

## Urban Forest Advisory Committee City of Dallas

Tuesday, May 6, 2008 4:00pm  
Conference Room B • L1 Dallas City Hall  
Dallas City Hall

### Attendees:

Sara Beckelman, Nicole Cooper, Phil Erwin, Michael Fitzgerald, Matt Grubisich, Michael Hellmann, Lora Hinchcliff, Steve Houser, Randy Johnson, Kurt Kretsinger, Eric Lerner, Cassandra McLaughlin, Amanda Popken, Bill Seaman, Richard Smart, Shirlene Smith.

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. Kurt Kretsinger, Second – Ms. Lora Hinchcliff).

Mr. Houser shared with the committee and guests a copy of the presentation provided to the Quality of Life Committee on February 25th. Although initially formatted as a 30-minute presentation, Mr. Houser was able to condense and present the information to meet a reduced allotted time frame of only 10 minutes. The committee, which is comprised of seven council members, requested a follow up briefing. The topic requested for the second briefing includes how a department or office of urban forestry fits into governmental structure around the country. A power point presentation was prepared and a copy was handed out by the Chair. The briefing is scheduled for June 9, 2008. Also, a companion briefing on how tree related issues are currently handled by each city department will be offered by Michael Hellmann, Sr. Park Planner.

Mr. Houser reported that Dallas Parks Foundation account balance at the end of the quarter was \$80,919.38. The only significant expenditures during the first quarter were for our website. Furthermore, the Chair was pleased to announce that Council Member Tennell Atkins recently agreed to be the spokesperson for our Adopt a Median Program. It was previously mentioned to the committee that Mr. Atkins adopted a median in the Red Bird area several years ago and spent \$20,000-\$30,000 of his personal funds for tree and landscape installation as well as maintenance of the median. On behalf of the committee, Mr. Houser expressed our sincere appreciation to the following:

- Mr. Phil Erwin, Chief Arborist; Mr. Eric Lerner, Team Leader for the Citizen Forester Program & Master Gardener Liaison and Mrs. Sara Beckelman, Past North Texas Master Naturalist President for contributing their personal time to educate the public during the Oak Cliff Earth Day celebration.
- Also, Mrs. Beckelman for her hard work in educating the public during two days of the Dallas Zoo's Party for the Planet.
- Mrs. Beckelman, who lives in Irving, was recently recognized by the Irving City Council for her outstanding personal contribution of almost 2,000 hours toward environmental causes in the city. She is also approaching **5,000 volunteer hours** contributed to the North Texas Master Naturalist's.
- The Chair requested and received a hearty round of applause from the committee in recognition of the extra effort by these individuals.

Office of Environmental Quality Liaison, Nicole Cooper, provided an update on the recent heat island survey by the Houston Advanced Research Center. David Hitchcock is working to include the Adopt a Median Program as well as other committee initiatives in his report. It is important to make sure it is well coordinated prior to public announcements and media events. Therefore, the

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timing of the media rollout of the Dallas Urban Heat Island Study has been extended to late summer or early fall, and a town hall meeting will be scheduled prior to the city council July break. There have also been discussions of hosting a full conference to include speakers. More information will be forthcoming.

On June 10, 2008 the OEQ department is hosting Ozone Day in Dallas for Dallas City employees. Vendors such as DART and NTCOG will be participating in the event. The Committee was asked to help educate the public and is requesting volunteers/Citizen Foresters to help on this date. Please let Mr. Houser know if you can help. The city sponsored [www.GreenDallas.net](http://www.GreenDallas.net) now offers downloadable 'green' guides containing environmental information for residents and businesses. Additionally the website provides links to the Dallas Urban Forest Advisory Committee website [www.DallasTrees.org](http://www.DallasTrees.org). Mrs. Cooper informed the committee of a forthcoming Dallas City lawn mower exchange program scheduled June 21, 2008 at Dallas City Hall horseshoe parking area 1500 Marilla Street. Residents can exchange their gas powered mowers for cordless electrical mowers as part of the Sue Pope Fund which awarded \$1 million for clean air efforts in North Texas. \$45,000 has been allocated for the lawn mower exchange program which will provide a 50% discount to residents who trade in their gas powered mowers and buy a cleaner electric mower. The Chair agreed to forward the information to the committee.

Mr. Phil Erwin provided the Chief Arborist report. As we learned last month, the Grady Niblo issue is more complicated and involves city attorneys plus the legal department. An extension of time was allowed by the city and the Grady Niblo officials are requesting a special exception to allow an alternative mitigation plan via the Board of Adjustments on June 25. Additionally there is a community meeting being held tonight regarding the Walnut Hill – Skillman proposed extensive removal of trees along the creek banks which could greatly affect the flood plain area. There is an effort to make sure the fill permit goes through the flood plain management office to gain approval.

Mr. Houser presented an update regarding the Adopt a Median Program and noted that he hopes to receive final approval in the near future. Any concerns regarding future tree care requirements will be addressed (e.g. those who walk away from the MOWmentum program agreement). Mr. Houser is investigating the establishment of an endowment which may have the ability to fund future maintenance for street medians.

The Dallas Urban Forester Report was provided by Mr. Michael Hellmann, Sr. Park Planner. Of the 1,000 applicant hits on the website, the field has been narrowed to eight final applicants. Mr. Hellmann is standing ready to interview for the Urban Forester position when office space becomes available. He can hire to fill the position within one month of completing the interviews. Two boxes of the Dallas Tree Planting Guide were provided to the public during Earth Day and the marketing department would like more to be made available (at least 100 guides per recreation center).

Ms. Lora Hinchcliff, Wood Waste Recycling Team Leader, had no update at this time. Efforts are being made to coordinate existing programs and information with the Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ).

Mr. Luis Salcedo, Forest Surveys, Inventory & Tracking Team Leader was not in attendance. Regarding the Forest survey & inventory, Mr. Houser advised that he is working diligently on finding different kinds of available images, software and data and is getting close to asking

members for approval of funding for a pilot project. The Chair advised that a part of the pilot project is a gamble as it is not known what data we will be able to extract from the images. He will

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investigate further with the city to see if any departments have an interest in the data. If the project can identify up to 30 different species using images, it would be extremely useful in managing the urban forest and the city will be on the cutting edge of current knowledge in this field.

Land Planning, Development and City Code Team Leader, Mr. Bill Seaman, informed us that the committee continues its efforts and work on the tree ordinance recommendations is ongoing. Public Relations and Media Team Leader, Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, is waiting for the Street Department to get back with him following a presentation by him and Mr. Kretsinger regarding a showcase median tree planting project outlined for Skillman at Lovers Lane and Skillman at University. Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Kurt Kretsinger will advise the committee on approval of locations and plans. Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Kretsinger will then follow up with Mr. Phil Erwin, Chief Arborist for the City of Dallas, on the tree varieties that can be used for the project. Mr. Fitzgerald is looking at a new site the Dallas Morning News is running <http://neighborsgoblog.dallasmorningnews.com> as a possible link to showcase the median project which goes hand in hand with the Adopt a Median Program.

Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Tree Planting and Transplanting Team Leader, introduced Shirlene Smith, with Crystal Dallas Marketing. Ms. Smith informed the committee that J. C. Penney, one of their largest clients, is interested in sponsoring a large median project and is considering a grant to fund various plantings as their contribution to the community. Also, Mr. Kretsinger is communicating with the Trinity Learning Center in an effort to include our tree information within the TLC programs.

Dallas County Master Gardener Liaison and Citizen Forester Team Leader, Mr. Eric Larner, informed the committee that the 2008 Citizen Forester training program kicks off on June 11. Mr. Larner worked with Mr. Fitzgerald to develop a press release and Mr. Larner is involved in a publicity plan to roll out the program. He hopes to get more media coverage by working closely with Mr. Mike Fitzgerald. Additionally he contacted HOA's and Master Gardener Associations in Kaufman, Dallas, Collin, Hunt counties to promote the CF program and would like to have a class of 20-25 people. Mr. Larner is trying to develop a concise list of volunteer projects including a Master Gardener showcase event for all projects concerned.

Mr. Matt Grubisich, who is now employed in the private sector, had no update to offer for the Texas Forest Service. No progress has been made to fill the position for Regional Urban Forester.

Ms. Amanda Popken, Co-Chair for the UT Arlington Green Roof Project, announced the first green roof test plots have been established. The plots are located atop the Life Science Building. The students are using two different roof systems, the first with rooftop soil mix and the second with trays. The plots will be monitored for one to one and one-half years. Mostly native plants will be incorporated to test which roof systems and which plants work best.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Hinchcliff  
Committee Secretary