

Advisory Committee Meeting #3 – Meeting Notes

June 16th, 2011

Time: 1:00-3:00 PM

Location: 6th Floor Conference Room, Ann Arbor City Hall
301 E Huron St

Meeting Attendees: **Peggy Sorvala** (DTE), **Ann Lund** (Broadway Neighborhood), **Harry Sheehan** (Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner), **Matt Naud** (City of Ann Arbor- Environmental Commission Rep), **Lynn Borset** (Ann Arbor Tree Conservancy), **James D’Amour** (Alternate- Sierra Club of Huron Valley), **Neal Foster** (Millers Creek Action Team, Orchard-Hill Maplewood Homeowners Association), **Rita Mitchell** (Neighborhood Alliance), **Kris Olsson** (Huron River Watershed Council), **John Lawter** (Parks Advisory Commission/UM Grounds), **Joan Doughty** (Community Action Network),

Meeting facilitators: **Cheryl Zuellig** (JJR), **Oliver Kiley** (JJR)

City Staff: **Kerry Gray** (Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Planner), **Kayla Coleman** (Water Resources Program Assistant)

Pre-Meeting Discussion

- AC members have requested a list of who is on the working group; this will be provided with meeting minutes.
- **Q.** There is an item that is currently on the council agenda for Monday. Is current Urban Forest management planning informing current decisions?
A. No, not yet. We are in the planning process. Implementation will come later.

Green Fair Re-cap:

- The City hosted a table at the Green Fair on Friday, June 10th to provide information to the public about the development of the Urban and Community Forest Management Plan. To attract people to the booth there were several activities including button making and an opportunity to share their favorite tree species. A flyer about the management plan process and how the public can be involved was handed out.

Stakeholder Meetings #2

- Seven different focus groups met over a two week span, with 42 total participants. (Non-profit groups/Environmental Organizations-10; Other Agencies/Public Groups- 4; Boards/Business Groups- 4; Residents- 12; City Commissions- 2; City Staff- 10)
- Business group involvement has been lacking although they have been invited to participate in the process. A suggestion was made by an AC member that a way to get businesses involved may be after plan development is completed when there is a specific action item for them to do.

Highlights from Working Group session

- The name change was approved; the plan will now be titled ‘Urban & Community Forest Management Plan.’
- Plan components will remain as tree resource, resource management and community framework.’
 - o The plan will include definitions of each component to clarify who/what is included in each component. (e.g. Community will be defined in a way that includes City staff and residents.)

- Despite different viewpoints about how the plan is structurally organized, it was agreed that the objectives really make the plan effective.
- Time frame: The Working Group would like the objectives to dictate the time frame, rather than having a specific plan time frame (e.g. 10, 20 50 years) that limits the objectives.

Goal and SWOT discussion -- Goals are as presented at the AC meeting

1. **Increase and maintain tree canopy cover across the city**
AND
2. **Establish and maintain a healthy, diverse, safe and sustainable, ~~healthy~~ urban forest**
 - Support for using preserve/protect *and* maintain
 - Discussion of whether or not goal #1 &2 are really separate
 - #2 covers it all. Make #1 an objective of #2
 - Clarification on what some of the terms in this goal mean- should be in definitions section
 - What does it mean to be a healthy, diverse, urban forest
 - What does safe mean?
3. **~~Promote~~ Enhance and support the ecological functions ~~and amenity uses~~ of the urban forest (i.e. a source for food or lumber)**
 - AC agreed with goal
 - Where do the things other than trees fit in? e.g. understory, shrubs/grasses. Could this go under both goal #2 and #3?
4. **~~Promote~~ ecological functions and amenity uses of the urban forest (i.e. a source for food or lumber)**
 - AC agreed with goal
5. **~~Standardize~~ Communicate and coordinate management activities and policies between city units and other agencies/organizations whose activities impact ~~with urban/community forest management responsibilities-~~ City managed trees (DTE, AAPS, Contractors, UoM)**
 - Add 'Ensure' to the beginning of the goal
6. **Balance funding strategies with city policies and urban forest management activities**
 - Balance is too loose of a term, it can be interpreted differently
 - Support for using the wording: "Devise and implement funding strategies..." and including all of the benefits (social, environmental and economic) that trees provide not just economic.
7. **~~Orient~~ Establish practices and policies to support a healthy, safe and sustainable urban forest**
 - Very similar to goal #2
 - The term 'structurally sound' is preferred over 'safe'
 - A lot of goals end with "healthy, safe, and sustainable..." are we being redundant?
 - Support to remove "be consistent with community input/values" in the rationale, #8 addresses that

8. ~~Adopt an outreach strategy to c~~Communicate, with and educate and maintain a dialogue with the community Build and maintain community support and knowledge about the benefits of the urban forest and its management

- In SWOT, #4 Public Education/Communication etc.: add to weakness that the notification of removals could be improved

9. **Engage the community in the collective management of urban forest resources**

AND

10. **Build partnerships between organizations to support a sustainable urban forest**

- 'Community' needs to be defined in plan
- Combine goal #9 and goal #10; use the wording of goal #9 ("Engage the community...") and 2 separate objectives of this goal will be engaging the private citizens and the outside organizations.

Benchmarking Ideas

Goal #1 & 2

- What does it mean to preserve/protect? Understand the numbers behind tree health/condition (i.e. how long do species live, turn over, when to begin new planting, etc.)
- What does a canopy cover goal look like? What does 40% mean? What are options used in other communities?
- What is an appropriate species mix? What are potential impacts of climate change on appropriate species selection? What does native mean? (i.e. how might the definition of 'native' change if climate change causes a different growth zone)
- Need to understand the value of non-invasive non-natives (i.e. Norway maples in street and not near natural areas).
- How to deal with invasive species?
- Clarify what a healthy forest is. How have others defined a healthy forest?
- How are other communities measuring how well they're doing with maintenance?

Goal #3 & 4

- How have other communities treated the understory?
- Explore ideas for "victory parks" to provide food

Goal #5

- Tree protection policies
- Pruning standards/guidelines
- How do other communities coordinate actions/policies between departments and multiple agencies (i.e. between city + DTE + UM + contractors)

Goal #6

- Alternate funding strategies/sources outside of the city
- What communities have *sustainable* funding strategies?
- Examine funding breakdown for trees in other cities (money spent on plantings via pruning, etc.)
- How do other forestry programs get their funding? How much is from grants vs. other funding sources.
- Programs for tree plantings as gifts/donations (e.g. Israel's "Plant a tree for Israel" program)

Goal #7

- Benchmark other cities' policies on practices and relevant ordinances
- What activities do other cities conduct versus contract out or rely on broader community?
- Examples of landmark tree protection/controls
- How do other communities balance priorities or activities?

Goal #8, #9, & #10

- What communication and engagement programs do other cities have?
- Explore what has worked in Ann Arbor (i.e. recycling + stormwater programs)
- Look outside the US for inspiration

Vision Statement

- AC discussed the two Vision Statements provided and the Committee preferred Vision Statement #2.
- Committee members had until Tuesday, June 21st to provide comments on the vision statement. Based on comments received staff will revise the Vision Statement and provide to Advisory Committee via email for their review/recommendation. The AC's vision statement recommendation will be provided to the Working Group for approval.

Next Steps

- July 7th Advisory Committee Meeting
Time: 9-11 AM
Location: 6th Floor Conference Room, Ann Arbor City Hall (301 E Huron St)
Discuss Objective/Recommendation topics- specifics objectives/recommendations will be discussed in detail at the November and December AC meetings.