

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee  
City of Dallas**

**Tuesday, September 1, 2009 4:00 pm  
Conference Room 'B' • L1FN  
Dallas City Hall**

Attendees: Mary Ayala, Sara Beckelman, Dick Coupe, Bob Curry, Phil Erwin, Michael FitzGerald, Timothy Herfel, Cory Herpel, Steve Houser, Kurt Kretsinger, Eric Lerner, Brad Mayfield, Gary Olp, Jon Patterson, 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. Timothy Herfel, Environmental Protection Specialist with the EPA, who is our new committee liaison for the EPA. The Chair also introduced Mr. Jon Patterson, Trinity River Corridor Project Intern with the Student Conservation Association. Mr. Patterson advised he was very excited to be working with the Trinity River Corridor Project (TRCP) office and coordinating trail work within the Trinity Forest.

Mr. Houser asked the Committee members if there were any corrections or additions to the August 4th meeting minutes. He noted that there was one correction and a few clarifications regarding the TRCP report, which Ms. Ayala explained. With no other corrections noted, a motion to accept the minutes as revised was made by Mr. Bill Seaman and seconded by Mr. Dick Coupe. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Mr. Bob Curry, Committee Vice Chair, and the Chair met with Councilmember Ann Margolin recently to introduce her to the committee and urban forestry. They delivered a copy of the forestry "bible", the committee annual report from 2008, planting guides, info on the Citizen Forester program, as well as other information. The chair also met with Councilmember Delia Jasso on Monday with the same information; however, Mr. Curry could not attend as he was tied up in another meeting. Since both council members were previously with the Park Board, they have a much deeper understanding of sustainability and the importance of urban forestry.

Chairman Houser passed around a copy of the final Urban Heat Island (UHI) report by the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC), which was recently released by the EPA. It was highly suggested that the committee review the information. Since the report was funded through the Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ), the Chair spoke with Mr. Eric Griffin (OEQ Director) regarding a potential briefing for City Council. In essence, he was informed they are busy so he agreed to set up briefings with various city groups if they will simply attend. After speaking with Ms. Paula Blackmon, of the Mayor's office, regarding the best way to brief council, it appears that we will work to get on the agenda for the Quality of Life Committee (Councilmember Pauline Medrano, Chair) and possibly the Transportation Committee (Councilmember Linda Koop, Chair). He also spoke with Mr. Mike Hellmann regarding a potential briefing for the Park Board, Mr. Paul Dyer and Mr. Willis Winters, and was informed of the need to forward a copy of the executive summary or power point on the report. The final report will also be covered in the research documents for a Vision North Texas (VNT) event in a few weeks.

The chair updated the committee on our tree inventory research project with Dr. Qiu (UTD) and his students, who are currently working to complete the preliminary portion of the project (which

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focuses on Turtle Creek and Reverchon Park) within the next week. Summarizing some points of the project, Mr. Houser advised that after attempting two different methods to identify trees, the third and most recent effort was much more successful. Out of 46 species of trees in Turtle Creek, we achieved a 66.48% accuracy in identifying species using primarily the hyperspectral images. We were pleased in that the results matched the accuracy of the field work in obtaining the spectral signatures of various common tree species. It appears that we will be able to obtain all the other data we wanted in the research but are still working on the exact algorithm we need to determine biomass in the right form to use for air quality issues in the future. Other data includes tree height, crown spread, diameter and X & Y coordinates (which appear to be more accurate than those taken in the field with advanced GPS technology). In the next week, Mr. Houser hopes to meet with Dr. Qiu to review and approve the preliminary research which allows the researchers to begin to apply the algorithms to the remaining 20 square mile area. Upon approval, we will need to pay the remaining balance of the amount due to UTD of \$18,500.00. Dr. Qiu is also working on a power point for the VNT meeting in a few weeks, as well as for presentation to city officials and others. It is not clear if it will be a companion briefing to the HARC final report for city officials. Since we will have an inventory of Turtle Creek and ultimately a 20 square mile area, the chair left Mr. Micah Pace a message about running the result through the UFORE or STRATUM computer modeling programs to obtain sound data on what our trees do for air quality and other public benefits. The chair will advise the committee on the results.

Mr. Houser also passed around an article from the Dallas Morning News entitled "We Are What We Sustain", on sustainable agriculture, and commented that the newspaper hierarchy are starting to get the picture about sustainability.

One final note, Mr. Houser attended the ONCOR public meeting on August 31<sup>st</sup>, with Councilmember David Neumann presiding. It was a very boisterous meeting with many Kiestwood Historical Homeowners Association (KHHA) members attending as well as other members of the public and ONCOR officials. The homeowners were very concerned about the treatment of their trees by ONCOR. Mr. Houser passed around a petition initiated by the KHHA and noted that he, as Chair of UFAC, is currently in discussions with ONCOR and city attorneys regarding potential changes to city codes. For some examples of responsible line clearance policies, Mr. Houser noted the following websites: [www.psoklahoma.com](http://www.psoklahoma.com) and [www.nespower.com](http://www.nespower.com) (from Nashville). He noted these are better ways to deal with power line and tree problems but it is up to the PUC to debate issues and make changes. In a down economy, it is not known if changes can be accomplished. There are numerous issues under discussion that could become a part of the Dallas Tree Ordinance. The chair noted that from his attendance at the ONCOR meeting, it is clear that vegetation management issues are not well understood by the general public.

Mr. Brad Mayfield, with ONCOR's Vegetation Management Department, advised that ONCOR's pruning policies are liability based and not based on time schedules. It was noted that ONCOR is fined by the PUC when power outages occur, no matter what the reason. In response to a

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question, Mr. Mayfield advised the committee that a 10' line clearance would last for 4-5 years, depending on the tree species. If committee members get calls inquiring about tree pruning, they should be directed to the Vegetation Management help line, 1-817-215-5515 (main office).

Mr. Bob Curry, UFAC Vice Chair, reported that Save Open Spaces (SOS) receives public notices for Board of Adjustment (BOA) hearings. Regarding an application for a BOA hearing on tree mitigation issues for the Timbercreek redevelopment, the application was recently pulled. In another case involving a PD request sent through council for 186 acres in Oak Cliff, the Council passed it subject to an approved escarpment plan. There is some controversy over whether the property is located within escarpment boundaries. The escarpment review committee is meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup>, the Tuesday before the next council meeting, to discuss this project. The review committee is looking back at original documents, when the escarpment boundaries were established, to get a determination on the property in question. Codes are in place to protect trees but how they are enforced is always where the process fails. Mr. Curry advised that SOS is electing officers in November for 2010. Committee members were invited to attend SOS meetings as they meet right after our committee meetings at 7:00 near downtown.

Mr. Houser sent information to the committee members via e-mail on the new Trees of Texas Field Guide, by Mr. Stan Tekiela, that was recently published. Mr. Houser reviewed the contents for accuracy and any glaring errors. Mr. Houser advised that he can get copies at a discount rate if the committee or any of the other organizations we work with want to purchase a number of books to sell as a fund raiser for their organization. The Chair also noted that he wants to know if others wish to take advantage of this opportunity.

Ms. Karen Woodard, Dallas City Forester, reported there has been no additional movement on the assessment of earthen dams in our parks by the Corps or by TCEQ. There may be a meeting in September or October.

Our City Forester is working on outreach to teachers for DISD, with lesson plans for getting more science into the classroom. She will be holding Project Learning Tree (PLT) training in the near future for 4<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> grades and a program on structural soils for engineers at the end of October. Ms. Woodard also made five home site visits regarding trees. Ms. Janette Monear, Executive Director of the Dallas Trees Foundation, will be briefing ONCOR on the final results of their project to determine possible locations for tree planting in Dallas. Ms. Monear is looking forward to briefing UFAC on this project, also. It was requested that Ms. Monear contact the chair about a possible date for her briefing as there are two other briefings due to be presented to the committee within the next couple of months.

Mr. Phil Erwin, Dallas Chief Arborist, gave a follow up report on the escarpment review committee meeting, noting that the committee does not have an updated engineering report for the escarpment. This committee is composed of three members from the city's departments,

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including Mike Hellman, from Parks and Rec. If you want additional information on the escarpment article in city codes, read Article 5, especially the definitions. This may be up for discussion in the coming month. The escarpment article was established in 1977 and it is dated therefore it needs to be updated. The meeting is open to the public and will be held at 1:30 on September 8<sup>th</sup> in the Oak Cliff Municipal Center.

Mr. Erwin reported that he has lost 2 arborists. One, Mr. Keith Chucci, is now working with ONCOR. Mr. Erwin will still have 3 arborists in his department, but the work load will be increased. He noted that the 311 call center had been shut down (due to budget constraints) and asked if anyone might be interested in volunteering at the Oak Cliff Municipal Center to answer phones in the Building Inspection Department. Please advise Mr. Erwin if you are aware of anyone who would be interested in helping.

Mr. Erwin advised that the Timbercreek redevelopment project is currently under a letter of credit that covers the developer until July of 2010, when the tree mitigation for this project is due. A meeting is scheduled with the development team at that time.

Regarding the sidewalks and trees issue in some neighborhoods, which was discussed in a previous UFAC meeting, the homeowners involved were issued citations regarding the sidewalks. The city is trying to find solutions for homeowners and is looking at different ideas through council members and various staff members, including Zaida Basora, Mr. Erwin's Supervisor. They are working on creating management plans for neighborhoods that include multiple homeowners, so that all neighborhoods/citizens will be given the same proposals for mitigating the problem. This team requested a meeting with some UFAC committee members and will write up a report to be given to UFAC at a later date. Committee members agreed to help.

Mr. Cory Herpel, Liaison for Dallas Public Works and Transportation, Storm Water Management Department, reported outreach events are scheduled for every month this year, with two events working booths. Also, they have prepared outreach presentations of 10-15 minutes for industry representatives. This could also be presented to non profits or other organizations as long as they have a customer or member base within the City of Dallas. The company or organization may be headquartered in another city, as long as they do business in Dallas. Please contact Mr. Herpel if you know of a company or organization that would like a presentation. The Storm Water Management Department is requesting additional briefings to complete their quota of educational presentations for this year.

Mr. Houser asked Ms. Woodard if there have been any further meetings regarding Street Department standards. The committee is working on a proposed pilot project for a median in Dallas and would like information on any standards that have been established. Ms Woodard, advised that she has not been involved in any further meetings on this subject.

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Ms. Mary Ayala, Committee Liaison, Trinity River Corridor Project, Sr. Project Manager for Recreation Projects, reported that the Student Conservation Association (SCA) had maintained .9 miles of trail and created .8 miles of new trails in the Trinity Forest, mostly around the Buckeye Trail. In response to a question, Ms. Ayala reported that the SCA crew size has generally been 10 children and 2 supervisors but the summer months were very hot and steamy this year and they were not able to get as much done as they did last year. The program has been expanded to year round and Mr. Jon Patterson, the SCA Intern working with the Trinity River Corridor Project Office, is coordinating the SCA's efforts. A presentation is being prepared to reflect their efforts during the year. The SCA volunteers are only working on the trail or right beside the trail while removing privet. They are not allowed to apply herbicide as the applicator must be licensed. It was noted that Mr. Jim Flood, a long time volunteer in the Trinity Forest and especially the Buckeye Trail, had recently obtained his chemical applicator's license and could be asked to help with this activity. The Chair congratulated Mr. Flood for his accomplishment. Mr. Brad Mayfield recommended a herbicide that would kill the privet, no matter what time of year it was applied. Due to budget constraints, there has been very little, if any, maintenance in the forest by the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Herfel reported that maintenance by the Corps is a real issue in California. At Mr. Houser's request, Ms. Ayala agreed to check with Rebecca Dugger to see when a meeting could be set with the Corps to discuss the potential removal of trees near levees.

Mr. Bill Seaman, Team Leader for Land Planning, Development and City Codes, reported he is still getting a few e-mails regarding Article X. They are general in nature so the process is winding down. By this time next month we may be close to having a rough draft ready to send to the committee. Another public meeting may be called after the Tree Ordinance Task Force provides their recommendations to the committee.

Mr. Mike FitzGerald, Team Leader for Public Relations and Media, reported that he is still reviewing information for the committee website, but the review should be completed soon. He advised the committee that he would be glad to send out any public relations information to the media to help educate the public on some of the tree issues that have recently come to light.

In introducing the next Team Leader for his report, the chair advised that Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Team Leader for Tree Planting and Transplanting, had recently returned from outside the U.S. and had reported that he is now engaged to be married. Mr. Kretsinger received a round of congratulations from the committee. Mr. Kretsinger then reported that he and Mr. FitzGerald are continuing to water the 27 trees planted in January on Skillman. He asked if anyone knew of a power wash company that the committee could hire to water the trees. He had previously hired a company in this field to water a prior tree planting. He also asked if the committee knew of any sponsors for tree plantings. He has found it tough to find sponsors in the current economic situation. Mr. Houser advised the committee that 2" trees cost around \$400.00 to plant and maintain for 2 years and 3" trees cost around \$600 to maintain for the same period.

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Please contact Mr. Kretsinger if you have any information on these subjects.

Mr. Eric Larner, Team Leader for the Citizen Foresters, reported that the 2009 Citizen Forester class kicked off on August 11<sup>th</sup> and completed two training sessions. There are several scheduled volunteer activities, mostly educational booths that are lined up for September. Ms. Woodard is coordinating school events. Mr. Larner also advised speaking engagements and booth events are scheduled for one or two weekends in October, including the 1 year celebration of the opening of the Trinity River Audubon Center (TRAC), on October 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Also noted was a "Tree Talk" at the VA Hospital provided on the subject of gardening and planting trees, by Mr. Gene Morrissey and Mr. Larner, to residents in the spinal injury section, which was very well received.

Mr. Larner also reported that it would be beneficial to set up by-laws and procedures for the Citizen Forester program and an executive steering committee is being established to handle this process. The committee will be looking at the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs in the formation of the Citizen Forester organizational structure. We will also look at standards and the establishment of regular meetings of membership in the Citizen Forester program. These are exciting times for the Citizen Forester program as we watch it grow.

Mr. Timothy Herfel, our new Liaison with the EPA, reported that grant funds are available for the demonstration of effective storm water management, non point source pollution management as well as improvement for air quality in North Texas urban areas. Mr. Houser will be in contact Mr. Herfel to set up a meeting to discuss the possibilities. The committee was encouraged to think big and possible demonstration projects were suggested. The committee is very pleased to have Mr. Herfel as our new Liaison for the EPA.

Mr. Dick Coupe, Liaison for the North Texas Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist program, reported that Teresa Taylor of the Texas AgriLife Extension office was asked by the Covenant School to help develop a walking trail with all trees identified for the children. This would be an excellent opportunity for the Citizen Foresters and a joint effort with the Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists to complete this project could be considered. The property where the trees are located is on the North side of 635 and West of Coit, on the East Side of White Rock Creek. Mr. Larner agreed this would be an appropriate project for the Citizen Foresters.

Mr. Coupe also reported on the Farm Day event at the Dallas County Youth Village, that was very well received by the youth as well as the adults. Mr. Houser and Mr. Coupe participated in this event. Mr. Houser reported that he enjoyed climbing trees for the group as well as urging them to make better decisions in their lives. The latest activity at the Youth Village is reclaiming dogs that have been seized from puppy mills and training them so they can be adopted by the public. The youth are greatly enjoying this program.

The Chair reported that Mr. Aten wanted to know who maintained the trees at City Place. Ms.

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Woodard reported that City Place is responsible for maintenance of the oaks, pine trees and sweet gums at the location. It was reported that the Streets Department has been trying to get the trees maintained for some time. The note from Mr. Aten also asked if UFAC could have any input on landscape design of various city projects because he noticed a city building where 5 large trees and 4 small trees are planted but are all one species, which does not create a sustainable landscape. Mr. Houser advised that the committee is available to advise the city on landscape criteria at any time. The chair welcomes any such questions and will be glad to advise on conservation as well as landscape issues. A member asked if the city could help with public awareness of the inappropriate use of Bradford pears and possibly a document to post on the website on appropriate native species of trees for the North Texas area. It will take public awareness of the appropriate species to plant, as well as where and how to plant them, to get more citizens and developers to plant better trees in North Texas.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Beckelman  
Committee Secretarial Assistant