

## Urban Forest Advisory Committee City of Dallas

Tuesday, April 1, 2008 4:00pm  
Conference Room B • L1 Dallas City Hall  
Dallas City Hall

### Attendees:

Stan Aten, Sara Beckelman, Fred Burrell, Nicole Cooper, Phil Erwin, Michael Fitzgerald, James Folger, Susan Grabar, Michael Hellmann, Lora Hinchcliff, Steve Houser, Kurt Kretsinger, Eric Larner, David Marquis, Amanda Popken, Jeff Quinters, Bill Seaman, Richard Smart, Steve Worden.

UFAC Chair, Mr. Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and welcomed all Committee Members and guests. The Chair asked the committee members if there were corrections or additions to the March minutes. With none noted, the minutes were approved unanimously (Motion to accept – Mr. Jeff Quinters, Second – Mr. Bill Seaman).

Mr. Houser informed the committee that we still need volunteer help on April 26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> for the Dallas Zoo's Party for the Planet. He noted that Citizen Forester, Ms. Lisa Willis, and the immediate past President for the North Texas Chapter Master Naturalists, Mrs. Sara Beckelman, volunteered to help during both days of this event. We also need volunteers to help with the city's EarthFest hosted downtown on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Without volunteer assistance, we simply cannot attend all the rapidly growing number of educational opportunities associated with the current "green" movement. Expanding the number of Citizen Foresters in the future may help to resolve the shortage. The Texas Tree Climbing Championship and workshop will be held this Friday and Saturday (April 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>) in Fort Worth Trinity Park just north of IH-30 on University.

The Chair mentioned a quote from a recent Dallas Morning News article (previously emailed to the committee) stating: "Today, no one at City Hall seems eager to reopen the tree ordinance issue...and with development slowing to a snails pace in a sluggish economy, the ordinance is a pressing issue only to people that live near the problem". Mr. Houser expressed some concern over the statement since we are working to develop recommended changes to the ordinance and mentioned that he sent a letter to the editor regarding the issue.

The Chair noted that he is scheduled to brief the Quality of Life Committee (comprised of seven Councilmembers) regarding the establishment of a Department or Office of Urban Forestry and how it could fit into city government, on April 14<sup>th</sup>. He recently met with all Councilmembers (except one) and all were supportive of the proposed addition to city government as well as many other committee initiatives. Senior Park Planner, Mr. Michael Hellmann will also provide a briefing on how tree related issues are currently handled by each city department.

Mr. Houser brought the committee up to date on the "Adopt a Median Program". Tree plantings will be subject to street department approval as there may be some median restrictions regarding tree size. Furthermore, the street department prefers that medians be adopted and maintained under one group. The Chair met with Councilmember Tennell Atkins, who adopted a median near Redbird Airport three years ago. As a result, the Chair requested that Councilmember Atkins consider being the primary spokesperson for the initiative. Establishing an endowment fund could also be considered and if the city were to establish a department or office of urban forestry, maintenance could perhaps fall under the new department. Chief Arborist, Mr. Phil Erwin noted that individuals may not apply for reforestation funds. Mr. Houser also pointed out that the cumulative Dallas area urban forests may equate to a \$205 billion asset, such as the Houston urban forest. As a highly valued asset, we need a part of city government that is responsible for its management.

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Mrs. Nicole Cooper, Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ) Liaison provided an update regarding the recent heat island survey by the Houston Advanced Research Center (David Hitchcock) and the expected public announcement/media event. The media events will include one announcement for the "Cool Roof/Cool Concrete" initiative and one for the urban forest/Adopt a Median program. She also covered the Dallas Sustainable Skyline Initiative being promoted by OEQ and the EPA.

Mr. David Marquis, Green Building Task Force Representative noted the completion of their work in developing green building codes. The Chair expressed appreciation and the committee offered a round of applause. Mr. Marquis also introduced Ms. Amanda Popken, Co Chair for the UT Arlington's Green Roof Committee.

The Dallas Urban Forester Report was provided by Mr. Michael Hellmann, Sr. Park Planner. Applications are still being accepted for the vacant urban forester position, and more office space still needs to be found for the forester. The Arbor Day/Mary Kay "Pink Doing Green" event is this Friday, April 4. Mary Kay employees will complete the planting of 45 Red Bud trees starting at 10:00 a.m. followed by a press conference at noon.

Mr. Phil Erwin provided the Chief Arborist report. David Rhoads is eliminating outdated information from the city arborist website and assisting with information updates. Phil informed the committee that *The Dallas Morning News* March 31 tree mitigation deadline notice was incorrect regarding the Grady Niblo site. The Grady Niblo issue is more complicated and involves the city attorneys and legal department. An extension of time required to mitigate for removed trees was allowed by the city. Mr Erwin is reviewing the interpretation of building inspection procedures regarding the preservation of existing trees. Of additional interest, Mr. Erwin created an outstanding discussion (Google) group to provide an open forum for discussion regarding tree and urban forestry issues and he encouraged others to join: <http://groups.google.com/group/dallastrees?hl=en>

Ms. Lora Hinchcliff offered a Wood Waste Recycling update. While Samuell Farm may offer the acreage necessary to recycle tree trimmings for the Parks Department, the site falls outside the city limits. In addition, fuel and transportation considerations may make the site cost prohibitive. More research is needed to understand city permitting and codes relative to stockpiling bulk materials (i.e. parks department cannot stock pile tree trimmings for mulch unless it is covered).

Mr. Houser provided a Forest Surveys, Inventory & Tracking report. Completing a tree survey and inventory is not as simple as we anticipated. Auto Correlated Data (or ACS which is similar to LIDAR data) may be available from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The Chair is investigating the possibility of using the data for the Dallas survey/inventory. He is also investigating a hyperspectral analysis which is very new but may provide a part of the required survey/inventory data. He is also discussing the potential to use the analysis to locate and manage invasive (non-native) species within the park department properties. The Chair is also checking with other city departments that can use the analysis for various purposes before moving forward.

Mr. Houser was asked to serve on the hiring committee to fill the vacancy for Texas Forest Service Region Urban Forester and mentioned that he will be working with Janette Monear, Executive Director Texas Trees Foundation, to encourage more federal funding for urban forestry, especially for Texas and the DFW region.

Land Planning, Development and City Code Team Leader, Mr. Bill Seaman, informed us that the committee continues its work and will provide a report in the future.

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Public Relations and Media Team Leader, Mr. Mike Fitzgerald is working with Planting & Transplanting Team Leader, Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, on a showcase median tree planting project. They have selected two medians on Skillman, drafted a project plan, received input and were able to meet with the street department March 11. Next step is to submit a plan to the street department, find out how to proceed, and then implement the project. Mr. Phil Erwin recommended they work closely with Mrs. Crystal Lee regarding the MOWmentum agreement. While stipulations are outlined in the MOWmentum agreement, the street department will need to give final approval of the plan. A soil depth and quality analysis of the medians is also recommended prior to finalizing plant selections.

Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Tree Planting & Transplanting Team Leader offered to manage the median maintenance following planting, but the committee will need to address watering expenses for first two years. Also, Mr. Houser's company will provide pro bono fertilization and insect control for two years. A discussion ensued regarding possible company sponsorship, civic group sponsorship, or neighborhood association involvement, but no decision was made regarding how to proceed.

Mr. Eric Lerner, Dallas County Master Gardener Liaison and Citizen Forester Team Leader, presented the final 2008 Citizen Forester training program (dates, sites, classes).

Mr. Stan Aten, Liaison for the Oak Cliff Earth Day event provided the committee with posters and information about the upcoming April 19 Oak Cliff Earth Day celebration. Over 3,000 people are expected to attend. Mayor Tom Leppert will be participating in a tree planting scheduled for 2:30 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Hinchcliff  
Committee Secretary