

## SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Weston Brinkley (Position #3 – University), Chair • Joanna Nelson de Flores (Position #7 – NGO), Vice-Chair  
Steve Zemke (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist) • Sandra Whiting (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist)  
Sarah Rehder (Position #4 – Hydrologist) • Stuart Niven (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA)  
Michael Walton (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA) • Andrew Zellers (Position #8 – Development)  
Craig Johnson (Position #9 – Economist) • Megan Herzog (Position #10 – Get Engaged)  
Megan Herzog (Position #10 – Get Engaged) • Whit Bouton (Position #11 – Environmental Justice)  
Jessica Jones (Position #12 – Public Health) • Shari Selch (Position #13 – Community/Neighborhood)

*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 1, 2018**

### Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27<sup>th</sup> floor)  
700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle

#### Attending

##### Commissioners

Joanna Nelson de Flores – vice-chair  
Whit Bouton  
Megan Herzog  
Stuart Niven  
Shari Selch  
Sarah Rehder  
Michael Walton  
Sandra Whiting  
Steve Zemke

##### Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE  
Evan Philip – Mayor’s Office

##### Guests

Hannah Kett (The Nature Conservancy)  
Chris Hilton (The Nature Conservancy)

##### Public

Richard Ellison

##### Absent- Excused

Weston Brinkley – chair  
Craig Johnson  
Jessica Jones  
Andrew Zellers

**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

Joanna called the meeting to order.

Steve requested adding time to the agenda to talk about the draft tree ordinance discussed today at Council’s PLUZ committee.

#### Public comment

Richard Ellison – Shared a poem he wrote: Trees, trees, who needs these?

Richard Ellison, 8003 28<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98115 climbwall@msn.com

Trees. Trees. Who Needs These!

or Indecent Densification

Its not trees vs density, its trees are the view!  
Can't there be room for big trees and people too?

Trees trees who needs these  
We've got warrants  
for more affordable housing, please!  
No Surplus City properties can be made into parks  
Abandoned utility shacks could be condos with Money Marts

Rezoning single family homes to Highrise gulag gashes  
Even UW cuts big trees for its football parking lot expansions  
Let's makeover natural areas into mr zippies amusement park  
Hey, there's plenty of green, the City knows, in all new building starts!

Trees trees who needs these?  
The "Green Factor" will protect the City apologies  
Cement walls can have ivy and  
Putting greens on roofs  
Native birds can leave for Bellevue if they want a big tree'd roost  
When will Robins learn that  
Its not for bird seed, these developers decisions,  
Its for the greater greed  
that all big trees are bleeding,

Trees trees who needs these  
The City's Two-for-One Tree Replacement Monotony  
Like a mobsters apology for killing grandpoppy  
Its project in a manner "consistent with current City policy"  
I give you two city blocks for each crispy zoning dollar  
Its Tree protection money, or I'll break your canopy cover

Trees trees who needs these  
Chickadees can't just do as they please!  
Affordable housing is the new Seattle mantra,  
the Owls can sleep with pigeons and the Walmart Santa,  
Trees are not prostitutes just swaying in the breezes  
That we must bust them at each light rail station,  
for "Indecent Densification"

In his famous speech, Chief Seattle was just kidding,  
About incentive zoning for blue herons, at the land auction bidding  
"Where is the thicket? Gone! Where is the eagle? Gone!  
The end of living and the beginning of survival."  
You know Chief, You can't have your owl and cedar too!

Trees, trees, who needs these?  
The Arboretum's new biking trail cut 168 if you please!  
42 of them older than your sexy grandma  
And Eight fat Natives over 4 feet in diameter  
For a 14 ft. wide biking trail, no curvy way around them  
You'd think Bigfoot was gonna parade his pet rhino on down there.

Trees trees who needs these  
The Mayor and City Council will do what they please  
Unless we stop them with a tree revolution  
Yes, a tree permit solution for the overcrowding and pollution  
Amidst the noise and concrete jungles and stagnant politicians  
We need a Lorax for Tree Sheriff in our government institution !

Trees trees who needs these  
Its not trees vs density, its trees are the view!  
Can't there be room for big trees and people too?

We all need humanity not eco-humiliation.  
Its not just the lattes and microbrews, and sports pork stadiums  
We all need big trees to survive this densification.  
Killed for a condo, save Seattle's trees!

#### **Adoption of July 11 meeting notes**

**ACTION: A motion to approve the July 11 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.**

#### **The Nature Conservancy briefing – Hannah Kett and Chris Hilton (The Nature Conservancy)**

Hannah and Chris provided an overview of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) work in the Puget Sound.

TNC is a global conservation organization with offices in every state in the US and 70+ countries in the world. They have been in existence for over 70 years and have been working in Puget Sound (mostly in rural areas) for several decades.

Three years ago, TNC decided to expand their programs to include work in urban areas since people are moving to cities faster than ever. As they considered how they wanted to work in urban conservation, and recognizing that there is already good work happening here, they decided to work on stormwater (the largest source of pollution to the Puget Sound). This focus area provides an opportunity to address air quality and impacts on human wellbeing.

TNC program is focused on addressing systemic issues around green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). They base their work on science. They developed a stormwater heat map (stormwaterheatmap.org) and are currently seeking funding with a number of partners to do a canopy cover assessment in the region to inform comprehensive regional planning.

They've been looking at science around the health of nature in cities. Nature has a significant impact on cities' health. They are working with the University of Washington to determine the impact a healthy canopy cover has on community health. They do a lot of work on funding and policy for GSI. Working on finding private investment to urban areas.

On the policy side they focus on recognizing opportunities to provide incentives to the private sector around GSI and are taking a comprehensive look at barriers current codes impose.

One of the projects they have engaged with is City Habitats, a cross-sector coalition to problem solve and find opportunities to collaborate. They are creating platforms for rich storytelling and seeking opportunities to support people doing good work on the ground in finding places to tell the communities stories.

They are working on providing funding, media outreach, and technical support to efforts related to tree canopy.

Project: Planting Trees for Thriving Communities. In May 2019, TNC launched a project to enhance and protect urban tree canopy throughout Puget Sound to promote cleaner water and air, store carbon and support human and community wellness. Through this project, the Nature Conservancy Puget Sound Cities Program will:

- Build community understanding of the benefits of trees in both public and private spaces;
- Engage communities in tree planting projects that enhance neighborhoods and parks;
- Support regional efforts to increase tree canopy; and
- Support science that helps us understand and quantify the impacts of tree canopy.

They are working on building community understanding of the benefits of trees. Bring in science data and communicate it with tools that will be available to TNC partners.

TNC is part of King County's Million Trees initiative, is engaged in King Conservation District i-Tree hydro project and is also working on the Puget Sound urban canopy cover project.

***For more details on the conversation, including the Q&A portion of the presentation, please listen to the digital recording of the meeting at: <http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocs.htm>***

#### **MHA Ordinance letter of recommendation**

The UFC discussed the draft letter or recommendation.

**ACTION: A motion to approve the amended MHA Ordinance letter of recommendation was made, seconded, and approved.**

#### **Public comment**

None

#### **New Business**

None

#### **Adjourn**

**Public input**

**From:** Michael Oxman <michaeloxman@comcast.net>

**Sent:** Thursday, July 12, 2018 12:27 PM

**To:** Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto\_de\_Bader@Seattle.gov>

**Subject:** RE: Link to DCI complaint at 9684 'B' 51st Ave S

Howdy Sandra,

The link works now. Sorry for the false alarm,

I thought you'd be interested in this letter to Council Member Rob Johnson. It should also be addressed to the UFC.

Michael Oxman

On July 12, 2018 at 12:14 PM Michael Oxman <[michaeloxman@comcast.net](mailto:michaeloxman@comcast.net)> wrote:

Howdy Rob,

A few comments & references on the process to update the tree protection ordinance.

- 1) I want my grandkids to have trees big enough to climb. I don't believe the purpose of Trees For All is to protect trees, but to remove protection for trees and enable other legislation like the MHA ordinance and ADU ordinance to sweep tree protection out of the realm of probability so that construction can proceed. This Urban Forestry Commission meeting video shows that that was the city's position in 2010. <https://youtu.be/Z-V8lv-XnPk?t=4m32s>
  - 2) In 2012, Councilmember Richard Conlin torpedoed the draft tree ordinance by sending this letter to the Urban Forestry Commission. In it, he claims to like trees, but turns his back on the regulatory process by offering 'incentives' with no teeth. <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/UrbanForestryCommission/FinalIssuedDocuments/Recommendations/RichardConlinLettertoUFC041312.pdf>
  - 3) On December 13th, 2017 Nathan Torgeson told the Urban Forestry Commission that DCI will "Trade off development flexibility for tree protection". See page 3. <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/UrbanForestryCommission/2017/2017docs/TreePresEnforcment121217.pdf> He said that some middle ground is the intent of the policy on enforcement of tree regulations. I don't see how Trees For All can seek middle ground, because construction in tree rootzones is the highest priority.
  - 4) The 2016 Canopy Cover Survey is not a suitable baseline for decision making because it only contains mapping information, not qualitative assessment. This 2012 Urban Forestry Commission document lists all of the ecosystem services that would be revealed if we compiled a database of trees and their ecological function, sometimes known as a Natural Capital Assessment. <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/UrbanForestryCommission/2012/2012docs/DRAFTEcosystemsMetricsPositionPaper051012v2.pdf>
- The UFC's companion chart displays a holistic approach to meeting canopy cover goals: <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/UrbanForestryCommission/2012/2012docs/UFCReviewMatrix061212.pdf>

5) A Natural Capital Assessment predicates a tree ordinance and the MHA and the ADU upzoning ordinance proposals. See Statement of Legislative Intent 75-1-A-2 from June 30th, 2016. <http://seattle.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=4146563&GUID=9C06C627-A125-4851-BAF3-19D15C6EDCD0>

6) A summary of my concerns about withdrawing the draft ordinance in 2013 is contained in this video of my testimony at City Council. <https://youtu.be/qk5rC8TJfgs>

Arboreally yours,  
Michael Oxman

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**From:** rebecca.watson@gmail.com <rebecca.watson@gmail.com> **On Behalf Of** Seattle Nature Alliance

**Sent:** Saturday, July 14, 2018 10:22 AM

**To:** Durkan, Jenny <Jenny.Durkan@seattle.gov>; LEG\_CouncilMembers <council@seattle.gov>; Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto\_de\_Bader@Seattle.gov>

**Subject:** Please Strengthen Seattle's Tree Ordinance

14 July 2018

Mayor Jenny Durkan / Seattle City Council Seattle City Hall  
600 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98124

Dear Mayor Durkan & City Council Members:

Regarding: **Update to Seattle's Tree Ordinance**

Soon you will have an opportunity to positively impact the citizens of Seattle as well as generations to come.

Trees are integral to Seattle's identity. In addition to their beauty, they are essential habitat for birds and wildlife. Trees provide shade, improve air quality, lessen soil erosion, provide wind/sound buffers, filter polluted waters, and offset our energy needs. **We urge you to be a leader and prioritize preserving the trees we have, and work to increasing tree canopy for everyone.**

**The Seattle Nature Alliance supports the recommendations of the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) to strengthen the city-wide tree policy, which include the following:**

- Requiring all trees that are 6-inch\* DBH or greater be replaced with an equivalent size tree (ideally PNW native), or that homeowner/developer be required to pay into citywide tree replacement and maintenance fund
- Strengthening penalties for the removal of both large tree groves, and/or heritage/exceptional trees
- Establishing a transparent, public permitting process for tree both homeowner/developer tree removal, allowing for two-week comment period for any trees removed 6-inch\* DBH or larger
- Requiring developers to do an urban forestry canopy assessment prior to development in an effort to more accurately track tree inventory and overall impacts
- Consolidating tree oversight into a single city entity to improve communication and efficiency
- Establishing a single, city-wide tree canopy database to improve the accuracy of urban forest data and better track challenges/progress, so as to achieve the city's 30% tree canopy goal
- Expanding SDOTs existing tree service provider's registration and certification requirements to all tree service providers working on trees in Seattle

- Promoting public education around trees inherent value; being critical to eco services which the entire community depends & establish incentives to homeowners and developers to keep existing trees
- Providing incentives for planting native plants and trees

*\* in honor of Cass Turnbull (1951-2017), who was unwavering in her support for a stronger tree policy, and an inspiration to us all, we propose the required measurement of 6" DPH, if adopted, be informally referred to as "Cass's Rule". She would not be happy with any diameter greater than recommended by the UFC.*

Sincerely,

Denise Dahn, Mark Ahlness, & Rebecca Watson

Seattle Nature Alliance

<http://www.seattlenaturealliance.org> | [seattlenaturealliance@gmail.com](mailto:seattlenaturealliance@gmail.com)

It is our mission at the Seattle Nature Alliance to preserve urban natural areas for wildlife habitat, passive use, and scenic beauty.