

Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas
Tuesday, August 7, 2007 4:00pm
Park and Recreation Department Conference Room
Dallas City Hall

Attendees:

Stan Aten, Sara Beckelman, Dick Coupe, Philip Erwin, Michael Fitzgerald, Matt Grubisich, Steve Houser, Michael Hellmann, Lora Hinchcliff, Eric Larner, Cassandra McLaughlin, Gary Olp, Walter Passmore, Jeff Quinters.

Chair, Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and welcomed all Committee Members and guests. Copies of the meeting agenda were distributed and the sign-in sheet was circulated. The Chair asked the committee members if there were corrections or additions to the July minutes. With none noted, the minutes were approved unanimously. (Motion to accept – Dick Coupe, Second – Eric Larner)

Nicole Waldman, Environmental Coordinator with the City of Dallas, Office of Environmental Quality, provided a briefing regarding the “Sustainable Skylines – Urban Heat Initiative”. Put into action in July 2007, the mitigation project contains seven initiatives and is being funded with \$35,000.00 from the EPA. A Houston based project contractor (Houston Advanced Research Center or HARC) has been hired to conduct the urban heat island effect study and to identify hot spots in the city. A presentation of urban heat island mitigation strategies and recommendations from HARC is scheduled for September 27th, 2007. The second part of the study, an Urban Tree Canopy Cover Assessment, will develop objectives to increase tree canopy coverage. Ms. Waldman will provide the Dallas Urban Forest Advisory Committee with a copy of the report. Ms. Waldman informed the committee that her office hopes to offer education opportunities for the city, public and private sector.

Team Leader Kurt Kretsinger was not able to attend tonight’s meeting. Work continues on the guide *ABC’s of Planting Trees in Dallas*. Because it is intended to offer a baseline for training, Kurt recommended that the guide also address tree girdling caused by “weed eater blight”, according to UFAC Chair Steve Houser.

Tree/Forest Management Team Leader, Mr. Walter Passmore, reported that he continues training with the Dallas City Park Department and City Street Services Department. The executive team at the city streets department is fully endorsing the program. To date 23 classes for 581 city employees have been conducted. Dallas City Park Department employees now sign a commitment to protect trees, especially the root system, when digging. More mulching is being encouraged to reduce tree damage as well as water usage, and the department director is asking for more wood chippers to recycle material that will be applied as mulch around trees.

Forest Surveys, Inventory & Tracking Team Leader Luis Salcedo had no report.

Land Planning, Development and City Codes Team Leader Bill Seaman had no report.

Public Relations & Media Team Leader Mike Fitzgerald had no report.

Acting Chief Arborist, Phil Erwin, provided the City Arborist report. First, a new building official and assistant have been hired for the City Building Inspection Department. Second, the Re-Forestation Program will soon be kicking off. Several neighborhoods have already been scheduled in. Third, Mr. Erwin needs suggestions to develop a price agreement program for city tree purchasing. He prefers dealing with 1-2 suppliers and would like to develop a strategy to not have to line item bids for replacement trees and re-forestation projects (price/type/delivery/weekends).

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Fourth, Mr. Erwin opened the floor for discussion regarding how best to deliver to the committee "cases" coming before the Planning/Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment (there are 3 different Boards) or the City Council. The Dallas UFAC needs to determine if the cases require a response as a committee or as citizens. Of heightened interest is the recent proposal regarding development at Audelia Road to eliminate tree mitigation (2,013 caliper inches). Phil recommended becoming familiar with Article 10 before continuing discussion on this matter. Because we would have to propose a position statement, the topic was tabled until more information can be provided the committee. Last, it was announced that two more (city employees) have achieved certified arborist status.

Matt Grubisich announced the 2007 Texas Blacklands Urban Forest Council Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament is scheduled Friday, September 21 at Pecan Hollow Golf Course in Plano, TX. The event raises funds to send 2-3 qualified individuals to Arborological 101 class to qualify for certification. Dr. Todd Watson at Texas A&M prepares the attendees to pass the ISA certification test.

Dick Coupe informed the committee that the North Texas Master Naturalists are moving ahead with their presentation regarding the Buck-Eye Trail for the 2007 Texas Master Naturalist State Meeting as well as submitting a nomination for a project award.

Mr. Eric Lerner informed the committee that the Dallas County Master Gardeners new intern class started last week. UFAC Chair Steve Houser is scheduled to speak to the group in 2-3 weeks, and Eric hopes to push a few volunteers our way.

Mr. Bryan Kilburn was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Steve Houser offered a re-cap of the Trinity Forest Management Plan, which is scheduled for completion in six months.

It was brought to the committee's attention that the Texas Trees Foundation is involved in a large mitigation project. The foundation is also undergoing some staff and program changes. A candidate has recently been interviewed to replace past executive director, Mike Bradshaw, who is now employed in East Texas.

Mike Hellmann and Steve Houser's meeting with Mayor Tom Leppert has been rescheduled for Thursday August 9.

Prior to adjourning, another fundraising suggestion was made which would parallel something similar to the Subaru sales and marketing concept (72 trees planted for every car sold).

With no other items introduced, the UFAC Chair adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Hinchcliff
Committee Secretary