

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas**

**Tuesday, August 5th, 2008 4:00 pm
Conference Room A • L1FN
Dallas City Hall**

Attendees:

Stan Aten, Sara Beckelman, Dick Coupe, Michael Fitzgerald, Susan Grabar, Michael Hellmann, Steve Houser, Eric Lerner, Gretchen Luedtke, David Marquis, Bill Seaman

UFAC Chair, Mr. Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm and welcomed all Committee Members and guests. Gretchen Luedtke (a guest) introduced herself and advised that her interest was in the Timbercreek redevelopment which is on the northwest corner of Northwest Highway and Skillman. The Chair noted that he has been meeting with Team Leader for City Codes, Mr. Bill Seaman and representatives from the building, development and construction industries in an effort to find answers to existing problems with our tree ordinance, since December of 2007. A consensus was reached on numerous important issues and he remains optimistic about the potential for positive results that could affect many development, building or construction projects in the future.

Copies of the minutes from the July 1st meeting (a revised version) were distributed and it was noted that Ms. Marjorie Webb, Marketing Director for the Texas Trees Foundation, requested a change in the minutes regarding her July report. After the chair read the potential changes, he asked the committee members if there were any corrections or additions to the revised July minutes. With none noted, the minutes, as revised, were approved unanimously. (Motion to accept – Dick Coupe, Second – Susan Grabar).

The Committee Chair was informed the day before the meeting (August 5th) that the second briefing for the Quality of Life Committee, to cover the subject of how a department or office of urban forestry fits into governmental structure around the country, had been scheduled for August 12th. The Chair noted that he had a conflict on this date and hoped to reschedule it for the next available Quality of Life Committee meeting.

The Chair then informed the committee of the current status regarding the tree survey pilot project. He has been researching the use of images to complete a tree survey for many months. He found that one type of image could provide some of the basic tree data such as location or size but we would not know the species or condition. However, algorithms must be developed to extract the data we need. He also found that a new type of image may provide the answers but being cutting edge technology, no one knows for sure. Since we do not know if this technology will work, it is a gamble; however, it could be the most efficient and cost effective method available, given the committee's

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limited resources. Due to the difficulties and potential delays in dealing with the city on this issue, Mr. Houser chose to personally fund the field work in an effort to determine if we can separate different species using the new type of image. He explained briefly that there are three stages to the process with the first being field work to determine species separability. Even if we can separate species in the field work, it does not lead to the conclusion that we can separate them in the actual images, which is the second stage of the process. A plane will fly over the 20 square mile test plot area to obtain both types of images during the 2nd stage. The third stage is the analysis and mapping of the data.

Mr. Houser stated that he, Dr. Qiu and several UTD graduate students have been working on the field work for more than two weeks to collect leaf samples from 18 species so far. They were able to accurately identify 4 species with 100% accuracy and 8-10 species with 60-80% accuracy. They will spend at least another week collecting many samples from a total of 50 species. However, he advised that he must authorize the flyover and analysis today. It will take more funds than we have in our account but we should end up with a tree survey for 20 square miles that includes the number of trees, size estimates, exact location, tree canopy cover percentage numbers and possibly an idea of the species with some degree of accuracy. The project area was broken into two sections due to restricted airspace around Love Field. Due to the complexity of the issue, Mr. Houser requested questions on the subject and provided answers to those that were posed.

As there was no report from Mrs. Nicole Cooper, Committee Liaison for the Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ), Mr. Michael Hellmann, Sr. Park Planner, reported that Laura Fiffick, Director of the Office of Environmental Quality, is leaving the OEQ for a job elsewhere. The committee members expressed regret for the loss.

Mr. Michael Hellmann also reported that of the 4 candidates which are qualified for the position of Urban Forester, one would be coming back for an additional interview with Mr. Willis Winters on August 15th. The person is from Dallas and he hopes to fill the position as soon as possible. However, there will be a 6 month period in which the new Urban Forester will be learning the City of Dallas procedures and policies. The Committee was excited about having an Urban Forester to work with the Committee again.

As there was no report from Mr. Phil Erwin, Dallas Chief Arborist, the Chair reported that Mr. Erwin was working with Mr. Bill Seaman and other groups regarding tree ordinance related affairs.

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Mr. Houser advised that he met with Mrs. Crystal Lee, MOWmentum Program Director, who advised him that the Dallas Street Department may wait until fall to get involved in an Adopt-a-Median program. However, Mr. Houser advised that we should set up the event with Councilmember Tennell Atkins (who agreed to be the program spokesperson) as soon as possible to ensure success.

As Mr. Brian Kilburn, Senior Project Manager for the Great Trinity Forest, was unable to attend the meeting, the Chair advised that Mr. Kilburn had provided several CD's with the nearly 15,000-17,000 page document but, due to its size, it will not be available to download from a listserve. Due to its size, only the Executive Summary will be on the Trinity River list serve. There will be a public stakeholders meeting on September 9th. Mr. Houser suggested that members review the management plan and consider responding. If something needs to be revised, now is the time to note it in an official manner. There will be a 30 day review and comment period, after which the plan will likely go to council for review.

The Chair then requested Team Leader Reports, beginning with Mr. Bill Seaman, Land Planning, Development and City Codes Team Leader.

Mr. Seaman reported that he has a printable draft document of the recommended tree ordinance changes that will be going to his team members for review. He would like to be on the committee agenda for next month's meeting to present the draft tree ordinance recommendations. This will allow the committee an opportunity to provide input.

Mr. David Marquis reported that the Green Building Task Force has three initiatives on its plate. The first is Integrated Storm Water Management (ISWM), including structural soil; the second is Green Building codes and the third is an Implementation Plan. Before the Green Building Task Force presents their construction and reconstruction ordinance, it must go through the legal department. The report will then be taken to City Council for approval. The implementation plan for green building codes, which is scheduled to take a year, will then begin establishing forms and procedures so that all departments will be ready to accept the first application in October of 2009, which is when the ordinance is expected to go into effect. There will be training sessions provided for city personnel regarding the new program. The Committee is very optimistic that green building in Dallas will increase greatly in the future.

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Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, Committee Public Relations and Media Team Leader, reported that the Skillman showcase planting has been approved by streets and public works. With the assistance of Mr. Phil Erwin, 18 trees have been ordered. The Committee is not required to submit revised plans. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the showcase planting could be done in conjunction with other important announcements such as the heat island project by the Office of Environmental Quality and the EPA or the Adopt-a-Median program by the Street Department.

Mr. Fitzgerald also suggested other possible projects. He believes it would be an ideal visual to inform the public regarding the effect of heat islands by getting the media to show a contrast of temperatures between a heat island in downtown and a tree filled park in another part of town. This would involve a 15 second spot showing of each thermometer and its location. The promotion would be similar to a count of pollen in the air for citizens who are allergic. However, temperature affects everyone in the city. We could request that the National Weather Service coordinate with the news to read the temperatures every day or once a week and this program could be put into effect next year during the summer. A recent announcement from the Houston Advanced Research Center stated that there has been a 1-2 degree increase in temperature since the 1970's according to statistics from Love Field. The Committee complimented Mr. Fitzgerald and is in favor of this project. Furthermore, the committee thought it would be a very effective visual message.

Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Committee Tree Planting and Transplanting Team Leader, was not able to attend the meeting.

Mr. Eric Larner, Team Leader for the Citizen Foresters, reported that the application and forms for the Citizen Foresters are about to be complete and a list of projects is being compiled with input from the Park Department.

Ms. Marjorie Webb, Marketing Director for the Texas Trees Foundation (TTF), was not able to attend the Committee meeting but she forwarded a report to the Chair to be presented during the meeting. The report is titled "Roadmap for Tree Planting in Dallas". In general it describes a partnership between TTF and the City of Dallas Park and Recreation Department to create a "roadmap" for tree planting by identifying and prioritizing planting sites through the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping. Assistance is being provided by such groups as the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), UC Davis, and the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC). Sites will be selected based on various types of information, including

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the heat island map by HARC and watershed data, to better quantify planting sites and to help identify criteria that prioritize future planting sites for the optimal environmental, economic and social outcomes.

The kick-off event will be held Friday, November 14, which will be a media event to introduce the project to the public, potential funding partners, and city officials. It will be held in the City Hall Flag Room at a time yet to be determined. A luncheon will also be held at a predetermined time and location. A planting project will also be held on November 14th in an area identified through sample mapping, to draw attention to the benefits of the Road Map.

Mr. Dick Coupe, Committee Liaison to the North Texas Master Naturalist program did not have anything to report at this time.

Mr. Eric Lerner, Committee Liaison to the Dallas County Master Gardeners, did not have anything to report.

Mr. Stan Aten, Committee Liaison for Oak Cliff Earth Day announced that the Earth Day committee is looking for people to help with the 2009 Earth Day event, which will be held on April 19th, from 11:00am to 5:00pm at Lake Cliff Park. The planning committee is starting early this year and their first meeting will be held on Sunday, September 7th at 1:00 pm at the Hampton-Illinois Library. They are drawing more people every year and are looking for corporate sponsors as well as people to help with the planning. If you are interested in participating in this great event, please contact Mr. Aten.

Ms. Gretchen Luedtke advised the committee that she works with builders on lighting therefore she has seen many developments where all the trees are removed. In her opinion, Timbercreek was the last straw and she now wants to actively pursue avenues where existing trees on new developments or reconstruction areas can be saved. She therefore would like to join efforts with the Dallas Urban Forest Advisory Committee. The Chair and the committee gave her a warm welcome and she will receive all correspondence sent to the committee members in the future.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Beckelman

Substitute Secretary at the request of Committee Chair, Mr. Steve Houser