

URBAN FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
MEETING OF June 19, 2009

Present: Mike Ahern, Danny Bagwell, John Baird, and Drew Todd

The meeting began at 10:05 AM as Drew Todd gave a brief overview of the Division of Forestry's budget outlook. Because, at the time of this meeting, the Conference Committee had not completed its state budget work, the Division doesn't have any firm numbers to base budgetary decision upon. The Division is working hard to find all available options to adjust its budget by reducing costs and improving revenue. Thanks to \$4,419,000 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Funds to create an Ohio Woodlands Job Corps, and a potential \$1,750,000 Emerald Ash Borer grant, the Division does have new options to get through this bleak situation.

Drew then introduced the Urban Forestry Committee's newest member, Mr. Dan Bagwell. Danny works for Pioneer Electric Cooperative in Piqua, Ohio. He is responsible for their vegetation management program. Danny is a certified arborist/utility specialist. Danny assumes the Utility Arborist chair. Welcome aboard, Danny.

Drew informed the group, that the Division has still not received official word on the status of their \$9 million ash removal, replacement, and recycling economic stimulus proposal. As noted earlier, the Division was notified of the \$4.4 million Ohio Woodlands Job Corps proposal. Both proposals were submitted simultaneously.

While the Division awaits word from ARRA, it will likely receive \$1.75 million for EAB mitigation in NW OH. These funds, sought by Representative Marcy Kaptur, District 9, will be used for jobs creation and ash tree removal and replacement. Details have yet to be worked out.

Drew expressed concern that EAB mitigation may begin in NW OH before he can inform the other communities that helped develop the ARRA \$9 million proposal that it may not be approved. John Baird suggested that a letter or e-mail be sent to all those communities clarifying the situation.

Drew then discussed the urban component of the ongoing Invasive Plant Grant. Recently, a report on the knowledge, attitude, skill, and awareness of community leaders towards invasive plants was completed. This report was based on the face-to-face survey of 47 southeast Ohio community administrators. The report identified four primary barriers that these administrators had to implementing positive invasive plant behavior. The survey and subsequent report can be viewed at <http://www.ohiodnr.com/default/tabid/21391/Default.aspx>. Armed with these barriers, the Division drafted three possible activities (a Community Invasive Plant Assessment, Demonstration Site for Invasive Mitigation, and Weed of the Month flyers) to modify their invasive plant

behavior. Danny suggested the Five Rivers Metro Parks has been addressing their invasive plants for some time, and they might be a good learning opportunity. John, as an Ohio Invasive Plant Council member, thought that the Iron Furnace Cooperative Weed Management Area and others would be happy to partner in any of these efforts.

According to Drew, the Urban Tree Canopy proposal that was made through the forest service's competitive grant program last fall was finally approved this week. Ohio will receive \$128,500 to assist participating communities with urban forest assessment and canopy mapping. Once the paperwork has been completed, Drew will try to arrange for a webinar between NCDC Imaging and the participating communities. Mike asked to be notified so that the water quality folks at OEPA could also attend.

Finally, Drew asked the members to think how we might take better advantage of Ohio's EAB situation. In the words of Rohm Emanuel, "never let a serious crisis go to waste...it's an opportunity to do things you couldn't do before." Drew wondered if we're letting the EAB situation go to waste. Is it not an opportunity to get administrators' attention, as well as change their attitude in favor of urban forestry? Drew noted how urban forestry legislation and land use reform came about from the Chesapeake Bay crisis, and wondered if EAB in Ohio could possibly do the same. Mike said that everything about the Chesapeake Bay was tied to negative economic impact, and that maybe the UTC assessments can identify how the loss of ash trees will affect the economy and environment.

During Open Comments, John Baird stated that ODOT recently got a new Director. This individual is a proponent of rail, and is advocating a rail system linking Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. According to John, ODOT is pursuing "all other methods" of noxious weed control, before relying on herbicides.

Mike Ahern expressed his hope that Ohio would pursue a GIS approach taken by the State of Alabama with their Virtual Alabama initiative http://www.dhs.alabama.gov/virtual_alabama/home.aspx.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 AM. The next meeting was scheduled for the Columbus Forestry office on **Friday, September 18, 2009**.

Respectfully submitted,
Drew Todd