

## **Meeting Notes**

Mayor's Southern Dallas Task Force Area #10

Beautification Sub-Committee Meeting with Economic Development, Dallas Water Utilities, Street Services, and TxDOT

August 3, 2009, 4 pm

Dallas City Hall Room 5CS

### Attendees:

Perry Johnson, Chair, Area #10 Team

Al Bryant, Jr., Vice Chair, Area #10 Team

Eli Davis, Chair, Beautification Sub-Committee, Area #10 Team

Edna Pemberton

Syndee Freeman

Patrick Haigh, Texas Department of Transportation

Kelly High, Director, Department of Street Services

Chad Kopecki, Program Manager – Engineering Services, Dallas Water Utilities

Karl Zavitkovsky, Director, Office of Economic Development

Tim Glass, Chief Planner, Office of Economic Development

Ron Patterson, Senior Coordinator, Office of Economic Development

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Perry Johnson stated the purpose of the meeting was to start dialogue between TxDot, City Street Services and Dallas Water Utilities regarding installation and maintenance of landscaping at identified "Gateway's" to Southern Dallas.

The goal of the meeting is to identify the cost, get a commitment from the TxDot to begin drawing the plans for installation of landscaping in Southern Dallas and request the aforementioned government agencies (to possibly include outside organizations) to consider maintaining the landscaping for a period of approximately 5 years.

Patrick Haigh stated TxDOT has previously installed similar landscapes at the I-20/US 67 and Loop 12/US-67 interchanges. These include trees, large shrubs, and irrigation, along with smaller ornamental trees. In 3-5 years these root systems take hold and become self sustaining, no longer requiring maintenance. Some ornamental trees died at the Loop 12/US-67 interchange, but these trees may have hit their lifespan limit of about 20 years. The meters were removed in 2002.

The money to pay for the installation is available as part of TxDOT's Green Ribbon Program. The program requires a long-term partner to maintain the installation.

TxDOT pays for the installation and maintenance for the initial 90 days, but contractors do not always return as often beyond that. After 3 to 6 months, a local government partner must take over 5 years of maintenance. Primarily weed control, irrigation system, and water costs. In one example, the homeowners association on

Preston Road in North Dallas pays the water bill and does the maintenance as part of Street Services' Mowmentum program.

Water use is estimated to be about 10 gallons per minute for 45 minutes per acre of planting area. Bills are usually around \$50 a month.

Balch Springs – TxDOT is working with Balch Springs on several planting areas along I-635, totaling about 1,000 trees spread over:8 acres:

- 490 - 3 gallon Oak, Ash and Other Hardwoods
- 557 - Small Ornamental trees, i.e. redbud
- 255 - 5 gallon
- 440- 1 gallon

The process involves selecting areas, killing the grass, tilling in compost, planting the trees and shrubs, laying rubber hoses for irrigation, and then begin maintenance.

Garland and Mesquite are among other cities maintaining plantings. Some require annual mulching as well. Garland does the mowing which helps the overall appeal of the plantings with the mulch. Mr. Haigh shared photos of these. A green herbicide can be used in place of mowing.

Mr. Haigh was asked about the Loop 12/I-30 and Woodall Rodgers/Central Expressway installations. These were done in concert with the Texas Trees Foundation. The Woodall Rodgers installation died off in part because the irrigation hoses were vandalized. Smaller Cypress trees were used in these installations.

In Sanger, TX the program installed rocks and smaller plantings that are more drought resistant, but after the initial maintenance period the typical installations are also drought-resistant. Rocks do help to reduce weeds.

TxDOT pays \$70/acre for mowing every 14 days, but that does not include weeding or herbicide. TxDOT mows 2-4 times a year currently along Dallas freeways.

### **Next Steps**

Phase in the landscaping projects to not overwhelm. TxDOT will design a pro forma to be used by the city and the Task Force Team to estimate maintenance costs. Street Services will follow up with Garland to get some sense of their cost structure for maintenance. If everything follows to the current timetable, planting is possible in fall 2010.

The next meeting of the Sub-Committee with city staff will be on October 8, 2009 at 4 pm at Dallas City Hall, room 5CS.