendees if there was anyone who did not have a copy of the committee contact information. He added that the information is available on request.

The Chair noted that he would meet with Emily Ramshaw, *Dallas Morning News* reporter, on Thursday to discuss the Urban Forest Advisory Committee, its goals, and strategic plan. Mr. Houser stated that he intends to ask Ms. Ramshaw to contact members of the committee, and for committee members to be prepared for a telephone call from her regarding UFAC. Additionally, he asked committee members to watch for an article in the *Dallas Morning News* and everyone “including aunts and uncles” to respond to the article by writing a brief letter to the editor. The Dallas Morning News tracks responses to articles and judges the articles importance bases on the number of responses.

Mr. Houser opened discussion regarding the potential overlap in the goals and objectives of the Critical Area Teams, in particular the Tree Planting/Transplanting Team and the Tree/Forest Maintenance and Management Team. He added that once the teams establish their own goals and objectives, any overlap would be addressed.

Mr. Hellmann reported that eight applicants were scheduled for interviews for the Dallas Urban Forester position. He hoped the interview process could be completed by the end of June and a job offer tendered by the end of July.

Mr. Houser asked for reports from the Critical Area Team leaders and called on Mr. Kretsinger. Mr. Kretsinger stated that goals needed to be established for the Tree Planting/Transplanting Team and there were questions as to who would establish the goals. Mr. Houser stated that he would prefer that each team establish its own goals within the guidelines of the committee’s mission statement and strategic plan. Mr. Kretsinger stated that it was not clear to the public and to some city departments what constituted public space when it concerned trees growing on street medians and street parkways. Mr. Hellmann stated that street medians were the responsibility of the Street Services Department, while the parkways, the space between the sidewalk and curb, are the responsibility of the Park and Recreation Department. Mr. Kretsinger stated that he receives telephone calls from Dallas citizens wanting to know how to get trees to plant in the medians that are referrals from the Street Services Department.

Mr. Seaman distributed a draft copy of the goals and objectives for the Land Planning, Development, and City Codes Team. He noted that the goals and objectives were taken directly from the committee’s strategic goals and objectives and that almost all of the statements had some aspect that fell into the scope of the team. Mr. Seaman stated that he found considerable overlap with the other teams, but added those items could be identified at a later date and the committee could give the teams direction regarding addressing the overlap.

The Chair introduced Mr. Salcedo, who distributed a copy of an outline document for the Surveys, Inventory and Tracking team. The document, “Urban Forest Advisory Committee—Urban Forest Inventory Study”, described the study, listed objectives, and then listed the benefits of a similar study which was done in Houston. Mr. Salcedo stated that the Houston study cost approximately \$700,000 and he projected that a similar study in Dallas would cost approximately \$1,000,000. He added that there were ways to reduce the cost of the study. One way worth exploring was to have trained volunteers, who are supervised by a paid project manager, gather the data and have the data reviewed by committee members and professionals in the appropriate fields. A brief, general discussion about ways to reduce the cost of the study and ways to raise funding followed.

Mr. Salcedo distributed a copy of a fund-raising letter to the committee for review and comment. He stated Frank Libro and the Chair had drafted the letter for the use of raising funds for Dallas Urban Forestry. The Chair stated that it was the committee member’s first opportunity to read and review

the letter and asked the committee to consider any changes the committee would want to make to the document. He also asked for the committee's input regarding whether each committee member should sign the letter, or if a single signature by the committee chair would be adequate. The committee concluded that the chair may sign documents approved by committee, without requiring signatures of all committee members. There was general open discussion about the letter. Councilmember Oakley questioned if the committee had the authority to solicit funds for the city and recommended that the Chair review the letter with the City Attorney before any action be taken. Michael Hellmann stated that he, as a member of the City Staff, would prefer that his signature not appear on the document. The merits of City Staff and Councilmembers signing a letter designed to solicit private funding was discussed. The Chair stated that he would contact Mr. Libro and the City Attorney and get direction on the specifics of the letter, its purpose, and content, and act on that advice. Mr. Houser tabled the discussion for further review.

Mr. Coupe introduced the idea that regional universities might be a source for processing GIS collected data for a city tree survey or inventory. A brief discussion followed, acknowledging that financial support for such an arrangement might come in the form of a grant from funds raised by the Urban Forest Advisory Committee to the university,

The Chair recognized Laura Fiffick, Director of the Office of Environmental Quality. She noted that she and Mr. Hellmann had previously discussed the possibility of budgeting funds for executing a study on the city's Heat Island Effect. Ms. Fiffick stated that the city was investigating opportunities to gain air standards compliance, and that identifying heat islands and reducing their impact as contributors to high ozone levels was a program that could have a direct connection with the committee's goals and objectives. Ms. Fiffick stated that \$35,000 had been included in the budget proposal for the coming fiscal year. The intent was to contract with the Houston Advance Research Center, which would require \$25,000, and for the remaining \$10,000 to be spent on public education.

Mr. Houser stated that he would be briefing the Council's Quality of Life Committee on Monday, June 12, between 12:00-noon and 2:00pm. Any committee member interested in attending is welcome to do so. The purpose of the briefing is to present the adopted Urban Forest Advisory Committee's goals and objectives to the Council.

Mr. Houser announced an Urban Forestry Technology Workshop to be presented by the Texas Urban Forestry Council in Plano on Monday June 19th.

The Chair asked Mr. Hellmann to report on his findings regarding the per capita spending on urban forestry by the City of Dallas. Mr. Hellmann reported that approximately 4-1/2% of all park maintenance relates to tree care. That amounted to \$914,000 during the past year. The estimated population of the City of Dallas is 1.2 million. There was a general discussion about what factors were included in the \$914,000. The committee's consensus was that a considerable number of tree care items were not included, and that the requirement of \$2.00 per capita required by the National Arbor Day Foundation to be a Tree City was not outside being an obtainable goal.

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Jeff Quinters and seconded by Luis Salcedo. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 5:07pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Bill Seaman, Committee Member
Draft minutes pending committee approval.