



**URBAN FORESTRY BOARD
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, April 20, 2011**

The Urban Forestry Board convened in a regular meeting on April 20, 2011 at the PARD Annex, 919 W. 28 ½ Street, in Austin, Texas.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Maceo called the Board Meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Vice Chair Peggy Maceo, Nick Classen, Tom Hayes, Shannon Halley, Jessica Wilson

Staff in Attendance:

**Parks and Recreation Department: Walter Passmore, Urban Forestry Program Manager
April Thedford, Program Coordinator
Charles Vaclavik, Division Manager
Gwendolyn McGee, Administrative Specialist**

Austin Energy: Ray Henning, Line Clearance Superintendent

Planning and Development Review Department: Michael Embesi, City Arborist

1. Approve the minutes of the Urban Forestry Board's regular meeting of March 16, 2011.

The minutes for the Urban Forestry Board's March 16, 2011 regular meeting, were approved on Board Member Maceo's motion, Board Member Halley's second, on a 5-0 vote.

2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

No citizen communications occurred.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice Chair Maceo introduced new board member Tom Hayes.

Board Member Wilson announced Earth Week is coming up and volunteer projects can be found on any volunteer database.

Board Member Wilson also announced Keep Austin Beautiful and Austin Parks Foundation have opened their application process for grants.

4. STAFF BRIEFINGS

Michael Embesi, City Arborist with Planning and Development Review presented his staff report. The following announcements were made:

- 1) Over 200 tree permits have been received in March.
- 2) There has been an increase in the request for dead tree removals.

Michael Embesi reported the bills currently up for debate at the Capitol seem to be progressing at different levels. There didn't seem to be any modification to the proposed wording over the last couple of months. He stated he has not received any notification that

the “Takings Bill” is moving through the system at this time.

Michael Embesi presented to the board a flyer from Solid Waste Services regarding their bulk pick up and concerns from citizens that this incites homeowners to prune their trees for this purpose and he would like the board to take up this matter as a future agenda item.

5. EXECUTIVE LIAISON’S REPORT

Walter Passmore, Urban Forestry Program Manager, presented reports on the illegal tree removal and gave an update on the Urban Forestry Summit.

Board Member Wilson also gave an update on the Urban Forestry Summit.

Walter Passmore presented to the board information requested by Board Member Wilson regarding the preserves. The preserves will be more of a team management approach which will have more staff presence, but no one staff person will be exclusively responsible for the preserves. Whereas Renee Barerra was solely responsible in the past; that responsibility will be more distributed. Plans are still being developed as to who will be doing what and the Park Rangers will play an important role as to how the plan moves forward.

Walter Passmore stated the department will be transferring the responsibility of street trees to Public Works and he has been instructed to complete the transfer by July 1st.

Board Member Wilson stated she had two questions she would like to ask regarding restructuring.

1. With the restructuring will staff or people serving in the Work Groups be allowed to serve out their terms in that group? She stated Angela Hanson was serving on the Invasive Species Work Group and it was stated that she might be removed.

Walter Passmore stated there was a proposal but it wasn’t sure if it had been amended and asked Charles Vaclavik, Division Manager, Central Parks, if this was still on the table. Charles stated he wasn’t aware of a proposal and that Angela Hanson would complete her term in the group.

2. Has it been decided yet what will happen to the position left vacant by Alice Nance?

Walter Passmore stated a lot of the responsibilities have been turned over to the Park Rangers, and he is not sure if they are going to rehire for that position.

6. NEW BUSINESS - DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

a. Action Item: Urban Forestry Board Officer Elections:

The motion to nominate Board Member Brewer as Chair was approved on Board Member Classen’s Motion, Board Member Halley’s second on a 5-0 vote.

The motion to nominate Board Member Tom Hayes for Vice Chair was approved on Board Member Halley’s motion, Board Member Classen’s second on a 5-0 vote.

b. Action Item: Discussion and action on amending the by-laws to reduce number of Board Meetings to 6 meetings per year.

Walter Passmore presented item to board regarding the decision to amend the by-laws citing cost analysis done by all board liaisons looking at staff and facility cost to have meeting therefore it was proposed to reduce the number of meetings.

Board Member Wilson wanted to know what would be the cost savings.

Walter Passmore said the estimate for all the boards that PARD deals with would be about \$6,000 per year, providing staff, facilities, materials etc.; the cost for the Urban Forestry Board would be about \$3,000.00.

Vice Chair Maceo stated she doesn't think it's a good idea to reduce the number of meetings.

A motion to table this item until next meeting was approved on Board Member Classen's motion, Board Member Halley's second on a 5-0 vote.

7. OLD BUSINESS – DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM

- a. Tree Overlay letter to Zoning and Planning – Board Member Halley and Maceo
Letter was sent past the posting deadline and was not available, but members voted to send the letter forward.

8. FUTURE ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

- a. Discuss departmental staff reports and identify which departments to request reports from and frequency of reports.
- b. Invasive Species working group would like to provide a briefing update on status of Citywide invasive species management plan.....Angela Hansen, Presenter
- c. PARD staff to present information on 2012 budget.....Angela Means, Presenter
- d. Discuss amending by-laws to reduce number of board meetings to 6 per year.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Maceo adjourned the meeting without object at 8:00 p.m.