

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

John Floberg, Chair • John Small, Vice-Chair
Gordon Bradley • Tom Early • Leif Fixen • Matt Mega • Jeff Reibman • Erik Rundell • Peg Staeheli

The Urban Forestry Commission was established to advise the Mayor and City Council concerning the establishment of policy and regulations governing the protection, management, and conservation of trees and vegetation in the City of Seattle

August 7, 2013

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower Room 2750
700 5th Avenue, Seattle
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Attending

Commissioners

John Floberg (JF) - chair
Gordon Bradley (GB)
Tom Early (TE)
Leif Fixen (LF)
Jeff Reibman (JR)
Erik Rundell (ER)
Peg Staeheli (PS)

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE

Public

Absent- Excused

John Small (JS) – vice-chair
Matt Mega (MM)

NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details listen to the digital recording of the meeting at: <http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocs.htm>

Call to Order

Public comment

None

Approval of July 10 and July 17 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the July 10 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the July 17 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

Urban Forest Stewardship Plan letter of support – continues and possible vote

JF – the intent is that we are looking at writing a letter of support.

GB – question raised last time. Going back to the framework, the sidebar does a good job at bringing back the sustainability model. When you get to the modeling part if those are the integrated approach, then somehow those should be reflected in monitoring and to a large extent in plan implementation, then the indicators are largely the ecological approach and aspects of the community and the resource management. Are there things that we will be looking overtime to reflect attention to a wider audience? How is the community engaged? In resource management, there is a funding aspect to this but there are things that various departments are going to be doing as well.

ADD TO PLAN VERBIAGE: In beginning of the monitoring section – and this monitoring framework based on the Plan’s integrated approach

JF – not just another assessment but one that relates to prior assessments.

Peg – move that we support

Leif – some of the comments I made were not included such as ‘strive’ vs. doing.

Peg – I thing that the request for monitoring and measurement. That should start answering the reporting that something is happening. It is a problem with vague statements.

Phyllis – my advice to you is to add in the letter. This is a good plan and we want more resources allocated. We want the city to provide more resources and attention to this or that. If you think the plan is good and you want it to be implemented. You can use the same letter in the letter.

JR – I would like to include a couple of things. Open the idea to amend the letter to say: we want full funding so this can be implemented; we want accountability included in the letter specifically. IN addition to supporting adoption we will continue to advocate for full funding and accountability.

Phyllis – what’s going to happen next week is: The full Council will get a briefing on Monday. Then we go into committee where we go into a more in depth discussion. Accompanying the plan is a resolution that the executive provides. Council is amending that and identifying 8-10 priorities to say that we want to be sure that in the near term these things will begin to happen. One is develop a funding strategy for all of it. That is in some ways kind of endless but we are going to look into that to some extent. We will be asking the executive to give us a sense of where does gaps are. That’s one of the items that is going to come out. Maybe other councilmembers will have additional amendments. Then if UFC says we support it and we want it funded. Then we move to the funding cycle and we don’t know what the executive will propose in terms of cuts or funding. We want to keep funding existing programs and then move to begin funding new things. What we are looking for Full Council is your letter supporting the plan and asking for more funding.

JF – Erik as our economist has been putting together a summary of UF expenditures.

JR –ADD: the UFC will continue to advocate for full funding to implement the goals UFSP and to measure our progress.

JF – let’s talk about budget and see if there is something we could include in the letter.

Peg - In a big overview. I want to emphasize that the UFSP is not just about funding. It shows and intent and I believe that intent, the budget cuts might not have been the biggest problem but not having the plan adopted might have been the reason why departments didn’t have a clear sense of urgency around UF. There are many actions that we take as a city that don’t require money but political leadership.

Urban Forestry Departmental Budgets - continues

Erik explained the document he put together on the budget.

Peg – the data under Transportation is really just the Urban Forestry section portion. Doesn’t include UF expenditures within capital projects.

TE – it would be helpful to add those figures to the report.

Peg – tree and vegetation in a project of the size of Mercer is large enough to make a difference in the numbers we are looking at.

JF – part of GSP funding came from the non-profit partner. I remember from Nolan’s presentation that pruning cycles were well below industry standard. Where do we need to add money to get to efficiencies? We need resources to do the analysis and realize the efficiencies.

Erik – Nolan mentioned that a lot of the funding comes from BTG that will go away in 2015.

JF – is there anything about reLeaf that people would want to see?

Peg – Parks budget – I’d question that the capital represents the total amount spent in UF in the year. Doesn’t look right. My only comment on reLeaf is that we are way underfunded for the amount work and the fact that it is citywide...

JR – when we talked to Jana about the level of funding and we asked what the choke point is on the flow. It would be nice to see how many requests are coming in but how many good sites that are requesting and can’t fulfill.

Erik – Jana said that they needed more staff time.

JR – I was excited to hear about the Portland Verde program that paid a contractor to do the planting. I can see us advocating for that and working with Jana on this. Get job creation in the communities that most need the trees.

JF – do we agree that reLeaf needs more funding?

Peg – the program is getting to a place of a brand but we are not backing it sufficiently. The program itself is very light and a good place to get canopy coverage.

Tom – especially with the amount of outreach they are doing successfully.

JF – any other comments?

Peg – I rather see us do math on transportation. Calculate how many people time 'x' would guarantee us pruning cycles. We can't change the money in the past but we can change the money in the future.

JF – we should talk about SDOT and Parks' pruning cycles because they are the most out of synch with industry standards.

Peg – the City would be leading by example by doing more proactive pruning and encouraging private property owners to do the same.

Capital project linear feet of roadway by year, calculate cost per tree and approximate the value of UF improvements.

Phyllis – one of the things we are considering for this coming budget

Gordon – it's been a pattern of the UFC to hear from people. So we are not operating outside of reality.

New business and announcements

Adjourn

Community input