Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission

Tuesday, April 28, 2015, at 5:00 p.m.
Air Pollution Control District Board Room
Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Announcements –Katy Schneider Co-Chair

The following Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission (hereinafter, "Commission" or "LMTAC") members were present: Henry Heuser (Co-Chair), Katy Schneider (Co-Chair), Allen Steinbock, Maria Koetter, Claude Stephens, Betsy Ruhe, Robert Eberenz, Todd Eberle, Kenya Wade, Cheri Bryant-Hamilton, Amy Johnson, as well as ex-officio Commissioners Mesude Duyar, Sherie' Long, and Michelle King.

Co-Chair Henry Heuser brought the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

II. Approval of Minutes – Henry Heuser, Jr., Co-Chair

Henry asked for and received unanimous approval of the minutes from last meeting, with the following changes:

- Under Item II, Approval of Minutes, the completion date for the tree ordinance should be changed from "spring 2016 to spring 2015."
- The Nature Conservancy Update under Item III, Old Business" should read that the details of and funding for the larger planting project are yet to be announced. In addition, Myra should be "Meera Baht."
- Under Item VI, Community Projects Update, Mike Hayman's project was for "Black Gums" at "Seneca Golf Course", instead of "Black Plums" at "a golf course."

All were in favor.

Henry passed around an article on a tree planting, coverage of the press conference and a photo of the press conference. Ex-officio Commissioner (APCD) Michelle King shared a 1973 article from the Courier Journal & Times on the greening of Louisville (See Attachment A). The article discusses the city's Forester and the benefits of trees, planting the right tree in the right place and trees as air conditioners.

III. Old Business

a. Treasurer's Report – Allen Steinbock

Commissioner and Secretary/Treasurer Allen Steinbock reported that the most recent bank statement from 3/31/2015 reported a balance of $4,977.26 (See Attachment B).

Allen announced that his company, Whip Mix Corp, planted 40 trees in April for the Mayor's week of Compassion. He thanked Chris Chandler for helping by coordinating receipt of the trees for free from UPS.

b. Update from the Office of Sustainability – Maria Koetter, Director of Sustainability

Commissioner Maria Koetter reported that she has been working with Urban Forestry Coordinator Erin Thompson on the Forestry Management Plan.

c. Update from Urban Forestry Coordinator – Erin Thompson, Urban Forestry Coordinator

Erin reported that she is on track with spending her budget. She's getting ready to plant many trees. With her funding, she planted just under 300 trees and removed many stumps on the east side of Broadway. These tree wells will be replanted. She opened 13 tree wells on West Jefferson. Her funding also covers tree maintenance for all newly planted trees. Henry asked about expanding the tree wells on Bardstown Road. Erin said she doesn't have any funding left and Bardstown is a state road. Ex-officio Commissioner (Louisville Metro Planning & Design) Sherie' Long mentioned that Councilman Owen was working on expanding these tree wells. Mary Ellen Wiederwohl said if you identify the funding, it shouldn't be a problem to expand the tree wells on a state road. You just have to go through the process. Henry said we have a study of that area. Sherie' said Public Works did a walk-through several years ago.

Erin continued her report. Trees will be planted along the street next to Toonerville Trolley Park on Brooke St, in Park DuValle for the Louisville Nursery's Association's dedication to Mark White and in the vacant tree wells around Spalding University, the Ford dealership along 4th street and along the west side of 9th Street. Oak trees will be planted for Doe Anderson on East Jefferson, along the Liberty Green property, and at Dosker Manor. Erin will be in charge of watering the trees next to Liberty Green. Sherie' asked if the trees on Washington Street were planted. Erin said she removed the stumps and dead trees so Mike Hayman could replant those areas.

d. Nature Conservancy Update – Chris Chandler

Chris Chandler, Director of Urban Conservation, reported that the Nature Conservancy (TNC) planted 28,164 trees in Kentucky last year, and only 164 were in Louisville. Many local plantings were completed in partnership with other groups. The rest were at the Parklands of Floyd's Fork. We're hoping to get that number much higher for Louisville. We're seeking partnerships with several city agencies and organizations. TNC is hosting eight LEAF interns from Atlanta again this year. The interns will work at Metro Parks for one month. Fern Creek High School will be involved with the intern program as well. Chris said he will log his trees in the tree tracker. TNC presented a ceremonial tree to Mayor Fischer at the Weevil Festival in front of 4,500 children.

IV. New Business

a. Tree Canopy Update on Feedback – Erin Thompson

Erin has been tracking the number of people looking at the Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Assessment using Google Analytics. The Office of Sustainability's Tree Canopy Assessment webpage has received over 450 hits, however, only 31 people have opened the full report. Erin is still looking into how many people have looked at the fact sheet. There will be three public engagement meetings to review the results of the UTC:

- May 14th in the Mayor's Gallery in Metro Hall at 6pm.
- May 20th at SW Government Center at 6:30pm.
- 21st at East Government Center in Middletown at 6:30pm.

Commissioner Amy Johnson asked what will be presented. Erin said it's an opportunity for the public to see the data and ask questions of the Davey Resource Group. Amy asked if they will be presenting GIS data. Erin said yes. Davey will only be present on the 20th and 21st. We hope that the web-viewer will be active and running at those meetings. We are not paying for it, but we get to use it for two years. We're the first city that will have access to this web-viewer as the test city. If anyone has problems with the web-viewer, they should submit feedback through the website to Davey Resource Group.

Erin has been receiving comments on the UTC Assessment. The majority of the comments are on issues we are already discussing such as education and accessibility to trees. Erin has been able to make a lot of connections with individuals to be volunteers. We are hoping to launch open data May 20th. This will include the GIS, the charts and the quantifications included in the report.

Henry asked if there has been any amazement or dispute about losing the 50,000 trees per year. Erin said no.

b. Trees Louisville – Cindi Sullivan

Cindi Sullivan, Executive Director of Trees Louisville, began her presentation by thanking the Commission for their efforts over the past three years. Our first order of business is a public education campaign to help everyone understand and appreciate the value of trees. Their goal is to collaborate with existing organizations working on tree planting and maintenance. She has been meeting with many groups and individuals to get the organization up and running. They are working with Via Studio to build a website, which should be ready to launch in the next week. They are also looking at a public mural project to grow awareness. Sherie' suggested that the website include Cindi's contact information. Co-Chair Katy Schneider said this information will be there. Henry said the mural project may take place in Portland or Nulu. It may be the Trees Louisville logo.

a. Next Steps – Katy Schneider and Henry Heuser

Katy said the LMTAC is three years old, and many Commissioners' terms are up, so we need to decide on the future of the LMTAC. The Commission was formed by the mayor. The organization prompted the UTC Assessment and helped pay for the UTC Assessment. We prompted the hiring of our Urban Forester and made suggested revisions in the Land Development Code, helping to educate the planning commission about the importance of trees. The fee in lieu will likely be passed. We all need to thank Commissioner Todd Eberle with his work on the tree ordinance. The Commission acknowledged his work. Todd said the group has been meeting weekly, most recently.

We hope to have a PowerPoint presentation on the ordinance for the May 26th meeting, which will focus solely on the ordinance. Once it is drafted, we turn it over to the city. In that ordinance, we will establish the tree commission in permanence.

This Commission has done what we said we would do in the Executive Order. Katy opened the floor for discussion on what to do with the Commission in the future.

Mesude Duyar, Ex-officio Commissioner (Metro Parks), asked if there would be a commission as a result of the ordinance. Katy said they may recommend a different type of commission, one with more tree expertise and technical knowledge. They are requesting a Department or Division of Community Forestry, and the new commission would help with the management of the Urban Forestry Plan. Mesude suggested that the LMTAC continue to exist until the new body is established. All of the exiting tree groups can support Cindi and her work.

Henry said June 2015 would be the last meeting of the LMTAC. Katy commended the suggestions from the audience. She said Trees Louisville would be a great way to stay involved. Trees Louisville will focus on education and fundraising, but we will need to have multiple strategies for engaging the community.

An audience member asked what happened with the UofL class that developed marketing materials. Katy said the Commission, at that time, was not a group that could manage a marketing campaign. Marketing and fundraising was not the job of the Commission in the Executive Order.

Commissioner Claude Stephens said there are some lose ends that need to be tied up and packaged that should be turned over to Trees Louisville. Todd agreed with Mesude that the LMTAC continue until a new formal group is created. He doesn't see why we should disband this one. Katy said that the Executive Order isn't relevant anymore. She doesn't know what the LMTAC's mandate would be because we've done everything already. Furthermore, terms are expiring. Mary Ellen said it could take years to pass the ordinance. As Erin's role evolves and we get some sort of Community Forestry Department, we may need an advisory group for Erin. We could also use an advocacy group to help pass the ordinance. There are a few ways we could have structural involvement. Allen asked if we need an official document from the Mayor. Mary Ellen said the Mayor and his staff are prepping an official thank you for this group, and we can wrap up what the Commission is doing so that we can hand it off to the next entity which takes over that role.

V. Committee Reports

a. Policy Committee/Tree Ordinance – Todd Eberle

Todd said they are working on the language that would create a new community forestry department and a commission to replace the LMTAC. They skipped over article 3 which is tree maintenance for now, but they are planning to draft it soon. They are planning to meet three more times before the May LMTAC meeting. Right now, the ordinance is 30 pages long. The Land Development Code (LDC) changes were already underway when they started to meet. The ordinance is different than the LDC changes. They try to coordinate the ordinance with the proposed LDC changes so that both documents are in alignment. Todd acknowledged that his committee's work will not be perfect, but it will be a really good start. It will cover 31 jurisdictions. They have looked to Atlanta, GA; Bowling Green, KY; Charlotte, NC; Jacksonville, FL; Raleigh, NC; Portland, OR; and Prospect, KY for example language. Once all of the individual articles are done,

they'll review the entire document. They will need to create a definitions section and update the purpose now that there is a canopy assessment. The focus of the ordinance is on public trees.

During the May 26th, 2015, meeting, Todd will ask for suggestions for the new commission. Todd asked for a volunteer to help with the PowerPoint. Michelle volunteered. Henry thanked Todd for his work. Henry said people ask him about no net loss and asked if that will appear in what he plans to present next month. Todd said no. It is not in the proposed policy. They discussed it and Brian Stone said Atlanta has a no net loss policy. Katy added that in light of the canopy assessment results, we'll put no net loss language into a general purpose statement. Henry said that it's outrageous that a company can clear cut an area without being fined. Todd said if we had a no net loss policy, we'd have to do a canopy assessment every five years. If you compared those two studies, you could see if you achieved no net loss. But to some extent, it would be an aspirational goal. If it's a requirement, what's the penalty if you don't reach it? Katy said we need to have that in the policy, at least philosophically. Mary Ellen said you could also include a list of options if the group cannot come to consensus in their recommendation to Metro Council.

VI. Community Projects Update

Mike Hayman reported the following projects:

- Three big gingko trees were planted in front of the Home of the Innocents. They will be watered by Home of the Innocents. In addition, Home of the Innocents planted six trees on their property.
- At the West End School, they are going to planted five plane trees along 36th street, next to the school.
- One tree was planted at Lincoln Elementary.
- He is working on a lot of small projects (around 80 trees total) in Butchertown. One Butchertown project on the 700 block of East Washington Street replaced 16 pear trees or stumps with 17 news trees. TNC paid for most of those trees. Erin Thompson's office paid for the pear tree removal. There are six landowners on that street that are participating in some form.
- Atherton High School is now a defacto arboretum. They will probably still plant some special trees in the area.
- Mike and his team planted seven trees in a traffic island in Irish Hill. They are putting several trees in next to shotgun homes.
- Three whitebark sycamores were planted around Home of the Innocents
- Eight whitebark sycamore trees were planted on Lexington Road

Maria asked if other JCPS schools are following suit – wanting to become arboretum-like settings. Henry said Portland Elementary is interested. Cindi sent some trees to Coleridge Taylor on Saturday. Henry said the JCPS COO will report back the 15 model schools for no-mow and planting. Mike said they have started no-mow at Atherton HS.
Robert asked if some species of Magnolias have been stressed. Mike said yes – especially the southern Magnolias. There is a nursery that is starting to aquire deciduous Magnolias.

Henry said Mike and Cindi's relationship with the Nursery Association is important so we have enough trees to plant.

Henry asked Andrea to send an announcement for Mark White's memorial planting celebration on Thursday May 7th, 2015, at 1pm at 5th and Jefferson.

Henry suggested that as the four candidates in the republican primary for Governor drive all over the state, everyone ask that the state stop mowing the grass off of the side of the highways. The next Governor will be able to appoint the transportation secretary who is the person we will be talking to about street trees along state roads. Sherie' asked if Henry had heard an update on the issue surrounding planting trees along state roads. The State decided not to require the trees along Highways 42 to be cut down. A few will have to be moved. They are working with federal requirements. Sherie' said she heard they may be rewriting those requirements.

Audience member thanked Erin for the trees recently planted in the Original Highlands. One recently planted tree was violated. The next effort in that neighborhood will be a tree assessment with the help of the Urban Design Studio.

Audience member said that last Wednesday one of her neighbors cut down a huge maple in their back yard on Earth Day. She feels strongly that our old growth trees need to be protected. Katy said they have discussed having a voluntary tree heritage program. The audience member offered to help. She wants to get more involved, even if it's helping with PowerPoints.

Michelle announced that on June 26th there will be a Green Roof and Wall Symposium. It's a partnership between the Louisville Energy Alliance, the Kentucky USGBC, the Partnership for a Green City and Green Roofs for Healthy Cities. She asked Andrea to send out an announcement to the Commission with the details.

VII. Adjourn

Henry adjourned the meeting at 6:12pm. The next meeting is May 26, 2015, at 5:00pm in the Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District Boardroom.