

District of Columbia Urban Forestry Advisory Council meeting minutes—FINAL

Call to order: 2:35 PM, December 13, 2016

Members Present

- Mark Buscaino, Casey Trees
- Delores Bushong, community rep.
- Dennis Chestnut, community rep.
- Zach Dobelbower, DGS
- Earl Eutsler, DDOT/UFA
- Jeff Seltzer, DOEE
- Irv Sheffey, community rep. (phone)
- Robin Snyder, GSA (phone)
- Perry Wheelock, NPS

Members Absent

- Brent Sisco, DPR
- Maureen Holman, DC Water
- Nathan McElroy, Pepco

Additional Individuals Present

- Luke Cole, DOEE
- Stephen Gyor, OP
- Josh Ghaffari, OP

Quorum: Yes

Approval of October 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes

- Resolution— approval of UFAC Meeting Minutes of 19/10/2016
Upon a motion moved by Luke Cole and seconded by Mark Buscaino, by unanimous vote of all present, the Committee approved the UFAC Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2016.

D.C. Office of Planning discussion of tree canopy in the District’s Comprehensive Plan

Following introduction by Earl Eutsler, Stephen Gyor and Josh Ghaffari (OP) presented on the general framework of the District’s Comprehensive Plan, tree canopy-specific sections of the Plan, and the potential role the UFAC can play in the ongoing amendment process.

Specifics: Context for Comprehensive Plan: kickoff this year to make amendments to the Comprehensive Plan with the goal of planning for an inclusive, equitable city. The Comprehensive Plan is a 20-y plan for planning and development; it was updated in 2006, amendments were made in 2011, and now a new round of amendments is underway (2016–2017). The Plan has 5 themes, including Building Green and Healthy Communities. Three large city-wide elements are especially important to UFAC: Environmental Protection, Urban Design, and Parks, Recreation, and Open Space. Trees have implications, however, for all 12 elements.

Rather than being directly incorporated as law, the Comprehensive Plan informs zoning ordinances, which is how many of the Comprehensive Plan elements are implemented. The Comprehensive Plan is needed, given the increasing District population, and developing concepts like resilience weren’t previously incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan or in the amendments (e.g., resilience to a growing population, climate change, economy, aging infrastructure, &c.). OP is looking for comments, particularly into the resilience sections. UFAC, District agencies, and private sector groups are all eligible to submit Comprehensive Plan amendments. Specifically, UFAC has the opportunity to delete or modify

outdated information and actions completed; we also have the opportunity to add new language based on policy needs and programmatic needs for accuracy (like new tree canopy maps).

Discussion:

What will the amendment and review process look like?

- OP will review and evaluate draft amendments, but there will be another chance to review the proposed amendment whether it gets adopted or not.
- Open call for amendments will begin in 2017 during a 60-day period in the spring.
- Plan is to submit to the DC Council by early 2018, at which point it will move through NCPC and Congressional review.

Will items in the Comprehensive Plan be incorporated as law?

- Not exactly, but it becomes a reference point that OP will use when assessing zoning adjustments and capital budget.

Does the Comprehensive Plan affect NPS land?

- There are existing references to federal components, and needs to be updated. Those relationships are accounted for here and in the federal elements part in the NCPC comprehensive plan (as a companion document, which was recently completed in 2016).

Deep dive into UFA tree programs

In an effort to better inform the Council about the workings of represented agencies, Earl Eutsler (DDOT/UFA) provided us with a deep dive into UFA tree programs.

Specifics:

DDOT just finished their most recent Land Cover Assessment (2006–2015), which is the third land cover assessment. This assessment not only tells us the state of our tree canopy resource, as well as impervious and other surfaces over a 10-y period. And this assessment helps to tell us how well our programs have been working. Part of the assessment leverages 2006 GIS data with 2015 data to show where tree canopy has changed. Demonstrated successes are partly driven by DDOT's replacement of 4 to 5 trees for every 1 street tree removed.

Results: tree canopy expansion across all areas/land uses in the District. Over time, hopefully we can leverage the UFAC's strengths to help mitigate and minimize tree loss over time, largely by driving additional tree planting. Every Ward has more trees today than it did in 2006 despite accelerated development with the most accelerated UTC growth along the Anacostia. We are now over 38% UTC, and continuing to trend in the right direction (increase in revenue, expansion of protections, and more authority to UFA to plant). In 2006 we were closer to 36%. Accuracy has been increased in this assessment because this is LIDAR imagery.

Discussion:

- Delores inquired about how we make sure everyone has access to green space within a short walking distance, given the development.
 - Earl: fortunately, DC has a variety of requirements and standards in place that should be sufficient to allow the trees to grow to full maturity, even in high density neighborhoods. Mark: Comprehensive Plan/Sustainable DC has put in place a goal of a greenspace within a 10-min walk from any location in the District.

- Dennis Chestnut: in January, the new ANC commissioners will be sworn in; do we have a process for outreach to the ANCs so they understand what the process is to get more trees planted, particularly in Wards 7&8.
 - Earl: we do a lot of outreach to ANCs, but we're not getting great results (i.e., service and interactions). Working with Earth Conservation Corps, Casey, etc. where those partnerships are working to develop materials to bring to inform residents and communities.

Meeting adjourned at 4:05