Urban Wood Group Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2020
Conference Call Meeting

Attendees: Joe Lehnen, Aaron Laurin, Jeremy Harold and Molly O’Liddy.

Old Business

Past One Month Activities – Joe gave a brief review of some of the activities of the VA Urban Wood program which occurred May 2020 through mid-June 2020.

Filling the Vacant seats to the VUWG Board – The general consensus was to proceed with filling the vacant seats on the VA Urban Wood Group Board. There is also a continued need to make sure that all portions of the state are represented. Joe will work on board member recruitment and report at the next meeting.

Municipality Urban Wood Production Study – Joe reported this is an ongoing study being conducted by Sav-a-Tree Consulting Group for the following municipalities: Richmond, Charlottesville & Vienna. Once the urban wood production data is gathered Sav-a-Tree will produce a report, an easily usable tracking model for use by other communities, and present their findings at an upcoming DOF urban forestry/wood event in 2021.

VA-NC Residential Fuelwood consumption & sourcing survey – Joe reported that the first steps in this survey are underway. The researchers team of Dr. Eric Wiseman (VA Tech), Dr. John Munsell (VA Tech) & Dr. Mikaela Schmitt-Harsh (JMU) will soon be formulating the survey and distribution methods.

Woodland Care Practices Manual – Joe provided a brief update regarding the development of a Green Industry Service Providers Handbook, a partnership project between Maryland Extension, Penn State Extension, VA Tech Cooperative Extension, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the VA Dept. of Forestry. The manual is now moving into the printing phase of the project. The Woodland Care Practices Manual is meant to be a tool for training folks in the green industry and helping them to explore the business model of servicing the resource management needs of small acreage landowners.

VA Urban Wood Group as part of TreesVA – The group continued the discussion about the VA Urban Wood Group becoming a subsidiary of TreesVA (Virginia Urban Forest Council). Some of the thoughts from the previous meeting were repeated with some additional questions:

- TreesVA has 501C3 non-profit status
- a consistent team of elected officers
- an already established relationship with the VA Urban Wood Group
- No idea what TreesVA would think about it
- We want to be more than a than standing committee
- Would we have to ask permission to do activities?
- We don’t want another layer of bureaucracy
- How independent can the VA UWG remain?
- Concerned about a loss of identity
- Would it diminish the value of being a member of VA UWG?
- TreesVA already hosts us electronically – website and service providers directory
- Great benefit of being in-step with Trees VA
- What about TreesVA insurance/liability coverage?
- What do we need/want from them and what they can provide?
- We need our ducks in a row before we talk to Trees VA

This was a continuation of the discussion and visioning in an effort to strengthen the VA UWG as an organization and relinquish some of the administrative duties such as electing officers. The Board will continue this discussion in the upcoming months. Joe will chat more with Lara, Becky Woodson and Anne Little (TreesVA Chair) about this concept.

**New Business**

VA Urban Wood Group Membership - General membership was again discussed. More questions than specific answers:

- Why did TreesVA move from a membership organization to a board-only organization?
- What would be the main benefit of membership?
- Would we have a set of membership standards?
- Can we handle the workload of membership? Maybe someone on the Board as a membership coordinator?
- Membership fee or no?
- Who is the fiscal agent for the membership fees?

Joe will talk to Becky Woodson, Barbara White & Lara about lessons learned by Trees VA as a membership and a board-only organization.

**Partner News**

**Newport News (Aaron Laurin & James McCabe):** Activities have included trying to catch-up on the workload that was slowed due to COVID. There are six upcoming timber sales on waterworks property for general forest management with five small clearcuts inside of these thinnings. Aaron also checked with a couple of the major mulch producers in the area and they report record sales this spring during these COVID weeks.
Harrisonburg (Jeremy Harold) – Jeremy provided an update for City of Harrisonburg activities which included their new Pollinator Trail ArcGIS Story Map. They have promoted this via Facebook and have had a wonderful response. The stops on the trail include all of their pollinator plantings where people can view the flowers and urban wood products used in the pollinator gardens. They will do another media release for National Pollinator week which begins Monday 6/22/2020. Harrisonburg has not received any news on the $1,000 VA Beautification Grant.

VA Dept. of Forestry (Molly O’Liddy) – Molly reported on the fungicide treatments given to the large, historic elms in Monroe Park in Richmond. Some of these trees are at least 250 years old. The treatments are helping the trees survive the ravages of Dutch Elm Disease. This project has become a great partnership between DOF, VCU and the City of Richmond. In lieu of the in-person Waynesboro U&CF Workshop there will be “Waynesboro Wednesdays”, an on-line series of webinars, 1 hour each Wednesday in September. Registration is free and there will be ISA-CEU’s available.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM

Next meeting date is: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 @ 9:00AM – conference call