

MINUTES

URBAN LANDSCAPE COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 25, 2011

4:30 p.m.

Attendees: K. Hurst, S. Poulson, M. Bowers, A. Tanner, J. Selin, M. Maupin, J. Lattanzi,
A. Cumming

There were no minutes from the April meeting as there was not a quorum during that meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Green Team – Laird Knight. Mr. Knight was not able to attend the meeting.

B. Goals and Recommendations for 5-year plan:

There was a lengthy discussion on what the ULC's Five Year Plan should include. Funding to hire the necessary staff to carry out any plan will be critical. One of the Commission's primary responsibilities is to evaluate the city's public green spaces and to enhance the overall aesthetic of these spaces with the use of plant materials, and other landscape features. Ongoing maintenance of these spaces cannot be emphasized enough. As more project sites are identified and added to the Urban Landscape Office's responsibilities, more staff will be needed for adequate maintenance of the office's sites.

Budgetary issues are an ongoing concern. The City Council representative to the Commission is now aware of the UL Office budget restrictions with regard to seasonal interns and other seasonal employees, and will seek to find information on this matter and report back to the Commission.

One of the design goals of the Commission is to identify and evaluate how the city can better utilize public right-of-ways, alley-ways, and paper streets to create a trail system that could connect neighborhoods to each other and the downtown and will facilitate walking and biking in the city. Developing a working plan with other city boards, committees and commissions will be key in this endeavor.

J. Selin, J. Lattanzi, and K. Hurst will work on a draft to present to the Commission.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. MS Downtown Connectors (WVU-Landscape Architecture Senior Project)

We looked at printouts of this report. Unfortunately no one has had an opportunity to really review this report. K. Hurst will try to send this via e-mail to the ULC members so they can review it and see if they get any ideas on how this can help us with the creation of a trail system throughout the City.

PROJECT SITE REPORT (M. Maupin)

All the offices work sites are behind schedule because the UL office's intern was not able to start the first of May as has been the practice in past years. There have also been issues with the greenhouse where the plant materials are purchased and the planting issues that come with an excessively rainy Spring. The islands on University Ave. are also behind schedule but Biafore's hope to start working on the islands next Thursday (weeding, mulching and re-planting perennials).

Because of raccoons (and the threat of rabbis), the Airport Manager has ordered all cat boxes removed at the airport. A lot of cleanup has taken place on the island in front of the terminal where the cats used to be.

The Sunnyside trees are being kept in the White Park storage area and they should to be planted in the next two weeks.

M. Maupin's intern is scheduled to begin June 1 and will work full-time through the summer.

BOPARC Report:

The representative from BOPARC did not attend the meeting and there was no report from them.

TREE BOARD Report:

- A) The information that follows is about a Tree inventory and assessment system and has been taken directly from Anne Cumming's original email explaining the inventory schedule and process, and how this information can assist the Tree Board. Anne Cumming was present and reported on this information as a representative of the Tree Board.

Background::

I have been project manager on a data collection protocol designed to look at urban trees and detect presence of insects and diseases. Over the last 3-4 years, our development team has worked with experts in entomology and pathology to create a step-by-step method of detection. Our method has been incorporated into a freeware tree inventory and assessment system called i-TREE. (www.itreetools.org). We have finished with our beta testing and the fully functional methods are available in the recently updated i-TREE v 4.0.

Summer 2011::

Now that we have a program "out there", our team needs to work on "marketing" and we need some data to work with. That's where the inventory effort this summer comes in. The USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry, Northeastern Area has a field office located in Star City (in case you forward this message... I know you know that). Our office will be collecting pest and disease data on street trees using i-TREE 4.0 this summer and the team is willing to do a full inventory of the trees within city limits. I will be the lead on this, but we have three or four other people in our office who will be collecting data also.

I am willing to work with the Tree Board to designate a couple fields for data collection that might be of interest. I'd be happy to suggest some for you to mull over. I will be working with our development team to "design" the project to meet our data needs in the next few weeks.

We have targeted the week of July 25 - 29 to be out collecting data. I realize that we might not be able to complete everything within that time frame. I spoke with Bob Hannah (WV Division of Forestry) yesterday

and he said that he is interested and willing to assist and may be able to find one other person who could help for a few days, here and there. Dave Barnett has also mentioned his willingness to assist with data collection. This is excellent!!

I have spoken to Trevor Lloyd (Damien and Dan, too) with the city of Morgantown. They said they could help by providing a list of street names, by ward.

The Tree Board received a grant and funded an inventory in 2002. It was completed by a contractor -- ACRT, Inc. I have been in contact with ACRT and am in the process of getting a copy of the information they collected.

Current Plan::

Right now, I'm gearing up to design the project for data collection, plan training for the data collectors, and hoping to provide some kind of outreach information to the neighborhood groups.

I have set up a blog to keep track of our progress, provide some background information and in general, have a quick way for folks to be kept up to speed about the project. Follow it at:

morgantowntrees.blogspot.com

Here you can find links to the inventory software we will be using. I encourage you to visit and learn. iTREE is not just a tally software - it will be able to estimate values - economic, social and ecological - of our street trees. This will be useful and interesting information for the city and the USFS.

Request for Your Assistance::

I could use help from the Tree Board and Urban Landscape Commission in the following ways:

- Getting the word out to neighborhood association -- it would be nice for them to know what's going on this summer. They will be seeing folks out looking at trees during mid-late July.
- Feedback/comments on a couple data fields that would be helpful for the Tree Board to have.
- Field assistance (if you're game!)

- B) Don Spencer has introduced a revised Tree Ordinance. It is quite comprehensive (12 pages). It will be put in the next packet for the Committee of the Whole on May 31, 2011. There will probably be questions by the City Council and review by the City Attorney. The ULC asked A. Cumming to attend this meeting to show Tree Board support of this ordinance.

PROUD OF OUR TOWN AWARDS:

S. Poulson and M. Bowers have contacted Kevin Trembush from Advantage Health and Wellness to notify him that his business is receiving an award. We have set up the presentation for June 3 at 5:00 p.m. Dominion Post will send a reporter and we ask ULC members to attend if possible.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.