

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas**

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

Attendees: Stan Aten, Mary Ayala, Sara Beckelman, Raymond Crawford, Bob Curry, Michael FitzGerald, Cory Herpel, Lora Hinchcliff, Lawrence Hochberg, Steve Houser, Kurt Kretsinger, Eric Larner, David Marquis, Brad Mayfield, Cassandra McLaughlin, Gary Olp, Howard C. Parker, Amanda Popken, Bill Seaman, Karen Woodard.

UFAC Chair, Mr. Steve Houser, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. welcoming all committee members and guests. A warm welcome was extended to Mr. Raymond Crawford, President of the Kiestwood Historical Homeowners Association, and Mr. Howard Parker, FAIA-E Architect. Mr. Parker, now retired, has been intimately involved in the Timber Creek issue.

Mr. Houser asked the Committee members if there were any corrections or additions to the July 7th meeting minutes. With no other corrections noted, a motion to accept was made by Mr. Michael FitzGerald and a second by Mr. Eric Larner. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairman Houser informed the committee that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently received the final copy of the Dallas Urban Heat Island report from the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC). Mr. David Hitchcock, the primary researcher for the report, provided a great education for Mr. Houser in how trees relate to air quality. A few years ago, the two worked together in an effort to convince the EPA to accept Biogenic Sequestration as part of our State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality. Briefly stated, they failed at the time, but the Chair learned a great deal by being involved in the process. By the same token, Mr. Hitchcock learned a great deal about urban forestry and reviewed our five-year strategic plan. As a result, the final report does a fabulous job of including the urban forest as a part of the solution to the Urban Heat Island Effect problem.

The report was authorized and financed by the EPA through the Office of Environmental Quality. Mr. Houser requested that the EPA and HARC (Houston Advanced Research Center) provide a power point on the subject for the committee, Vision North Texas, North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and the City Council/Park Board, to which they agreed. He thanked them for providing a great tool to get our message across and recently left a message for Kevin Lefebvre with OEQ to ask if they are interested in presenting it to City Council. Although Mr. Houser has a copy, he has not received authorization to send it to the committee. He does have an executive summary that was recently provided to Vision North Texas as a case study relating to their regional growth scenarios research.

On behalf of the committee, Mr. Houser expressed appreciation to the City of Irving for establishing a volunteer "Green Advisory Committee" and working with TFS Forester, Mr. Micah Pace plus a few Citizen Foresters to complete a STRATUM analysis of their street trees. The Street Tree Resource Analysis Tool (or STRATUM) is computer modeling software in which street tree inventory sample data is used to determine the street tree function, structure, benefits and value. It is a usable and valuable tool that can help to educate public officials on a few of the many benefits of trees.

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Dallas UFAC committee member, Mrs. Sara Beckelman, serves on the City of Irving Green Advisory Committee which assisted in the tree survey and also included the help of 50 volunteers. The information collected was processed and provided to the Irving City Council. In essence, they used the report to develop recommendations for the Heritage Crossing Redevelopment District Ordinance and a synopsis of the details was passed around for committee review. All the details within the report were approved, which helps Irving obtain a "Tree City USA" designation by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

The Chairman formally recognized our liaison for Oak Cliff Earth Day, Mr. Stan Aten, who was recently recognized by the Dallas City Council for his long term efforts in support of our public library system. Mr. Aten acknowledged the recognition, letting the committee know that it has been a 15 year effort and he is currently working with three library branches.

The Chairman, along with our Vice Chair, Mr. Bob Curry, have a meeting scheduled with our two new council members in a few weeks and will provide them an urban forestry "bible" and our annual report from last year.

Regarding the problem of using volunteers or Citizen Foresters to treat stumps of Chinese Privet or other invasive plants with a herbicide, Mr. Houser researched the Texas Department of Agriculture(TDA) applicators manual for the details and provided the research to Mr. Mike Hellmann (as he previously requested). The Chairman also congratulated Mr. Jim Flood for recently becoming a TDA Certified Applicator. The city is rightfully concerned about untrained volunteers using any product (chemical or "organic") on public property and potential solutions are being sought out that protect the city from liability yet allow us to legally use any required material to properly maintain a property in the future.

The Chairman was thrilled to announce that the Harold Simmons Foundation recently approved our grant request of \$10,000.00 for our research project, which effectively completes the fundraising effort required for the project. On behalf of the committee, the Chair thanked Mrs. Serena Connelly and Mrs. Lisa Simmons Epstein from the foundation as well as our grant writer, Mrs. Barbara van Pelt and Mr. Pat & Astrid Merriman, and Mr. Craig Reynolds, Dallas Parks Foundation (DPF) President, for their support. Mr. Houser also added that when he authorized the research project to move forward, we were over \$30,000.00 short of the required funds and is greatly relieved to finally acquire the necessary funding. One reason the grant was accepted was because the request came from the Dallas Parks Foundation, which is a 501(c) 3 and the cover letter was signed by the DPF President, Mr. Craig Reynolds. The Chairman recently sent a letter to Mr. Reynolds as well as others noted above in order to thank them for their support.

The Chair expressed our appreciation to Mr. Bob Curry, Citizen Forester and President, Save Open Spaces, who recently provided a presentation to the Dallas Environmental Health Commission regarding urban forestry and our committee. They are interested in urban forestry and in the "moonscapes" popping up around the city.

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Ms. Karen Woodard, Dallas City Forester, informed the Committee that much of her time in July was taken up by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), who is working on dam and creek assessments. All the planning is in very early stages, and there will be some impact on vegetation, as trees can change water flow patterns and can cause problems on the structural integrity of small earthen dams. The plan will include Kid Springs Park, Lake Cliff Park and others. The Army Corps of Engineers is working with Dallas flood control officials and the TCEQ. Engineers are recommending the removal of "brush" to be replaced with grass. As a result, the Chair recommended contacting Mr. Brett Johnson, Texas Park and Wildlife Representative to our region as well as the North Texas Council of Governments "Stream Team" as valuable consultants in the process. Ms. Woodard reports being very busy dealing with these issues.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman formally recognized our Tree Planting and Transplanting Team Leader, Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, for his recent and sizable contribution of \$5,000.00 to our Dallas Parks Foundation sub-account. The donation was earmarked to support public tree planting and maintenance. The Chair revealed a large copy of the check and photos were taken of Mr. Kretsinger with the committee expressing sincere appreciation.

Mr. Phil Erwin, Chief Arborist, was under the weather and the Chairman offered brief updates on his behalf. Regarding the neighborhood sidewalk issue in District 10, which was discussed in our last meeting, Mr. Erwin organized his staff to address the issue and may request some help from other committee members. Vice Chair, Mr. Bob Curry, stated that others in the Code Enforcement Department are trying to smooth any ruffled feathers and are moving quickly to get the issue resolved by relating acceptable alternatives to the Public Works Department, neighborhood groups and others.

Regarding the matter of the Timber Creek Apartment redevelopment, the developer applied to the Board of Adjustments for a variance but recently pulled the request. Mr. Erwin plans work with them on the request and compliance with the tree mitigation requirements, which are due in July of 2010. For the committee's information, 14,000" inches of tree were removed during the demolition phase and there will only be room to install around 2,000 to 3,000" on site after the development is complete (43-acres in all). Mr. David Marquis inquired if there is an opportunity for a conservation easement on the property. While there is an assumption regarding the developer's intended use of a 'linear park' on Melody Lane, there is no further information at this time. Citizens can track the *Advocate* blog for updates regarding the matter (www.Advocatemag.com).

Dallas Storm Water Management Outreach Liaison, Mr. Cory Herpel, is currently involved with two projects regarding non-potable water use. Public officials want to chlorinate the non-potable water, which code allows for with treatment, but the treatment has not been defined. Mr. Herpel scheduled a tentative date of October 10 for a rain barrel making workshop. SWM and OEQ Water Conservation officials are partners in the event, with a trial first run for 30 participants and a fee of \$40 each. If well-received, they will host another workshop in November. The 2-hour workshop will teach how to make a basic 55-gallon drum rain barrel with a down spout.

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Ms. Amanda Popken, Development Information Analyst with the Economic Development Department, recently visited the UT Arlington green roof, which was installed over a year ago. Mr. David Hopman is the site contact and Landscape Architect at UTA who is managing the site two days a week. He will provide presentations and tours of the roof. Both "Intensive" and "Extensive" green roof mixes were installed. The extensive blend is for low depth plantings, and the intensive blend is for deeper plantings such as trees.

Regarding the economic development analysis of "sustainable" median plantings, there was some discussion regarding the city making our medians more "water wise" or "earth kind". Most medians are not watered, and there is an interest in working on a proposal for a pilot project to transform a particular median to a more sustainable landscape.

Ms. Popken is working on the environmental section of the city's Economic Atlas, a long term analysis of future Dallas growth. Mr. Houser brought up such environmental benefits as moving from a 14 day to 21 day cycle of mowing turf which reduces weeds, pollution from the mowers and our dependence on oil as well as saving the city budget in the long run. Ms. Popken said the city recently moved to a 21 day mowing cycle for now. Mr. Houser is working to encourage Mayor Leppert to help promote the city's Adopt-a-Median program this fall.

In July, Ms. Mary Ayala, Committee Liaison for the Trinity River Corridor Project Office, worked with the Student Conservation Association maintenance crew on the soft surface trail at Rochester Park. They are working to get the trails back to usable state. When all is complete, there will be a three-mile soft surface trail. The ADA accessible trail is almost complete, but has been slowed by the recent rain. The contractor needs to make some repairs to the crushed granite area, and mentioned that someone has been digging holes in the levee. It was recommended they contact 911 should they witness this in the future. Mrs. Ayala also informed the committee that a college intern will be handling the orienteering program this coming year, in January of 2010. She is also requesting that Mr. Michael FitzGerald send her the dallastrees.org link so she can forward it to the appropriate person for placement on the Trinity Corridor website. Ms. Ayala also noted that Judy Schmidt, with her office, contacted Home Depot and they are willing to donate the herbicide to combat non native plants such as Chinese Privet.

Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, Public Relations & Media Team Leader and Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Tree Planting and Transplanting Team Leader need help watering trees at Skillman Showcase Project. Father John Stack, who has generously been assisting us, showed Mr. Kretsinger how the trees are currently receiving water. It was suggested that Citizen Forester's may be able help with the watering in the future.

Mr. Eric Lerner, Dallas County Master Gardener Liaison and Citizen Forester (CF) Team Leader, reminded the committee that the CF training class of 2009 kicks off one week from today at the Texas AgriLife Extension Service offices off Marsh Lane, with 30 enrollees. The class will meet every two weeks over 8-9 weeks, followed by some Saturday field training in the fall. Also, Mr. Lerner gave three mini talks at the recent Sammons Center event along with other Master Gardeners. Topics included "The Benefit of Trees", "Care and Maintenance of Trees" and "Right

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Tree, Right Place". Also, our Chairman, Mr. Steve Houser, and his staff taught the 2009 Dallas County Master Gardener class about trees all day yesterday.

Mr. Stan Aten informed the committee that Oak Cliff Earth Day 2010 is scheduled for April 18th. Mr. Aten will let the committee know when registration opens. If committee members know of anyone who would like to help with the event, Mr. Aten requests they contact him by email. The first committee meeting will be held next month, and the group will meet monthly thereafter until year end. In January 2010, the group will meet every other week until the day of event. Mr. Aten also mentioned their group has recently given money to the Park and Recreation Department toward the addition of more bicycle racks.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Hinchcliff
Committee Secretary