

Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas
Tuesday, May 1, 2007 4:00pm
Park and Recreation Department Conference Room
Dallas City Hall

Attendees:

Imana Cordova, Dick Coupe, Philip Erwin, Michael FitzGerald, Matt Grubisich, Steve Houser, Eric Lerner; Gary Olp, Walter Passmore, Jeff Quinters, Cassandra McLaughlin, Luis Salcedo, Norm Strang, Meghna Tare,

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 April minutes. With none noted, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Mr. Houser stated that the recent column by Bob Miller in the Business Section of the *Dallas Morning News* generated interest from the community. He and Walter Passmore received a number of responses, notably from Ron Bush and from Edee Kuhn.

Mr. Houser informed the Committee that Mr. Chip Clint had submitted his resignation from the Committee due to personal and business commitments. The Chair thanked Mr. Clint for his work on the committee from its inception.

Mr. Houser expressed his regrets for missing the April meeting. He asked if there was any additional discussion on the briefing by Dr. Briggs and Dr. Qiu. Mr. Houser stated that other city and county agencies, including NTCOG and Vision North Texas and the Urban Land Institute would benefit from any survey and thus, should be contacted. He added that they might be able to assist in funding the analysis or helping identify other funding sources.

Mr. Houser distributed an article on a New York City tree evaluation. He stated that the article comes close to placing a price tag on nature. The article noted that in the study it was determined that for each \$1.00 spent on trees, a resulting \$5.60 in benefits was returned. A previous study in Los Angeles had shown over \$3.00 in benefits. Steve stated that the difference in the findings might be related to the percentage of canopy cover. These findings show that investing in the urban forest can bring a 500% return on the investment, and trees offer a much greater value than any other part of a city's budget. Mr. Houser also distributed copies of "How to get Wall Street to Hug a Tree", which describes the need to make conservation fit mainstream business. Mr. Houser recommended each committee member take the time to read the articles and use them as educational resources.

Walter Passmore reported the Citizen Forester program was being developed. Final details were being completed and that first priority participation in the program would be given to those participants who would complete the entire program, as apposed to those who would choose to attend single classes. Attendees will "pay back" the training in volunteer hours. A few committee members suggested that make-up days be offered since the classes will start in the summer. One of the program goals is to develop community advocates and adequate volunteers needed to plant trees. Mr. Passmore added that it would be good to have corporate sponsorship to cover some of the program's cost. TXU was discussed as a funding prospect. Cassandra McLaughlin mentioned that International Paper had provided funding for urban forestry projects.

Mr. Passmore reported the in the 2007 fiscal year, the Dallas Park and Recreation Department planted 1,156 trees, with 400 more scheduled for planting. The total should exceed 1,500. Additionally, the department provided urban forestry training for 304 employees and held 24 instructional classes.

Mr. Passmore stated that additional information had been added to the UFAC website, dallastrees.org, including a donation link. A donation of \$150.00 has already been received through that donation link.

Team Leader Luis Salcedo, had no report.

Team Leader Mike FitzGerald reported on the media results of the tree climbing training session and the Arbor Day activities. He distributed news articles from the two events. Additionally, Mr. Fitzgerald noted that he had contacted Dr. Morgan at Texas Christian University, who is an expert on the "Heat Island Effect". He would like to use Dr. Morgan's research report for UFAC's next public relation effort to show how trees can reduce urban summer temperatures.

City Arborist, Phil Erwin had no report but stated he would have items to bring to the committee next month. The Chair asked that Mr. Erwin include a status report on the City's Reforestation Fund.

Walter Passmore reported on the Dallas Arbor Day Celebration, the Oak Cliff Earth Day Celebration, and the Love of the Lake Celebration.

Mr. Houser noted that Earth Day Jam was rescheduled to May 26, 2007. The committee remains involved in the event and the Mayor's PSA will be shown at the event.

The Chair announced that he planned to present a copy of draft By-Laws for the committee's consideration at the June meeting. The document would address financial protocol, ethics guidelines, and other items.

It was noted that the committee continues to seek a secretary, primarily for the purpose of taking meeting minutes.

Mr. Houser called for any additional reports or issues. Guest, Imana Cordova, reported to the committee her concerns regarding the possible removal and damage by DART, to trees outside the transit system's right-of-way, as they construct the segment along Scyene Road to Lake June Road. Ms. Cordova requested the committee to help her neighborhood by verifying that DART's actions were contained to their easement. City Arborist, Phil Erwin informed Ms. Cordova and committee that he had recently been informed of the concern and was researching the issue.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mike FitzGerald and Bill Seaman,
Committee Members