

## MEETING NOTES

City of Ann Arbor  
Urban Forest Management Plan  
Advisory Committee Meeting 1  
Thursday, April 14, 2011  
1:30-3:30 pm

**MEETING ATTENDEES:** **Ann Lund** (Broadway Neighborhood), **Paul Bairley** (Former City Forester), **Jeff Plakke** (University of Michigan Botanical Gardens and Arboretum), **Jim Rogers** (Friends of Greenview and Pioneer Nature Areas), **Lynn Borset** (Ann Arbor Tree Conservancy), **Neal Foster** (Millers Creek Action Team, Orchard-Hill Maplewood Homeowners Association), **Harry Sheehan** (Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner), **Mike Martin** (First Martin), **Kris Olsson** (Huron River Watershed Council), **Joan Doughty** (Community Action Network), **Peggy Sorvala** (DTE), **James D'Amour** (Alternate- Sierra Club of Huron Valley), **John Lawter** (Parks Advisory Commission/UM Grounds), **Rita Mitchell** (Neighborhood Alliance)

Meeting facilitators: **Cheryl Zuellig** (JJR), **Carol Schulte** (JJR)

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

### PROJECT PURPOSE/ADVISORY COMMITTEE OPERATIONS/BACKGROUND:

Kerry Gray and Cheryl Zuellig presented on the project purpose, advisory committee operations and provided background information on Ann Arbor's urban forest and the City's Forestry program. A copy of their presentation is available on the City Forestry webpage at [www.a2gov.org/urbanforestry](http://www.a2gov.org/urbanforestry) or by [clicking here](#).

### IDEA GENERATION ACTIVITY:

#### Review of Community Input/Consistent Themes (COMMON THEMES CHART):

The AC had the following comments regarding the Common Themes Chart...

- Low number of references to 'long range planning' theme, but it is a "catch-all" that is included in other themes.
- Importance of public education
- The varying number of keywords per theme was mentioned with a concern that this may place too much attention to a specific theme. *City Response: We attempted to provide close to the same number of keywords for each category but did not want to risk missing relevant references by limiting some of the key words too much. The common themes chart was a summary; full responses are available online.*
- Cost issues, key quote: "no money should be spent on this special interest item." Is this the general mentality? *City Response: this is an example of a distinct perspective. We tried to select quotes that showed the range of viewpoints.*
- Dollar amount that each tree provides in benefits is substantial; unfortunately most people are not aware of these measurable benefits.
- It was mentioned that the survey may not truly be representative of the Ann Arbor public.

- One AC member felt that the EAB millage that failed is the most accurate representation of how the public feels toward forestry.
- Financial reality (think about this as setting the stage for the plan)
- Would be helpful to know how much resources the City has allocated for urban forestry activities. Which funds? How much?

### **Idea Brainstorm & Feedback:**

**The AC members were asked to brainstorm “Things that they would like the plan to achieve...”**

**Results from the brainstorm session at the meeting have been grouped into themes and ordered based on the approximate number of references to each.**

NOTE: (1) Comments in regular font have been typed from note cards (based on our best interpretation of handwriting); italicized comments are taken from meeting notes. Quotes were not directly transcribed. (2) Some comments represent more than one theme; we have categorized each comment based on the theme that it best represents.

### **Ideas/Goals- Public Education/Communication & Involvement/Volunteers/Outreach**

(Note: ‘Education’ and ‘Volunteers’ were separate in the previous themes chart) [20 total references]

1. Build stronger connection/buy in. Educate public about the urban forest as a resource. Get info out there. Make it accessible. Be responsive to public reaction to information. 2 way dialogue.
  - o *Make info available and make it known that it is there.*
2. Identify a process to better educate citizens in how to better manage their own ‘forest’ and interact with the “public forest” around them.
3. Emphasize the enhancement of opportunities for better connection of people with the natural world.
4. The public is aware of the value of trees \*and\* natural landscapes to economic, environmental, and public health and is an active partner of maintaining the urban forest.
5. Education, communication- from a utility point of view. What can and cannot be done because of the regulations/licenses. Safety/reliability
  - o *How does the utility convey what it’s required to do?*
6. Improved communication with neighborhoods regarding their trees- forestry presentations at Ann Arbor District Library (AADL).
7. Increase volunteer/citizen participation/notification throughout process and incorporating all effective current and new methods (social media, etc)
8. Need public education for adults
9. Planting and watering, pruning private trees- need to encourage more by outreach efforts.
10. Communication and outreach to the public via methods other than website, e.g. CTN. (the demise of A2 News creates problems here).
11. Include a public awareness/educational component regarding the benefits of the urban forest and involve the public and private schools, churches, service organizations and other volunteer groups i.e. the neighborhood associations. Broadest outreach possible.
12. Teach workshops on routine pruning and maintenance to such service groups and churches to help alleviate the pressure on city resources.
13. Education is multi-level: community to learn value of trees, care, coordination of volunteers and professional staff (e.g. NAP started training volunteer tree pruners- long term goal and responsibility should be defined); provide clear info on problems of invasive {plants} and alternative choices for planting

14. Clearly convey to the public the City's policy regarding routine tree maintenance/define an expectation for tree maintenance if needed.
15. Education about the urban forest benefits, etc.
16. Historic Info- celebrate past "old north woods" what was here?
17. Awards and recognition Ann Arbor has- Tree City?

#### **Action/Rally**

1. Advocate for a call for action! To all segments of the community and issue a challenge- what are you doing to restore Ann Arbor tree canopy? (service groups, churches, schools)
2. Public education- why has funding for our most treasured resources, trees and parks, declined over the past 25 years? How can we rally the public and city government to address appropriate funding needs?
3. A campaign for trees-kick off

#### **Ideas/Goals- Tree Selection & Planting [10 total references]**

##### **Canopy Cover**

1. Increase canopy cover 5-10% over the next 10-20 years
2. The urban forest consists of a diversity of mature and healthy trees that cover 40% of Ann Arbor's land area
3. Increase net gain of tree canopy (end net loss!)
4. Set canopy goals and manage to that
  - a. Protection what we have and can influence
  - b. Maintenance/health
  - c. Planting - Diversity (restoration, new)

##### **Diversity**

1. Improve diversity
2. Address "dilemma" of achieving a more beneficial species diversity
3. Diversity and structure- age and species native trees, shrubs, and perennials

##### **Natives**

1. Strongly emphasize native, natural plantings (tree and herbaceous) in public and private spaces.
2. Greater diversity of native tree planting
  - a. Preference for natives
  - b. Non-invasive non-native, if desirable?

##### **Planting Location**

1. Greater emphasis on tree planting and tree care in the central city- urban core- coordination with the City/University.

#### **Ideas/Goals- Balancing Priorities/Competing Interests- Coordination and Conflicts [6 total references]**

1. Coordination between departments/divisions, policies so that trees do not get trumped by other things: sidewalks, road repair, leaf pick-up, *tree removal issues*
2. Greater coordination of zoning/solar/wind development issues as they relate to the Urban Forest development and management and other City ordinances.
3. Identify a way to resolve conflicts and prioritize tree health/pruning vs. sidewalks and electric lines and sewers- which wins?
4. Greater oversight /management of contractor/utility management of urban tree canopy
5. Merge with PROS, Allen Creek Greenway, UM- Forestry master plan
6. Zoning/ordinances- new development, *solar*

- *Better coordination with zoning ordinance concerns*

### **Ideas/Goals- Routine Tree Maintenance** [5 total references]

#### **Maintenance**

1. Mission statement-maintenance: preserve what we have!
2. Clearly convey to the public the City's policy regarding routine tree maintenance/define an expectation for tree maintenance if needed.
3. Contiguous management (public/private)

#### **Improvements in tree health**

1. Maintain health (seems that ash tree replacement will increase the percent of healthy trees)
2. *ID- way to prioritize tree health*

### **Ideas/Goals- Budget/funding/resources** [5 total references]

1. Public education- why has funding for our most treasured resources, trees and parks, declined over the past 25 years? How can we rally the public and City government to address appropriate funding needs?
2. "Restoration" funding
  - a. Replacement planting
  - b. Improved forest health via increased allocation for reestablishing pruning cycles.
3. Clarify budget and staff resources by funding source. i.e. what does it mean to use the stormwater fund for trees?
4. Funding/community support/incentives, revenue, resources out...
5. *Show the importance of funding by emphasizing the benefits*

### **Ideas/Goals- Partnerships with other agencies/institutions/groups/organizations** [4 total references]

1. What can DTE do to help? Develop innovative opportunities to work together and achieve both goals
  - *Help with the cost, education, etc?*
2. Establish a framework for a public/private/service organization and business partnership to achieve very specific and measurable goals- e.g. %canopy, % fruit and nut trees, # of trees)
3. Streamline/simplify the process for private involvement/sponsorship of the maintenance of City trees
  - *Let people know more clearly how to do this*
  - *Had issues with resistance from the city*
  - *Unions*
4. *City and university communication*

### **Ideas/Goals- Ordinances/Requirements- Accountability** [3 total references]

1. Ordinance: sets standards and is enforceable, governs
  - *Enforceable*
  - *Maintenance and preservation of what we have*
  - *A permanent committee for the urban forest*
2. Permanent oversight committee with some authority to affect policy and practices
3. Establish an easy to read report card that allows the public to keep track of these goals

**Ideas/Goals- Trees as a Food Source** [1 total reference]

1. The urban forest is regularly harvested by food gatherers and other service providers.

**Ideas/Goals- Incentives for Private Tree Planting** [1 total reference]

1. Develop stormwater credit for tree planting

**Ideas/Goals- Other** [2 total references]

**Decision Making**

1. Develop a level of service for decision making

**Broaden view of the urban forest**

1. “The forest is more than the trees. Shrubs and herbs too!”

**NEXT STEPS AND WRAP-UP:**

The next Advisory Committee meeting is Friday, May 13 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Traverwood Branch of the Ann Arbor District Library (3333 Traverwood Drive (at Huron Parkway)). Agenda items for the May 13 meeting:

- Refine and prioritize goals
- Develop objectives/measurable
- Discuss plan organization and major elements

Advisory Committee “homework” for the May 13 meeting:

- Review example urban forest management plans (links provided in email and meeting packets and have also been posted in the Urban Forest Management plan section of the Forestry webpage)
- Brainstorm possible objectives (measurables) related to your ideas and goals and bring 2 to the next meeting. Feel free to add ideas/goals to your list that you may think of while reviewing other plans.

**Q&A THROUGHOUT MEETING:**

Q: Where does City Council fit into the UFMP development process?

A: They will approve the plan before it is adopted.

Q: Were public school property trees included in the inventory?

A: No, they are not City trees.

Q: Who manages Public School property trees? Do they have a forester?

A: They have grounds maintenance staff who manage them.

Q: Who decides the species to plant for City trees?

A: Forestry Field Operations and Systems Planning staff. There is an approved street tree species list which the City uses when bidding out trees with the final decision on tree species planted from year to year based upon nursery availability.

Q: Can the relevant policies for public and private trees be provided? Are they posted somewhere?

A: They are available at the Clerk’s website; we will also provide the links.

Q: Tree inventory- is this based on historical records or how was this collected?

A: Davey Resource Group arborists walked the streets and visited every tree/stump/planting site.

Q: Is the historical inventory still available?

A: Yes, but it requires a special software to view.

Q: Could a comparison be done pre-and post Emerald Ash Borer?

A: It would take a lot of work to do this, but there is interest. Perhaps it could be a student project by U of M; maybe a Grad student.

Q: Are County trees included in the canopy analysis?

A: Yes, the canopy analysis included all lands within the City both public and private; however we do not have a breakdown of canopy for County lands, University or school properties. The UFMP will focus on City trees and possibly provide guidance for tree activities on private property in the City. It will not address trees on county owned land, or public school property within the City.

Q: Are we working on pruning trees that are not in good condition to get them to a better condition?

A: We are focusing on removals now, would like to work on pruning in the future.

Q: What makes a tree in 'very good condition?'

A: Young trees

Q: Do we have age data of city trees?

A: No, we just use size to estimate approximate age. Age depends on the species, some grow faster. But with new plantings we are now recording the year when we plant so that we'll get a better idea of this in the future.

Q: Why decorative species and not fruit/nut?

A: There are maintenance issues, but it is being explored.

Comment: What portions of the City budget are used for UFMP? General funds? Storm? Some other UFMP make suggestions about the funding sources.