

URBAN FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
MEETING OF MARCH 20, 2009

Present: John Baird, Erica Engel-Ishida, Pablo Jourdan, Joyce Reier, Drew Todd, and Gay Williams

The meeting began at 10:05 AM with introductions. Erica Engel-Ishida was sitting in for Mike Ahern, who was attending a meeting with the Director of OEPA. Drew Todd opened the meeting by mentioning that in an effort to seek out significant department-wide efficiencies and focus limited resources on essential programs and services, ODNR was consolidating the operations of several divisions. The Divisions of Soil and Water Conservation and Water will be merged into the Division of Soil and Water Resources, and will include the Division of Recycling and Litter Prevention. Programs within the Division of Real Estate and Land Management will be dispersed among several divisions. The Director's consolidation goal is to continue to deliver the level of services Ohioans expect from ODNR.

Drew also stated that President Obama signed the Omnibus Appropriations bill, which had a 7% increase in national Urban & Community Forestry funding.

Before discussing the economic stimulus proposal, Drew mentioned that John Milam, with Duke Energy, resigned his committee seat. The Utility Chair has been offered to Danny Bagwell with Pioneer Energy.

The remainder of the meeting was spent reviewing and discussing the Division's response to the economic stimulus package.

According to Drew, on Friday, February 13, 2009, the Division of Forestry was informed that \$250 million dollars of economic stimulus money was available through the USDA State & Private Forestry Program. Each state forestry agency had one week to submit proposals that focused on creating "shovel ready" jobs within the forestry/natural resource area. In reality, because the following Monday was a state holiday and Ohio's proposal needed to be pre-screened by the Northeastern Association of State Foresters, the division had only three days to develop and submit its proposals.

After receiving input from nearly 80 communities, an Urban Forestry Recovery proposal was developed. This \$9 million proposal would fund a statewide grant program for the removal, recycling, and replacement of community ash trees.

Drew sought feedback on the grant objectives, community pool, constrains, and selection criteria from the group. As part of the recycling phase, Gay Williams wondered if browse from ash removals could be offered to local zoos. Gay also asked how ONLA's Nursery Stock Survey could help communities locate specific trees and nurseries. [Editor's Note; Drew will mention these to each Regional Urban Forester.]

Although no match requirement is involved, the group agreed that

reimbursement might be the limiting factor for some communities. Because of that, they suggested that it be made quite clear when an approved community could expect their reimbursement checks.

Erica suggested that if our proposal is approved, we immediately notify the 88 counties of this grant opportunity. Drew mentioned his concern that based on the approved selection criteria, the requested funding amount, and the timeframe, most communities wouldn't be funded. He didn't want to raise any false expectation.

Drew thanked the group for being the sounding board for this important, yet somewhat iffy initiative, and for providing valuable input.

During Open Comments Joyce Reier said that Sidney has cut her planting budget while adding additional duties to all Utilities/Streets/Parks staff as part of the economic situation.

Pablo Jourdan stated that OSUE lost 40 positions. In addition OSU will be moving to semesters by autumn 2012.

Gay Williams mentioned that Extension was "near and dear" to ONLA. In fact, they took up this issue with Dr. Bobby Moser. Gay also said that ONLA brought in a professor from Michigan who spoke to the Ohio Invasive Species Council about Michigan's invasive species protocol. It looks like Ohio will model their protocol on that of the "state up north".

John Baird said that he recently received an e-mail about the MegaTree, a cross of some sort between Empress Tree and

Black Locust, which is being touted as the future bio-fuel.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 AM. The next meeting was scheduled for the Columbus Forestry office on **Friday, June 19, 2009.**

Respectfully submitted,

Drew Todd