

**Urban Forest Advisory Committee
City of Dallas**

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

Attendees: Stan Aten, Mary Ayala, Sara Beckelman, Dick Coupe, Bob Curry, Phil Erwin, Michael FitzGerald, Laura Foland, Timothy Herfel, Cory Herpel, Larry Hochberg, Steve Houser, Eric Larner, Brad Mayfield, Gary Olp, Betsy Orton, Stephanie Saunders, Bill Seaman, Bob Stimson, 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 all in attendance.

Mr. Houser asked the Committee members if there were any corrections or additions to the October or November meeting minutes. Ms. Betsy Orton, noted that Ms. Janette Monear, Executive Director of the Texas Trees Foundation, was out of town but had read the minutes and thought she might have a few suggestions for amendments to the November minutes. The Chair requested that we tentatively approve the minutes and asked that Ms. Monear submit her amendments. If there are any substantial revisions to the minutes, they will be resent to the membership prior to our January monthly meeting for approval. With these possible corrections noted, a motion to accept the October minutes and tentatively accept the November minutes was made by Mr. Mike FitzGerald and seconded by Mr. Dick Coupe. The motion carried unanimously.

The Chair reported that as of September 30th of this year, the Committee account at the Dallas Parks Foundation (DPF) contained \$27,862.54. Three other payments have been made since this date - One being a final check to the University of Texas at Dallas for \$18,500.00 and another being a payment to our webmaster for extensive updates to our website for \$1700.00. The other payment was for \$250.00 to the Jefferson Median Beautification Project. This leaves our current balance at around \$7412.54. The Chair pointed out that over \$4000.00 has been earmarked for planting projects. The current DPF statement was passed around to those in attendance.

The Committee is preparing an update for our entire research project donors list, which includes all the information we recently provided during the city council briefing. UFAC is also working to set up a briefing for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and many other official organizations/groups regarding our research project as well as how the results can be used by other gray and green infrastructure managers.

Mr. Houser also noted a recent article on the Trinity levee trees and asked if those in attendance had seen the article and had any comments. A discussion ensued.

The Chair also noted that the Committee is working on the annual report to city officials and he requested all members to send him an e-mail or leave a voice mail regarding their volunteer hours during 2009. It can be a simple number of hours or it can be more precise, if preferred.

As the Committee members are aware, Mr. Bob Curry is expected to assume the role of Committee Chairman at the end of the year. The Chair acknowledged that Mr. Curry has his full support and he is very confident in Mr. Curry's abilities. Mr. Houser would also respectfully request that all members and supporters offer their full support as Mr. Curry transitions into his new role.

As outgoing Chair, Mr. Houser stated he is deeply honored to have worked closely with each of the members and he is very proud of what we have accomplished together as a team in the last four years. A round of applause was given and received by all in attendance.

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Mr. Bill Seaman, Team Leader for Land Planning, Development and City Codes, provided a presentation on the current draft revisions to Article 10 – Landscaping and Tree Preservation Ordinance. It was noted that the power point Mr. Seaman gave, as well as the Tree Ordinance (18-19 pages of very small text) will be on the Committee list serve for everyone to review within a few days. Red lettering is recommended to be removed. Blue lettering is recommendation to be included in the document.

Mrs. Jill Jordan, Assistant City Manager, has been briefed on the recommended changes. An additional meeting of the Green Building Task Force was scheduled for November 13th. The most current revisions from UFAC at the end of the year will be sent to the Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee (ZOAC) and the City Planning Commission (CPC) as well as the City Attorney's office before it goes to the City Council. This process is expected to take a year or two before City Council approval. It was noted that additional revisions can be submitted anytime by the Committee before the final version goes to City Council.

Mr. Seaman thanked Mr. Bob Stimson and Mr. Marquis for getting the development community involved in the tree ordinance revision. He noted that the number one complaint in plan submission is the cost of a tree survey. An ordinance that better accommodates changes for the future is desired. Incentives for conservation of mature trees are a main item of the revision. Wherever possible, vagueness of wording will be corrected to specific information. The Reforestation Fund is restricted to the purchase of trees to plant on public property; acquire conservation easements or urban forest. However, interest is growing in using the funds for public urban forest education, staff in-service education, and the purchase of non-budgeted, urban forestry equipment. The current recommended changes allow for the establishment of a "Tree Conservation District" for neighborhoods that request regulations exceeding those in Article 10. This tool will help neighborhoods protect the character of their neighborhood. There were many other revisions listed. The Committee members were encouraged to go to the ftp site at <http://www.dallastrees.org/lisfiles.asp> to view the entire presentation.

After a question regarding structural soils, a discussion ensued. City Forester, Ms. Karen Woodard, advised that areas adjacent to a street in uptown are being converted to structural soils to allow for full mature growth of trees to be planted there for redevelopment in the area. UFAC has been promoting structural soils for some time and more recently, structural soil cells. Mr. Tim Herfel, Environmental Protection Specialist with the EPA, advised of another street in generally the same area where structural soils are also being used. Cornell University has been instrumental in developing this environmental use of trees and structural soils. The Committee was glad to hear that this beneficial process is being used in the city.

It was noted that the education of developers, builders, as well as the public, will be important objectives and incentives will encourage others to learn how to protect and care for trees.

Ms. Karen Woodard, City Forester, reported on a mitigation-required development whose developer wanted to provide the mitigation in parks to include irrigation. The developer actually went over the mitigation requirement in number of inches but saved \$2000.00 in total mitigation fees. Ms. Woodard advised that this can be done with large mitigation projects but may not be able to save the developer funds on smaller projects.

Regarding the City Forester's report, Ms. Woodard advised that 17 trees were planted at the Dixon Branch Park as many trees there were declining in health. (18) Eastwood residents, (12) Student

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Conservation Assoc. volunteers, (6) Citizen Foresters and Mary Ayala participated in the planting, along with Mrs. Woodard. Also, trees are scheduled for planting at the Jefferson Median Beautification Project site on Jefferson Blvd. on Saturday, December 12th. The city is currently scheduling other neighborhoods for tree plantings. Councilmember Angela Hunt requested information on where trees are being planted and how many are being removed and where. Ms. Woodard reported that out of 82 recent projects...only 38 required tree mitigation. ½ of the projects are now complete. It appears that developers are planting more trees on projects. However, the changes in the economy greatly reduced the number of development and building projects which slows the number of trees being removed and replanted.

Mr. Cory Herpel, Dallas Stormwater Management Outreach, reported that Stormwater Management provided training to Park and Recreation staff in District 1 on November 13, on the proper use of leaf blowers and explained the current city laws. On October 2nd, the department covered 19 public grids and handed out 85 brochures to individuals and lawn maintenance companies. The staffs from three companies were issued notices of violation for blowing grass clippings/leaves into the storm drainage system. It will take education of the public and companies alike to correct this problem.

Mr. Stan Aten, Liaison for the Oak Cliff Earth Day Event, advised that he did not have anything to report at this time.

Mrs. Mary Ayala, Liaison, Trinity River Corridor Office, reported that the scheduled trail work in the Trinity Forest was rained out. Mrs. Ayala will coordinate work days with Ms. Woodard so the committee and the Citizen Foresters can be notified.

Mr. Mike FitzGerald, Team Leader for Media and Public Relations, reported that maintenance on the Skillman Showcase project was performed on November 14th, at which time one of the dead trees was removed. Three trees will need to be replaced and they have been ordered. University Meadows neighborhood is involved with the project and is very enthusiastic about the tree planting program.

Mr. FitzGerald also reported that the Committee website revision is on the final track for completion.

Mr. FitzGerald also reported for Mr. Kurt Kretsinger, Team Leader for Tree Planting and Transplanting, that the University Meadows neighborhood is interested in watering and maintenance on our Skillman Showcase project. Another planting was planned for January 16th (hopefully) on Lovers Lane, between Abrams and Skillman. We are looking forward to this event.

Mr. Eric Larnar, Team Leader for the Citizen Foresters, reported that the 2009 class graduated and the Citizen Foresters now have over 50 citizens trained. He also reported that he gave a 2 hour program on Tree Health Care at the Addison Athletic Club on November 14th for the Addison Arbor Foundation, which was well received. The Dallas County Master Gardener group nominated the Citizen Forester program for a state Master Gardener award in the education project field. Mr. Larnar thinks this program has a good chance of winning.

Mr. Tim Herfel, Liaison for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported on grant opportunities for \$5000 to \$200,000 regarding education outreach. Mr. Herfel said he would be glad to help strategize with anyone on the committee and critique grant requests. He also suggested there be several items rolled into the outreach project – possibly the purchase of trees, use of

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structured soils, etc. and list the objectives. The deadline for application is December 15th so time is very short. It was noted that we could possibly gear up for next year and put together a proposal.

Mr. Houser noted that Mr. Wesley K. Harder, an original member of the Committee has volunteered to host some fund raisers in his home for the Committee in the future.

Mr. Dick Coupe, Liaison to the North Texas Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist program, reported that the 2010 Master Naturalist class starts in February of next year and the chapter is holding an Open House at the Texas AgriLife Extension office at 10056 Marsh Lane in Dallas, on Tuesday evening, January 12th, for those interested in the program.

Ms. Betsy Horton, Liaison to the Texas Trees Foundation, reported on the appreciation event for Fr. John Stack. She advised that Fr. Stack was appreciative of the recognition for planting trees for over 20 years in the Dallas area. At the event the Texas Trees Foundation gave away 75-100 live oak seedlings. Mr. Houser expressed appreciation to the Texas Trees Foundation for honoring Fr. John Stack. The event was a wonderful testament to Fr. Stack's lifetime tree-planting achievements.

Mr. Larry Hochberg with the Turtle Creek Association was in attendance and noted that there are 21 medians up and down Lemon and Blackburn that could use some trees. The association has four events a year to clean up the creek. The Park Department was very helpful in supplying gloves and picking up the trash that is to be collected from the area. There are usually around 50 volunteers from the neighborhood who participate in the clean-up. Mr. Hochberg advised they will be planting 23 trees in the next 30-60 days along Turtle Creek Blvd. Mr. Houser expressed his appreciation for what the Turtle Creek Association is doing by taking ownership of a part of the city.

The Chair advised that the Texas A & M University system has started an Urban Solutions Department through the Extension Service. Dr. Melanie Kirk, who is a past president of the Texas Urban Forestry Council, is going to head up this department. Due to her efforts, many of Dr. Benny Simpson's trees planted at the Coit Road research center will be saved. Mr. Houser expressed his opinion on the extreme value of Dr. Simpson's research and stated that we lost a great deal of knowledge when he passed away. The Chair planted a four inch Bur Oak in front of the center shortly after Dr. Simpson passed away, that he grew from a historic trees acorn.

The Chair also advised that Mr. Roy Appleton had contacted him regarding an article on the Adopt-a-Median program in the future.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Beckelman
Assistant Secretary