

District of Columbia Urban Forestry Advisory Council meeting minutes—FINAL

Call to order: 3:30 PM, April 12, 2017

Members Present

- Mark Buscaino, Casey Trees
- Delores Bushong, comm. rep. (phone)
- Zach Dobelbower, DGS
- Earl Eutsler, DDOT/UFA
- Maureen Holman, DC Water (phone)
- Nathan McElroy, Pepco (phone)
- Jeff Seltzer, DOEE
- Brent Sisco, DPR
- Robin Snyder, GSA (phone)

Members Absent

- Dennis Chestnut, community rep.
- Irv Sheffey, community rep.
- Perry Wheelock, NPS

Additional Individuals Present

- Luke Cole, DOEE
- Sally Parker, DCPS
- Jim Pieper, NPS

Quorum: Yes

Approval of December 13, 2016 Meeting Minutes

- Resolution—approval of UFAC Meeting Minutes of 13/12/2016
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 December 13, 2016.

Coordinating tree planting plans and approvals on DPR- and DCPS-managed land in the District

DOEE is currently managing grants to plant trees on schoolyard and parkland sites. Grantees have been unsure of how to identify eligible sites and obtain approvals for tree planting plans. Coordinators from DPR and DCPS joined this meeting to discuss their programming and how we can better coordinate tree planting efforts across agencies.

Brent Sisco (DPR): summary of trees and tree planting

We know that District residents are interested in and engaged with trees in their neighborhoods. As examples, in 2014 a “Tree Bandit” in DC damaged over 400 trees. UFA worked with the US attorney on this following resident outcry. Residents have also expressed concern with signs posted on trees, as well as bikes locked to trees.

In an effort to identify potential DPR sites, Brent reviewed the number of parks with scheduled and executed planting plans. Kenilworth Parkside, a large District park, is set to be capped and could possibly take trees. In addition, of the 371 DPR parks, 200 are small parks (<1 acre). Should there be a master plan? While this is being decided, we are in a holding pattern. **Brent is going to dig to try to find out what opportunity we have to support additional tree canopy in these small parks.**

Supplemental planting: many of the District’s parks that have existing planting plans can take more trees for additional cover. In addition, **DPR has identified trees that need to be replaced, and the group agreed that we could find a way replace them as needed.**

NOTE: Items in **BOLD** are follow-up items for discussion and presentation at the next UFAC meeting

Challenges: 1) Ongoing care and access to water. 2) Inventory metrics; DPR doesn't have a great assessment on trees on their properties. Summer youth employees and interns will be tasked with this in summer 2017, incl. species. Fortunately, UFA has been doing some inventory, and Casey Trees had participated in ID-ing planting locations and have done some inventory. 3) Stewardship: Indianapolis has a stewardship plan to take care of planted trees. Delores expressed concern in stewards/volunteers not realizing how difficult it can be.

Open space:tree canopy: The District is still trying to find a balance between open space and what we want to plant on our biggest parks. Brent volunteered to share the DPR inventory with interested partners. DPR just received \$5M for park space at Ft. Lincoln which will serve as a good case study on open:planted space. The \$5M is likely to go toward infrastructure improvements like tennis courts, though we could add money to the current budget exclusively for trees by using design funds to spec out trees and then have a community planting to put trees in post. Also install frost-free spigots at water features for watering. One opportunity for this is the Edgewood Renovation, 2018: slated for 115 net, new trees, incl. an urban working green roof/farm.

Earl (DDOT/UFA): there are enough tree planting programs within the DC Gov, we should be able to **augment any tree planting initiatives where budget may be lacking.**

Low-hanging fruit: in terms of inventory, **Casey and UFA can inventory sites** (if DPR and DCPS can give a list of sites) and then plant in the fall. Even on small parcels.

Sally Parker: Energy and Sustainability Coordinator for DCPS

As background to the group, Sally's role at DCPS is to improve school tree planting. She has used her position to intervene on school modernization to make sure tree planting is maximized and has begun efforts to use trees as shade for outdoor classrooms to maximize relationship between students and trees while trying to focus on peripheral spaces where nothing is currently planted and the spaces are rarely used.

Challenges for tree plantings: schools need open runaround space. Trees near or along it are hard to protect. Kids are tough on trees. But school administrators also need line-of-sight to trees, and while there's often negotiation, DCPS has to respect the concern that admins have that trees will lead to illicit activity.

Many studies exist linking student performance and exposure to trees. But at the same time, there is a difficult balance between wanting students to have a good environment and not wanting people to linger. To achieve this, school officials need to be informed more about the benefit of trees with security; **Maureen will dig up some information on this.**

Zach Dobelbower (DGS) noted that DGS is looking at the next capital improvement plan for 2018–2023, and there are some schools slated for modernization. This could be an opportunity for getting out in front of the planning cycle. Sally: she now has staff that knows to bring design engineering plans to her up front, rather than at the end. **Zach is happy to coordinate with Sally on this.**

Opportunities: full plant-out at planting sites. Including a full forest-type canopy with large forest species and understory trees to make the site self-sustained to minimize maintenance. One pilot school could be Phelps Academy. Sally is currently working on an education campaign on the social and economic benefit of trees.

NOTE: Items in **BOLD** are follow-up items for discussion and presentation at the next UFAC meeting

Zach: As a case for including in modernization design or retrofitting, could we use new software to calculate linear feet of S & W facing facades to look at energy reduction in the long run if we had trees along those walls? In addition, through the PPA on solar, DGS has removed 20-30 trees from HD Woodson. DGS wants to replace those 2 to 3:1, but aren't sure where yet.

Next steps

- Need to identify the pressure points, bottlenecks, and open chances we have.
- At the next meeting, check in to establish a baseline of what we've achieved as of spring 2017 so we can track and coordinate over time. The goal of this group is to increase tree canopy, and it would be excellent to establish this number to quantify this. **Ask members to bring in a planting # for the previous season at the next meeting.**
- Mark: categorize focus areas. Identify 10-15 sites across the District.
- Should we add DCPS to the roster? Open invite.
- Zach: aligning planting with the TNC ROI sites for SW and Heat Island—align that with the goals of this group with a 20-year outlook.
- Earl: next meeting, we will have a rep from the Forest Service to discuss pest and pathogens.
- Zach: could we assess different District properties to ID sites that have better survivorship/more damage than others. Maintenance is an issue that we need to get better at. Ability to hone in on best practices, rather than poor maintenance, could lead to better contract management and development.

Meeting adjourned at 5:04 PM

NOTE: Items in **BOLD** are follow-up items for discussion and presentation at the next UFAC meeting