District of Columbia Urban Forestry Advisory Council meeting minutes

MEETING CHAIR: Jim Woodworth email: james.woodworth@dc.gov phone: 202.535.2244

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MEETING TITLE: UFAC Summer Meeting, Web-Ex

Call to order: 2:30PM, Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Council Members (* if in attendance):

*Steve Saari, DOEE	*Perry Wheelock, NPS	*Nathan McElroy, Pepco
*Earl Eutsler, DDOT	*Robin Snyder, GSA	*Dennis Chestnut, comm. rep.
*Brent Sisco, DPR	*Maureen Holman, DC Water	*Delores Bushong, comm. rep.
*Angela Scott, DGS	*Mark Buscaino, Casey Trees	*Brenda Richardson, comm. rep.

Invited guests (present or on phone):

Kasey Yturalde, DDOT	Robert Corletta, DDOT	*Stephen Gyor, OP
*Matt Weber, DOEE	Melissa Deas, DOEE	*Patrick Campbell, NPS
*Maureen Alonso, GSA	Russell Clark, GSA	*Deborah Shapley, RMA
Sally Claggett, USFS	Julie Mawhorter, USFS	*Phillip Rodbell, USFS
*Jess Sanders, Casey Trees	*Rob Shaut, Casey Trees	

Quorum: YES

UFAC Meeting Notes

1. Welcome, Introductions & Updates – Jim Woodworth, DOEE (15 min)
2. Round robin on tree planting and tree care – how are partners adapting during COVID? - All (15 min)
    - Casey Trees planted 1,200 trees with single person vehicle crews, RiverSmart, Large parcel, TNC.
    - NPS has not really done much, just getting back into the field at this point…
    - GSA – no impact, no down time due to COVID, contracts not suspended, all tree work is moving forward
    - DPR – Eastern Market renovation had substantial number of trees planted in collaboration DDOT; no COVID decreases
    - RMA – this week Mass Ave rehab project has begun; RMA advocating to get plans changed to protect 1,000+ street trees; adjusting street lights to minimize pruning requirements;
    - DDOT-UFD – very successful season, 8,500 new trees; street tree stocking levels 97% as of last season; after this season, nearly 100% across all 8 wards.

3. Update on urban wood reutilization – Earl Eutsler, DDOT Urban Forestry Division (15 min)

- More wood harvested from urban forests than national forests!
- DC's wood not being wasted
- Mill 2.0 for outdoor seating in school gardens/outdoor classrooms
- 30 schools have made requests
- Stump seating, large monolithic log benches, tree cookies and wood chips for stepping 'stones' and pathways
- Always needs for kids for outdoor spaces
- Climbing features – logs w/structure/remaining stumps and branches – kids clamoring over it
- Phelps DCPS and CTE focus on carpentry track/milled lumber e.g. 2'x4's utilizing wood shops
- Idea PCS – bird house kits for Arbor Day; wood kiln under construction – stalled due to COVID; students had field trips to see whole process from tree planting, removal to milling to carpentry…glimpse/connection to jobs, industry
- Marshalling yard – central location near arboretum
- Community garden partnerships – Harry Thomas Rec Center – produce wash station
- Had to get creative – log hauling dolly for monolithic log benches
- Evolving designs w/modular pieces
- OSSE and DPR have facilitated

4. Update on forest stewardship of Langdon Park – Delores Bushong, UFAC community rep, Mary Pat Rowan
    - Langdon Park forest patch 2.2 acres
    - ~2 city blocks along Franklin St NE btwn 20th-24th streets
    - *Real woods experience*
    - Lots of natural regeneration; lots of native diversity ~ 20 species
    - Some illegal dumping
    - Cut back vines, measured trees, ID species, marked, recorded –> mapping inventory
    - 52 hours of field work March - June
    - 216+ Seedlings, saplings and 16 special/heritage trees
    - Threats:
        - Illegal cutting?
        - Invasive vines (kudzu, porcelain berry, multi flora rose, honeysuckle, English ivy)
        - Future construction of Langdon rec center
        - Pests & diseases
    - Needs/next steps:
        - Communication/signage/education
        - GIS map inventory
        - Long term management plan w/succession v. hap-hazard mowing/cutting/clearing
        - deer caging seedlings could be helpful
        - DOEE can work w/you on signage, outreach literature

5. NCPC briefing on tree replacement policy – Stephanie Free, National Capital Planning Commission
    - Comp Plan – amendments to federal environment element
    - Section FE.G.1 -2 & 3 updates for federal development
        - Existing policies have issues; rely on case-by-case basis

- Reviewed prevailing policies of surrounding jurisdictions
- Goal to be consistent regardless of location of application
- FE.G.1Prioritize preservation of existing trees
- Recognizes Districts Heritage tree size
- NCPC wants to have that conversation about tree preservation/transplanting/replanting
- Flexibility in procedures
- FE.G.2 - Replacement:
    - if less than 10-inch diameter -> 1 for 1.
    - If tree more than 10-inch diameter; replacement formula based on size, species, condition.
    - Forests/stands – 1.5 acres replacement required for 1 acre removed; Trees
- Preference for Location of replacement trees:
    - On project site
    - On the property
    - Another site w/in agency's jurisdiction
    - Combination of above
- Soil volume, ANSI standards
- Alternative sustainable design practices (green building, other trade-offs)
- Submission guidelines updated - tree survey and inventory; chart for removals and replacements
- Resource guide
- Next Steps:
    - 2 public comment meetings- info@ncpc.gov
    - Public comment period ends Sept. 16, 2020
    - Submit for approval on Nov. 5

- Q: re: forest stand removal:
    - would all replanting be required in same jurisdiction as removal?
    - Ideally, on, or near the site, or e.g. within DOD, then on DOD land as close to site as possible
- Q: how many trees/acre?
    - Mix and density, coordinate w/local and federal stakeholders, have conversation at that time
- Q: Process question, re new security requirements for fencing, border protection
    - E.g. Arlington National Cemetery security fence?
    - Project officer and coordinating team; Hoping new policy will give us more tools to equip for these development projects.
    - Helpful to have a policy in place, not 'our' policy, but NCPC would review it.
    - NPS largest landowner in DC, when would it apply? Park Police horse stables is an example
    - – which lands apply here? Generally ANY federally owned land in the National Capital Region. Commission or staff level approval depending. Projects purchased with federal funds wouldn't apply, MNCPC projects have to comply with MDE forest conservation law
    - Will policy go thru GSA for review? Heads-up provided. Aug 18th focused federal and district stakeholder meeting – another opportunity for GSA thoughts

        - DOD has other policies that they need to abide by

6. Discussion of Special & Heritage Tree law applicability to DC government:
    - Specific cases on DC-owned parks, schools of large-sized (special/heritage) tree losses
    - Want to have a dialogue, discussion about how we could further legislative action in order to protect more trees in the district
    - Misconception, confusion that the protections don't apply to DC lands
    - Barry Farm - numerous heritage-size trees impacted, but are not protected. Harmful impact of gentrification?
        - How many special and heritage trees are there that are NOT protected on DC lands? What are we talking about?
        - As long as land is cleared, before a private developer takes it over, those trees can be removed on public properties.
    - Interesting to reflect on NCPC presentation
        - What is the *actual current practice* for DC agencies?
        - What is the *actual policy* which is uniform across agencies?
        - Do we have a public-facing tree removal and replacement policy?
        - Do we have requirements for public notification when a removal of a special or heritage tree is removed?
    - DDOT is implementing the law as it was written
        - Reality is that District projects are exempt from law as legislated
        - DDOT does not have lee-way, latitude or discretion over
        - Desire to change that? Has to take a legislative path
        - Assigned to DDOT the authority to review and advise on all DC capital improvement projects for tree protection and planting – we have a new landscape architect that reviews all of these for DGS, DPR, DCPS;
        - Get involved early on to preserve trees, take existing trees into account early on, consistent w/law;
        - St. E's, Walter Reed, housing authority;
    - District agencies are only as good as the legislation they have; how can we improve this, create more agency w/in law?
    - A solution will involve legislation; a 2-edged sword, need to think carefully how we open that back up;
        - Longer term process
        - DC gov staff on this call work for the executive branch; uncomfortable situation to discuss something that requires a legislative change; taking action is difficult
    - Biggest change to current law was to eliminate the replacement planting option (v. paying the permit fee);
    - Is the tree law working? Yes, it seems to be. How do we find out better if it is working? Are sufficient replacement trees maturing to replace special tree removals?
        - Cost of removals by DC v. investment of new plantings by DC
    - Big Special (and Heritage) trees move me! Spiritually…emotionally.
    - Barry Farms - How many special and heritage trees were removed?
    - DCPS is facing pressure too, with enrollment and expansion.
    - UFD process – understand these are not DDOT's projects. E.g. DPR Edgewood Rec Center; all of that is wrapped up in DPR's community engagement process over 2 years;

DPR hired arborist to work with DDOT. Gets very hard balancing many competing park priorities.

  - When should the public be involved? DDOT is engaging at the earliest stage possible to consider trees.
  - DEMPED or DCHA w/third party public private entities where things get more complicated; trees were protected on St. E;s for the sports & entertainment development.

- Is there some lee-way for us to find some improvement in the development process to retain and protect more large trees?
- Urban Forest Preservation Act – was never intended to protect a single individual tree; but we have 3 consecutive rounds of LIDAR data showing that canopy is expanding; with a 4th to come soon
- Do we require a gap analysis to identify how many trees are vulnerable?
  - USFS FIA data is undergoing analysis, but expect outputs and deliverables by end of year; uncertain when that information would become available to UFAC;
- Next meeting tentatively scheduled for Oct 14th.
- Meeting adjorned.