

**City of San Diego
Community Forest Advisory Board**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
June 11, 2011

California Center for Sustainable Energy
8690 Balboa Avenue, Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92123-1502

Attendance:

Jon Becker (District 1), Vicky Heithaus (District 3 North Park), Mary Johnson (District 6), Joe Jones (District 7), Tershia d'Elgin (District 8), Fausto Palafox (Horticulturalist/ Nursery), Robin Rivet (Certified Arborist), Jeff Harkness (City of San Diego staff), and Anne Fege (nominee for Board Chair).

Agenda:

- 9:00 Brief recap of December 2010 retreat
9:15 PowerPoint adapted to San Diego from the Center for Urban Forest Research
9:30 Strategic planning process
--Confirm "what do we want as desired outcomes for San Diego's urban/community forests in ten years (or longer)?"
--Confirm available resources and challenges, and review strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and strength of CFAB (add to December 2010 retreat)
--Identify strategies (to assign to the policy, partnerships, finance, outreach and emerging technologies committees identified in December)
--Provide action plan for next 2 years, with measurable outcomes, assignments, and accountability (will be referred to committees)
12:30 Summary and adjourn

Community Forestry Advisory Board (CFAB) Duties

- (1) Provide advice and recommendations directly to the Mayor, City Council and City Manager on all policy issues relating to urban forestry.
- (2) Advocate and formulate proactive urban forestry policies, ordinances and guidelines.
- (3) Prepare a recommended comprehensive urban forestry master plan and conduct a tree inventory.
- (4) Review and comment on the coordination of urban forestry related policies and programs.
- (5) Network with other boards, agencies and community residents.
- (6) Act as a general information resource and promote volunteerism.
- (7) Review and comment on the implementation and compliance with urban forestry policies and programs.
- (8) Promote and seek funding for the establishment and sustaining of an urban forestry program.
- (9) Promote and foster a strong sense of community through urban forestry.

Priorities identified for CFAB

After reviewing and CFAB duties and describing the current environment (using the SWOT steps outlined below), the following strategies were identified to enhance effectiveness of the CFAB. Specific actions are identified in Table 1 to address these priorities, and will be further developed by the five committees.

Highest priority:

- Educate and advocate for urban forestry programs with the Mayor and Council members.
- Identify the benefits of funding urban forestry programs to infrastructure and other City programs, and bring management actions into other department budgets.

Medium priority:

- Invite mayoral and council candidates to commit their support for urban forestry programs
- Produce and disseminate web-based and print materials about tree values and care, using existing educational materials, and localized California- or national-based urban forestry information.
- Make presentations to community planning, professional, and business groups about the benefits of trees and the value of urban forest management.

Lowest priority:

1. Prepare a recommended comprehensive urban forestry master plan.

Identification of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

This is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)** involved in a program, project, or business venture. It involves specifying the objective(s) of the organization and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve the objective(s). This SWOT analysis starts with the CFAB duties as the desired objectives to be achieved.

Strengths of CFAB:

2. Clear duties of advisory committee
3. Eight members are appointed by and report to their Council members
4. Diverse and knowledgeable members (professions, roles, geography), and familiar with neighborhoods
5. Dedicated, willing to commit time
6. History of accomplishments
7. Information and educational materials (presentations, text for webpage and flyer)
8. Five committees established in December 2010: Policies/Programs, Networking/Partnerships, Outreach/Education, Funding, Emerging Technologies
9. MATERIALS

Weaknesses of CFAB:

- Limited implementation, follow-through, and accountability for decisions
- Unclear vision of what “working together” means

- Limited connection to other community or professional groups with common interests
- Uninformed about current City staff with duties relating to urban forestry

Opportunities in City of San Diego:

10. City has policies, regulations, general plans, and community master plans
11. City has community planning boards, maintenance assessment districts, and other City groups
12. Public loves trees, educational efforts can start “from the heart”
13. Healthy living is gaining national attention, and urban trees and parks contribute greatly to personal and community health
14. Many organizations have common interests in nature and trees (i.e. garden clubs, SD Canyonlands and Friends’ groups)
15. Other communities have organized public activism (5K run, art banners in parks); strong urban forestry programs (Sacramento, Phoenix); and effective advocacy and volunteer organizations (TreePeople in Los Angeles)
16. Political pressure for urban forestry can emerge from public interests
17. Mayoral and council elections can include inquiries about urban forestry issues and resources
18. Tree inventory in City has been completed, and was used for American Forests urban forestry assessments in 2003 and 2007
19. Trees can contribute to effective storm water projects, and this can fund some tree planting and maintenance
20. Recycled water demand is far lower than supply, and that could be used to water more City and residents’ trees
21. State has urban forestry grant funds
22. San Diego Gas & Electric limited program to pay for trees, that homeowners commit to maintain
23. Urban Corps organization, labor resources, and accomplishments for urban forestry projects
24. Advice and Technical Assistance Center for Urban Forestry, at California Center for Sustainable Energy
25. San Diego Urban Forestry Council is active and a source of expert advice
26. City’s television station and other public information resources
27. City’s Street Tree Selection Guide with suitable trees (may need to be updated)

Threats/barriers in City of San Diego:

- Budgets for urban forestry have been cut and are considered low priority by the Mayor and Council
- Urban forester position unfunded—no program, no department, no primary contact
- Accountability for City’s assets (trees) is generally not being met
- Those who could influence urban forestry program likely are unaware of CFAC
- City had TreeCityUSA certification but no longer meets the requirements
- Inadequate information to residents, particularly about street tree planting and maintenance, replacement of dead trees, and local resources
- Drought and water use restrictions led to misunderstanding about and removal of trees
- Regulations are often not enforced (i.e. 50% tree cover to be planned, and the planted trees are often not maintained)
- City has not recently applied for urban forestry grant funds from the State

- Nursery stock quality is often inferior and limits tree growth and vigor
- Tree cover is far higher in more affluent neighborhoods
- People are spending less time outdoors and are apathetic about nature, parks, and trees.

Key messages (need to be developed further)

- Benefits of urban forests, including health, shade, energy savings, air and water quality, carbon sequestration, health, business, quality of life, and more
- What does it take to get x thousand trees and x percent tree cover in City of SD?
- Trees need to be maintained, not just planted
- Loss of canopy cover, calculations of loss of infrastructure services

The Board will develop an “Emergency Report on our City’s Urban Forest” for decision makers, including Mayor Sanders and Council members and their staff. This 3- to 5-page report will call attention to three critical but overlooked issues, in graphics and text, with the following messages.

Forfeiture of the City’s Urban Forest Program and a dedicated Urban Forester with ties to appropriate City departments has costly financial and public service implications.

1. Lack of staffing jeopardizes valuable taxpayer resources and exposes City to liability. Thousands of trees have died or been damaged in the last 18 months from inadequate tree care, and city-wide tree cover continued to decline. Without code compliance, code violations go unaddressed and fees uncollected. Inspections and tree trimming are done only when damage is reported or trees have fallen.
2. Loss of tree cover increases City costs. These include environmental damages from storm water runoff where trees and soil don’t soak up the rain, higher energy demands and costs when shade cover is reduced, and increased crime in “blighted” treeless neighborhoods.
3. Lack of urban forestry program makes the city uncompetitive for other funds. These include state urban forestry grants, climate change mitigation grants, and TreeCityUSA designation.

Expectations of meeting

4. [These were reviewed at the end of the meeting, and most were met]
5. Revisit committees and their activities since they were created on December 4, 2010
6. Identify ways to inform, engage, and get actions from council members
7. Say, “Yay, this is worth doing!”
8. Live up to the title, “Advisory Board,” maybe even become an Advocacy Board
9. Develop action list that is strategic and will get results; “Give me something specific to do!”
10. Make filling vacancies a priority
11. Recognize the urgency of urban forest management as well as economic and political realities
12. Clearly describe what citizens can do to plant trees, without getting discouraged by City processes and permits
13. Identify ways that City staff can support CFAB activities
14. Revisit the December, 2008 invitation by Mayor Sanders to suggest three projects for his support
15. Identify ways that Urban Forestry Center at CCSE can contribute data and analysis, educational materials, and other resources

Table 1: Strategies to increase effectiveness of Community Forestry Advisory Board

CFAB Duties	Strategies identified at June 11 meeting	Actions (from Committees)
<p>(1) Provide advice and recommendations directly to the Mayor, City Council and City Manager on all policy issues relating to urban forestry.</p>	<p>Confirm CFAB key contact in Mayor’s office, and Chair meets with her/him at least annually. Maintain contact with key aides (Mayor’s office and each Council member). Council representatives meet with Council members at least annually. Send update to Mayor and Council members after each CFAB meeting. Provide media opportunities for Council members and Mayor. Make list of key City staff and provide information to them regularly.</p>	<p>Networking/Partnerships Policies/Programs</p>
<p>(2) Advocate and formulate proactive urban forestry policies, ordinances and guidelines.</p>	<p>Ask and advocate for an urban forestry master plan; urban forestry professionals; and resulting increase in urban tree canopy and benefits. Bring urban forestry issues to mayoral and council candidates, inviting them to declare support for urban forestry. During community presentations, ask others to advocate for urban forestry programs.</p>	<p>Networking/Partnerships Policies/Programs</p>
<p>(3) Prepare a recommended comprehensive urban forestry master plan and conduct a tree inventory.</p>	<p>Outline urban forest management plan, in consultation with City staff and local experts, to present to the Council (start with Urban Forest Management Plan toolkit, including funding needs). Review tree inventory, that has already been conducted by the City.</p>	<p>Funding Emerging Technologies</p>
<p>(4) Review and comment on the coordination of urban forestry related policies and programs. (7) Review and comment on the implementation and compliance with urban</p>	<p>Assemble and assess city policies, regulations, and their implementation, in order to understand and recognize effective aspects, and to identify and change those that are ineffective. Invite input from City staff, local professionals, and review this with CFAB. Review and comment on community plan updates.</p>	<p>Policies/Programs Emerging Technologies</p>

CFAB Duties	Strategies identified at June 11 meeting	Actions (from Committees)
forestry policies and programs.		
(5) Network with other boards, agencies and community residents.	<p>Make presentations to community planning groups and maintenance assessment districts; homeowners' associations, professionals that plan and care for trees; garden clubs and service clubs; and other environmental and community groups.</p> <p>Make a list of the target organizations and contact names.</p> <p>Develop email list to send periodic information about urban forestry.</p> <p>Contact each to offer a presentation on the City's urban forestry program at one of their meetings.</p> <p>Develop PowerPoint presentation that can be adapted for Mayoral and Council member briefings, presentations to various community planning and professional groups.</p>	Networking/Partnerships Outreach/Education
(6) Act as a general information resource and promote volunteerism. (9) Promote and foster a strong sense of community through urban forestry.	<p>Gather existing local informational materials. Review and select California- or national-based urban forestry materials, and localize the content.</p> <p>Develop localized messages about urban forest contributions to health; air and water quality; energy use; property values and business; and more.</p> <p>Identify potential audiences, in order to tailor outreach materials.</p>	Outreach/Education Emerging Technologies
(8) Promote and seek funding for the establishment and sustaining of an urban forestry program.	Ask and advocate for dedicated budget for urban forestry, and for tree planting and maintenance to be included in storm water remediation, energy conservation, and other City programs.	Funding
All	Develop CFAB agendas to be focused, effective, and with "learning" components.	Board Chair