

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas**

**Tuesday, July 7, 2009 4:00 pm
Conference Room 'B' • L1FN
Dallas City Hall**

Attendees: Sara Beckelman, Bob Curry, Yvonne Dupré, Philip Erwin, Joseph Fielding, Michael FitzGerald, Michael Hellmann, Cory Herpel, Lora Hinchcliff, Lawrence Hochberg, Steve Houser, Eric Larner, Gretchen Luedtke, Brad Mayfield, Gary Olp, Bob Schmidtke, Bill Seaman, C. Michael Stevens.

UFAC Chair, Mr. Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. welcoming all committee members and guests. Ms. Yvonne Dupré was in attendance representing Ms. Carole Davis, our committee liaison with the City of Dallas Water Utilities Department; and Mr. Bob Schmidtke of Integracolor, a horticultural printer.

Mr. Houser asked the Committee members if there were any corrections or additions to the June 2nd meeting minutes and noted one clarification regarding Mary Ayala's report on the Trinity Trails. The clarification was made in the current version of the minutes. With no other corrections noted, a motion to accept was made by Mr. Bill Seaman and a second by Mr. Eric Larner. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairman Houser expressed the committee's sincere appreciation for the hard working Citizen Foresters, Team Leaders and volunteers that recently cleaned up the mulch around our Skillman, Signature Tree Planting Project. Mr. Mike FitzGerald, Public Relations & Media Team Leader, noted with Mr. Eric Larner's help, they were able to break up the heavy areas of mulch and spread it more evenly. Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Tree Planting & Transplanting Team Leader, was able to ensure a water supply for the trees during the month of July and is working on coverage for August and beyond. Mr. Houser also expressed our appreciation to everyone that made our public stakeholder meeting a success including; Mr. Bill Seaman, Mr. Mike FitzGerald, Mr. Michael Hellman, Mr. Eric Larner, Mr. Bob Curry, Ms. Karen Woodard, Ms. Kassandra McLaughlin, Mrs. Sara Beckelman and Mr. Phil Erwin.

Chairman Houser was very pleased to announce that long time friends and previous committee donors, Mr. Pat & Mrs. Astrid Merriman, recently agreed to increase their previous donation of \$10,000 by contributing **an additional \$10,000.** They also challenged the Chairman to find someone or some group to match the contribution, which would effectively reach our goal of funding our research pilot project. The Merriman's also hired a professional grant writer, Mrs. Barbara van Pelt, to assist. As a result, they worked together to complete a \$10,000 grant to the Harold Simmons Foundation, which was recently submitted.

The Street Tree Resource Analysis Tool for Urban Forest Mgmt (STRATUM) and Urban Forest Effects Model (UFORE) are computer software modeling programs (collectively called "Itree") which assess the financial value of the many benefits that trees offer a community (i.e. storm water run off reduction, amount of carbon absorption, and other related air quality concerns) using tree inventory samples.

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A STRATUM analysis of street trees was completed last month for the City of Irving by the recently established Green Advisory Committee and Mr. Micah Pace, Texas Forest Service Representative for the Dallas area. Mr. Houser is currently working with Mr. Pace and Mr. Matt Churches, Forester and Certified Arborist with the City of Arlington, to assist in the completion of a UFORE analysis for their urban forest. Those interested should contact Mr. Houser as the Arlington project will need extra hands. Both the Arlington UFORE and Irving STRATUM analysis were submitted to Vision North Texas as case studies in planning for the regional urban forest in 2030 and 2050.

The Chairman opened the floor to comment regarding the recent memo from Mayor Leppert and his support for urban forestry. The memo requested that city officials check with the committee on all tree and urban forest ecosystem affairs. The Mayor also agreed to meet with the Chair on a quarterly basis along with the three council members appointed to our committee. The first meeting should be in August or September. Mr. Houser will research which council members were recently appointed to the various positions relating to our committee.

Before the Mayor's memo was released, Council Member Linda Koop, placed the committee Chair in touch with Dr. Sheron Patterson, the Chair for the Dallas Environmental Health Commission. As a result, he will brief them on the committee and urban forestry during their August meeting. In addition, Mr. Houser recently contacted the chairpersons for the Board of Adjustment (BDA), City Plan Commission (CPC) and Landmark Commission (LC) in an effort to establish a relationship. He spoke with the BDA Chair, Mr. Robert Richmond and found that the board is similar to a court of law in that they cannot request advice from the committee, only city staff such as Chief Arborist, Mr. Phil Erwin. However, our committee is free to testify or send letters/emails on various cases. This will require us to be on the early notification list by signing up with the city secretary, researching upcoming cases and becoming more proactive in following issues related to trees. These issues fall under the purview of Mr. Bill Seaman's team which will need help in the future due to the additional responsibilities. Chairman Houser provided our website and list serve address as background and requested that he send the information along to other BDA members to ensure they recognize us when we contact them in the future.

To be sure all committee member are aware, we are currently listed on the official City of Dallas website under the City Secretary's Office heading and then under "boards/commissions". In the future, we hope to link our city website with the Green Dallas site as well as Mayor Leppert, Parks & Recreation, Trinity River Office and the Dallas Office of Environmental Quality. Mr. Houser spoke with Meranda Carter-Cohn, Dallas Public Information Office, about linking us to these other city sites.

Regarding the Corps of Engineers (COE) proposal to remove 2,800 trees in the Trinity Forest, Mr. Houser spoke with Project Manager Ms. Rebecca Dugger and she agreed to set a meeting

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with the Corps to discuss the issues further. The standard requirement elsewhere in the nation is fifteen feet from the levee however the COE is requiring 50' feet in Dallas.

In considering recommended changes to our city tree ordinance, the Chair was curious about what authority the city may have in regulating tree pruning for line clearance purposes and did some research. In essence, he found the Public Utilities Code Chapter 25 - Subchapter E under standards of construction and operation which give municipalities the authority to regulate line clearance pruning within their jurisdiction. As a result, he discussed the issues with Mr. Jeff Quinters, Regional Forester with ONCOR, and we will likely add recommendations to the tree ordinance regarding vegetation management near power lines. Some of the recommended changes were already enacted by ONCOR voluntarily in the past.

Committee Vice Chair, Mr. Bob Curry, mentioned that certain types of line clearance cannot be done legally by private tree companies and a discussion ensued on the topic. The Chair noted that this occurs all too often and that it is a question of time before someone is injured or killed. Also, he noted that ONCOR does try to dissuade private companies from the practice.

During the recent public stakeholder meeting, Mr. David Marquis, Green Building Task Force Co-Chair, noted the establishment of another city task force to review the tree ordinance and provide recommendations to our committee. It is the Chairman's understanding that the group was formed by Assistant City Manager, Ms. Jill Jordan, and will include several committee members. The first meeting is on the up coming Thursday and according to Mr. Marquis, they only plan to meet twice with a public meeting to follow. Afterward, any suggestions will be submitted to the committee for consideration in our final recommended changes. Although this will delay the process, it has the potential to improve our final recommendations.

There was a brief discussion about the primary topics raised during the public stakeholder meeting for the recommended changes to the tree ordinance. Land Planning, Development and City Codes Team Leader, Mr. Bill Seaman, is still receiving email, much of which is duplicitous. However, the general response has been very positive. The discussion was then directed to Chief Arborist, Mr. Phil Erwin to determine if we could simplify the ordinance, or come up with a companion document. The language of the current ordinance is difficult for the lay person to understand. A complementary document or handbook could give examples of best management practices, or offer demonstrative scenarios or situations. Other ideas from committee members include condensing the information into a tri-fold brochure, or listing frequently asked questions on the city website.

Mr. Michael Hellmann, Senior Park Planner, reported on behalf of Ms. Karen Woodard, City Forester. Ms. Woodard is finishing the 2009 Citizen Forester Program draft. A tree survey is being conducted at Samuell Farm and the department is preparing for a new Trinity River service trail.

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Dallas Chief Arborist, Mr. Phil Erwin, will hold a staff meeting on the first of August to discuss what is on the Board of Adjustment agenda (or others) for the August sessions. The Timbercreek property developers may have filed for an August hearing along with a number of other tree related cases which may have been filed but Mr. Erwin does not have an official list at this time. Anything that does come up will be brought to committee's attention. There is also a growing city wide problem of competition between trees and sidewalks. For instance, a north east Dallas neighborhood planted Live Oaks too close to the sidewalk due to the neighborhood design and are now having to deal with the associated problems. The district council member asked Mr. Erwin to develop a solution. Each property owner is responsible for the sidewalk in front of their respective home, and it appears the trees are at risk. Mr. Erwin is working through the Development Services Office to look for ways to work with the homeowners, as the City must guarantee access to sidewalks for public use. Some good recommendations to the problem were suggested by Mr. Gary Olp, AIA, LEED AP, which may allow a reciprocal easement access agreement.

Regarding the city's Reforestation Fund, the chief arborist does not yet know which city vendors will be chosen. However, he started collecting requests for trees from neighborhoods and noted that trees purchased with Reforestation Funds must be planted on city property.

Mr. Cory Herpel, Storm Water Management Liaison, noted they have a few summer camps scheduled at the Dallas Arboretum.

Mr. Eric Larner, Citizen Forester Team Leader and Master Gardener Liaison, requested help in distributing CF Program fliers. The 2009 class currently has 28 enrollees and he hopes to increase the number to 35. Mr. Larner presented the final tree inventory/identification report yesterday to the "Keep Rowlett Beautiful" group, with a total of 24 trees being identified. The next step is placing species identification signs near the trees. Also, Mr. Larner used the UFAC education display at the Dallas Museum of Nature and Science during a recent event and Ms. Karen Woodard provided some items for the children including a poster showing how pencils are made.

Observations and lessons learned from previous tree planting projects by the Citizen Foresters led Mr. Larner to suggest having a completely integrated management plan before entering into any future projects. He would like to see the Citizen Foresters take the lead on developing basic management protocol including more upfront work in the pre-planning phase, and in the after care of trees. Mr. Larner and Mr. Dick Coupe, Master Naturalist Liaison, will be involved with other Master Gardeners during the "Save Dallas Water" event hosted at the Sammons Center on July 18th. Mr. Larner will offer a presentation about choosing the right tree for the right place and Mr. Coupe will offer a presentation on soil preparation.

The Chair requested additional comments or questions. With no other items introduced, the UFAC Chair adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Hinchcliff
Committee Secretary