

**District of Columbia Urban Forestry Advisory Council meeting minutes—DRAFT**

**Call to order: 3:00PM, July 10, 2018**

**Council Members (\* if in attendance):**

\*Jeff Seltzer, DOEE

Earl Eutsler, DDOT

\*Brent Sisco, DPR

Zach Dobelbower, DGS

\*Perry Wheelock, NPS

Robin Snyder, GSA

Maureen Holman, DC Water

\*Mark Buscaino, Casey Trees

\*Nathan McElroy, Pepco

Dennis Chestnut, comm. rep.

Irv Sheffey, comm. rep.

\*Delores Bushong, comm. rep.

**Invited guests:** Sally Parker, DCPS; Julie Mawhorter, USFS; \*Kasey Yturralde, DDOT; \*Robert Corletta, DDOT; \*Stephen Gyor, OP

**Others present or on phone:** Russ, Brent

**Quorum:**

Approval of April 12, 2018 minutes

Resolution: approval of UFAC Meeting Minutes for April 12, 2018. Upon a motion moved by Luke Cole, and seconded by Mark Buscaino, by unanimous vote of all members present, the Committee approved the UFAC Meeting Minutes of April 12, 2018.

Status of the 2018 tree planting plans

Casey Trees: 1700 estimated

WPP:

DDOT: 8085 since Oct 1, 2017 plus additions (250?) trees on housing authority properties.

DPR: Nothing comes to mind

PEPCO:

DGS: 500-700 annually (DPR & DCPS)

NPS:

GSA: 31 planted this spring 29 more planned by September at St. Elizabeth's site. Approximately 2058 trees planted at that site. 800 trees have been planted since 2015(?) More information upcoming.

DCPS:

Tree-Slope Overlay, GAR, and Zoning Discussion (Stephen Gyor, OP)

Regulatory Framework-Zoning at of 1938 regulates height, bulk and density of trees within the city. Regs not so good for other items regarding trees.

Land use plan for the city-1950's, probably the place to concentrate efforts, sets the tone for all other plans in the city. Comprehensive plan does inform zoning regs. 1958 zoning regs introduced overlay zones (I.E. residential + other requirements). ZR16 = radical overhaul of 1958 regs. Introduced GAR, Tree/Slope Overlay

TSP established to preserve existing conditions in single family home neighborhoods by limiting lot occupancy and development. Introduced restrictions on splitting up lots in order to preserve large areas for trees. These don't exist anymore. Done away with in ZR 16 (2016).

TSPs are not folded into other zones, idea still exist but are not overlaid onto other zones.

Tree protection standards only affect certain zones and only when you are constructing a building or causing any other land disturbing activity to the lot that could result in the disturbance of the tree canopy,

Forest Hills TSP District was established to preserve and enhance the park like setting of certain designated neighborhoods including soapstone valley and Hazen Park. Limits permitted group coverage of new and expanded buildings by 30%.

Zoning is not idea vehicle for protecting tree canopies. Prior to ZR16, Green Area ratio was introduced. GAR has been successful but need to do more analysis. GAR has introduced a flexible policy. Can preserve existing trees and plant new ones and get points in many areas. Allows green roofs, cisterns, and other green infrastructure but still weighted in favor of preserving existing trees.

GAR: will be modified in SDC2.0. Will be open for comment. Different zones in the District are eligible for different credits. And credits can be overlain on top of each other for co-benefits. A big change to GAR (now accepted) is that the tree canopy is the driver of GAR, not caliper size.

Conclusions-GAR flexible fully integrated into permit process, and provides multiple environmental benefits. Still areas to improve, Difficulty in quantifying benefits, design sometimes not visible, not enough incentives for renewable energy, could do more in terms of biodiversity, and work to do in enforcement and maintenance.

Pervious surface requirements are being introduced which will also help the tree canopy. Same applies to surface parking lots. Ideas for bonus elements include native plants, food, renewables, etc.

Q: What does it mean to say the tree-slope overlay has been "folded in"?

A: The same zones that had TSOs are still just as protected, it's just not a separate regulatory process.

Q: How can we prevent slope erosion through zoning? Who is doing something to look at failing retaining walls on steep sloped streets? Stormwater issue due to large amounts of sediment entering tributaries such as Hickey Run. Presents a problem not only for the single homeowner but also for city government and water utilities etc.

A: Zoning not the best tool a lot of times to solve the problem. TSP only restricts removing trees of a certain caliper, so it's not very effective. There might be another vehicle through legislation to solve the problem instead of zoning. DOEE Inspectors and Urban Forestry should take action to prevent tree removal on steep slopes. Make language strong as possible-we should review these slopes and take action.

Q:

## DDOT, the Urban FIA, and Forest Health (Kasey Yturralde and Robert Corletta, DDOT)

Urban forest inventory and analysis-New but part of a long running program – National forest census. Amazing resource for evaluating forests all across the country. Datasets have many applications- evaluating threats to forests from pests, etc. But census didn't cover urban areas. Forested areas had to be an acre in size and 120 ft in width.

2014 Farm Bill adds in assessment of ecosystem services and urban tree inventory to census. Annually monitor nation's urban forests with special emphasis

Urban FIA and iTree attempt to combine traditional inventory of forests and quantifying benefits for urban forests. UFIA is important because the majority of US population lives in urban areas. Urban forests serve the majority of Americans. Two ways to do inventory, all at once or a proportion 1/7 per year. Typically done in 200 plots per city. Portion inventoried every year.

UFIA different from other inventories because it covers all trees across the city. Annual inventory updated each year. Crews must be certified by USFS for FIA and UFIA. Process of QA/QC where USFS inspects 10% of plots. Standardized throughout the country. Great benefit of participating in the program.

District unique in the way that we are conducting Inventory/Analysis. Doing accelerated process, all at once, this summer. Using a contractor to survey the urban forests-Savatree consulting group. Beneficial to UFIA community as a whole because they typically use USFS staff and there are too many cities for USFS staff. Our contractor would be able to staff another city after this year, after being trained.

National parks throughout city presents challenge.

Methodology: field crews conduct pre-field work including plot determinations, sending out letters to private landowners and USFS certifying crews. Field season- crews inventory plots, inspections occur, continued requests for access to private land.

Plots can cover multiple landowners, max 6 per plot.

Letters sent out to homeowners. DC UFIA underway on June 11. Savatree will work throughout the summer to survey the city. Public facing side-web app for two cities so far. Heat map for urban trees, with different themes.

Q: Report for country-district scale wasn't representative and showed canopy declining, does this affect UFIA?

A: UFIA tells us more details than just canopy. Can get estimate of canopy and it will be individualized.

Q: Why couldn't we do iTree plots?

A: Differences in the design of plot size means we can't merge them and it has to be separate programs. Two data protocols are not the same.

Q: What are you looking at in terms of land use types? Potentially interesting way to characterize the district.

A: Protocol very specific will need to get back. Includes pavement/groundcover/herbaceous layer as well.

Cryptic wood-boring survey

Many insects that live in trees are super small and unable to be detected from the outside. Interest in survey for wood-borers, because we have a large number of invasive pests. Pests come from overseas in firewood, pallets, etc.

Focusing on early detection on insect pests when costs are lower and easier to eradicate. Wood boring sampling 2014-16. Canadian study sampled street trees by taking pieces of the trees and allowing them to mature in a controlled environment. Partnering with Earth Conservation Corps to conduct the same study in DC. Sent beetles to NH where they were identified. Found Staphylinid Beetle, known only in GA and LA, so indicates potential range expansion. Three types of beetles were unable to be detected through passive trapping, possibly because some beetles are not attracted to pheromones.

Q: Were harmful beetles found?

A: Not really-most interesting find was foreign species.

Going to repeat the study and use smaller tubes for easier storage. Focusing on trees exhibiting rapid decline.

Q: Does UFA does anything to inform stakeholders about affected trees and what they can do to remedy problems?

A:UFA does street displays at events and events at schools and does conduct outreach. Have worked with DC Water in the past to put together a mailer.

#### NEW TOPICS for consideration in upcoming UFAC meetings

DC Housing Authority- much land available for tree planting, great potential opportunity

Lots of development on RI Ave, everyone wants green roofs. Green Roof on library was not taken care of and most foliage has died. Inspectors from DOEE inspect those facilities as stormwater facilities. Organizations can call 311 to report and get an inspector out to the site. Report as erosion sediment control.

Perry would like to bring Pat Campbell (Chief of Natural Resources) in to talk about inventory management in Rock Creek Park.

Meeting was adjourned at: 4:30 PM