

**City of Fort Lauderdale
Utility Advisory Committee
Tuesday, November 29, 2005 – 6:30 p.m.
100 North Andrews Ave., 8th Floor Conference Room
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301**

Committee Members	Present/ Absent	(1/05 to 12/05)	
		Attended	Missed
Bunney Brenneman, Chair	P	10	0
Richard Barrett	P	8	2
Bob Caine	P	3	1
Christine Campbell, Vice Chair	P	8	2
L. Thomas Chancey	P	8	2
Bob Cole	P	9	1
Margaret Haynie-Birch	P	9	1
Joe Holland	P	4	0
Bernie Petreccia	P	7	3
Fred Stresau	A	2	1
Clare Vickery	P	8	2
Nathaniel Wilkerson	A	7	3

City Representatives

Peter Partington, City Engineer and staff liaison to the UAC
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary

Guests

Lynn Shatas, FPL External Affairs Manager

I. Call to Order

Chair Bunney Brenneman called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Ms. Opperlee then took roll call.

III. Self Introductions

The Board dispensed with self introductions.

IV. Approval of Minutes

September 2005 meeting

Motion made by Mr. Petreccia, seconded by Ms. Campbell, to approve the minutes of the September, 2005 meeting. In a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

V. Old Business

Distribution of Citywide Educational Brochure [Tree Brochure]

Chair Brenneman informed the Board that half of the mailings were completed prior to Hurricane Katrina; the rest would be mailed in December. Chair Brenneman thanked the Tree Subcommittee and Mr. Chancey for his contribution to the brochure. Many homeowners had commented that the information regarding tree placement was most enlightening.

Mr. Chancey felt that people would be more receptive to landscape/power line education since Hurricane Wilma. He felt they needed to seize this opportunity to get the message out to homeowners to maintain their own trees and to remove trees that shouldn't be there.

Update on Sistrunk Plantings

**Gene Dempsey, Urban Forester
Chair Bunney Brenneman**

Chair Brenneman informed the Board that Mr. Dempsey could not attend the meeting this evening but would attend in December. Chair Brenneman confirmed with Mr. Partington that the planting schedule was delayed by the hurricanes and was now set for after the first of the year.

Energy Roundtable II Update

Chair Bunney Brenneman

Chair Brenneman explained the issues and scheduling conflicts involved in setting a new date for the Roundtable. The Board discussed several possibilities and decided on April 25, 2006.

Status of Sistrunk Substation Landscape Design

Lynn Shatas, FPL, and Fred Stresau

Chair Brenneman explained that Mr. Stresau could not attend this meeting. Ms. Shatas and Mr. Partington stated that nothing had changed since the last meeting.

Other Old Business

VI. New Business

Report on Ordinance Research

Joe Holland

Mr. Holland explained that Chair Brenneman had provided him with a copy of the Board's 2002 recommendation report and he had looked into possible code changes based on those used in other municipalities. He asked that the report be put on the City's website in pdf format for the public to access. He felt that the existing ordinances in Fort Lauderdale were good and that enforcement was the real issue. He suggested that the Code Enforcement group could note tree problems during their rounds and issue pre-hurricane season warnings about potential problem trees.

Mr. Caine said he thought they had discussed an ordinance aimed at undergrounding the utilities. Mr. Holland thought that was a separate issue and he had concentrated on tree trimming. He noted that the UAC had discussed the pros and cons, as well as the economic barriers to undergrounding the utilities.

The Board then discussed the difficulty with an ordinance concerning existing utilities versus new construction.

Mr. Petreccia felt that ordinances should be more specific regarding which trees should be planted and where trees should be planted. Mr. Petreccia noted that home building codes had been upgraded after Hurricane Andrew and asked if utility company standards had been upgraded then as well. Mr. Petreccia's homeowner association had met recently and he noted the following two issues they expressed concern about. 1] There was no incentive for the utilities to perform better maintenance and improve their infrastructure standards when the repair costs were routinely borne by the customers. 2] Since electricity was an essential service, a plan should be devised to ensure that no one was ever without electricity for more than one or two days.

Mr. Chancey said he was most frustrated by the lack of communication between planners, the City, the County and the power company and the absence of a Master Plan. Chair Brenneman noted that the suggestion of a Master Plan, including the undergrounding of future utilities, was included in the UAC's 2002 report. She agreed to email a copy of the report to all Board members.

Mr. Partington said he would present the UAC's report to the City Manager after they finalized it. The City Manager would then decide when to present it to the City Commission. The Commission could then instruct staff to create an ordinance incorporating their recommendations, or ask planning staff to bear the recommendations in mind for new development. Mr. Partington was unsure how the City's existing Master Plan addressed the power line issue. He thought they could bring in someone from the City to explain.

Ms. Campbell felt there were ways they could work with developers and homeowners to make it more likely they would find a way to underground utilities. Ms. Campbell felt issues

regarding utility undergrounding and maintenance should be dealt with now, bearing in mind that the franchise agreement was up for renewal in 2009.

Mr. Petreccia felt that it was imperative that the City Commission and Mayor be committed to undergrounding utilities whenever possible for new construction and be committed to a program to underground an acceptable, predetermined percentage of the existing utilities every year.

Mr. Cole felt the UAC should recommend that the City hire a consultant to determine the feasibility of undergrounding utilities, including the effects on homeowners and right of ways, how much it would cost, who would pay for it, and how it could be accomplished. Mr. Barrett felt that it was FPL's job to perform that kind of analysis. He thought the UAC should instead recommend that the City have a consultant evaluate whether the City should go into the electric utility business.

Ms. Shatas noted that when FPL had met with homeowners to discuss undergrounding their utilities, after the cost issue, the homeowners were most concerned about the space issue. Very few homeowners were willing to give up space on their property for the transformers. She noted that in a storm like Wilma, which was very windy but not very wet, the underground lines did perform better than overhead lines. But underground lines were worse in a wet storm; they had more of a problem with corrosion and took longer to find faults in and repair than overhead lines.

Report on Hurricane Wilma

Lynn Shatas, FPL External Affairs Manager

Ms. Shatas pointed out that there was no way to guarantee that any utility would not be interrupted for an extended period after a severe hurricane. She gave the following damage statistics for Hurricane Wilma:

- 780,000 poles were affected
- 11,000 toppled over completely
- 10% of these were concrete
- 30-40% of all poles were owned by Bell South

Ms. Shatas said that a third party was going to investigate many aspects of the impact the hurricanes had on utilities and she was sure that recommendations for improvements would be made.

Ms. Shatas continued with the following statistics:

- This was the largest restoration effort in FPL's 80-year history
- 3.2 million customers lost electric service
- 21 counties affected
- 235 substations effected
- 2,450 feeder circuits affected
- 16,500 lateral circuits affected

- 16,000 transformers affected; 6,250 replaced

Ms. Shatas noted that flying debris had caused most of the damage. She explained the procedure that must be followed before power is restored. Ms. Shatas informed the board that 19,000 workers from 36 states and Canada were mobilized after the storm and many of the personnel were pre-staged before the storm. She described the logistical management of the repair effort.

Report on New City Grant

Gene Dempsey, Urban Forester

Chair Brenneman reported that at the last City Commission meeting, the City had received a grant of \$75,000 for a citywide tree-mapping project. The Riverwalk area would be completed first, followed by the rest of the City.

Report on Green Building Lectures

Chair Bunney Brenneman

Chair Brenneman reported that she had attended a Green Building lecture at Miami Dade community college and learned there was a fund of \$8 million available for South Florida. The money was available for new construction or upgrading older homes, as long as "Green Building" was part of the plans.

Line Clearing

Lynn Shatas, FPL External Affairs Manager

Ms. Shatas produced a map describing the planned line clearing, coded by homeowner association. She explained that FPL planned to have all feeders for Sistrunk and Verena substations cleared by the end of the year. This included Sailboat Bend, Victoria Park, City View, Beverly Heights, Navarro Isle, Flagler Village and Lake Ridge.

Ms. Campbell wanted to know how a homeowner who maintained his or her own trees could ensure that Asplundh did not come through and re-trim them. Ms. Shatas said she would find out what the mechanism was for this and report back to the Board. Mr. Partington said this could be one use for the GIS system. Trees and poles could be registered on the system and then it could be consulted when trimming was planned.

Other New Business

Ms. Vickery wanted to be sure that the UAC recommendations report would be presented to the City Commission after it was updated. Mr. Partington advised them to consider any changes or updates to their recommendations at a future meeting and then he would take it to the City Manager to request it be put on the City Commission agenda. Chair Brenneman agreed to email the report to all Board members prior to their next meeting.

VII. Good of the Committee

Chair Brenneman distributed copies of recent newspaper articles regarding the utility outages after Hurricane Wilma.

Chair Brenneman announced that she had invited Public Council Harold McLean to attend a future UAC meeting.

VIII. Next Meeting – December 19, 2005

The Board discussed various dates and decided to meet on December 19, 2005.

IX. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:55.

Handouts:

1. "Homeowners & Trees" pamphlet
2. Sun Sentinel articles regarding Hurricane Wilma Utility outages.