

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) • Bonnie Lei (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

October 10, 2018

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners

Weston Brinkley – chair
Joanna Nelson de Flores – vice-chair
Whit Bouton
Bonnie Lei
Jessica Jones (on the phone)
Shari Selch
Sarah Rehder
Sandra Whiting
Steve Zemke
Andrew Zellers

Absent- Excused

Michael Walton
Stuart Niven
Craig Johnson

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Jon Jainga – Seattle Parks & Recreation
Heidi Narte - SCL

Guests

Uche Okezie - Homesight
Rachel Meyer – Weber Thompson

Public

Lance Young
Alexandra Moravec

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

Weston called the meeting to order.

Public comment

None

Adoption of September 5 and September 12 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the September 5 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the September 12 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Othello Square - Uche Okezie (HomeSight)

Rachel Meyer – she is an architect with Weber Thompson working on this project.

This is a 3.5-acre site that is the last piece of Seattle Housing Authority's New Holly re-development. They have been doing a feasibility study to bring this project to the community. The community outlined different goals as part of the neighborhood planning process. They had six large community meetings.

The campus is designed to represent the diverse and international nature of SE Seattle, providing a place that serves the whole community with homes, educational and business development opportunities, family-wage jobs, health care, social services support, and a variety of small enterprises at which to shop, eat, and play.

The project has four buildings:

- Building A will be occupied by HomeSight Economic Opportunity Center; the multi-cultural center, and residential units.
- Building B will house the Rainier Valley Leadership Academy High School.
- Building C will be occupied by Seattle Children's Odessa Brown Children's Clinic; Sound Child Solutions; and residential units.
- Building D will have HomeSight Home Ownership units.

The project team hosted brainstorming sessions with the community to get input. From the collective exercise that helped shift the vision to concept, common themes emerged. Four main themes built upon ideas identified in the exercise: dream, unity, center, crafted. The design team assembled images to show how these ideas could take form within Othello Square's open space and buildings.

Dream takes into account vertical elements that represent uplifting, aspirational forms. These include linear structures that have a lightness to them.

Unity focuses on elements that evoke a sense of belonging and comfort. Spaces that make everyone feel welcome and provide the right scale to allow small and large groups to gather.

Center draws on natural forms that represent life, and growth. The idea that the site can be restorative to visitors as well as the environment, and that nature is a thread that connects us all.

Crafted speaks to an attention to detail and thoughtfulness in how site elements are assembled. It is rooted in many cultures where everyday objects are celebrated as pieces of art because of the care taken to make them.

A series of smaller linked exterior spaces, each distinct to specific building functions, will be included in the project.

They are using a low-allergy plant palette: Many of the anticipated future users of the site have allergies to common urban plants. In an effort to minimize allergic reaction, plant and tree selection is based on a low-allergen species mix. Allergy ratings for each plant is based on the Ogren Plant Allergy Scale (OPALS) which ranks potential to cause allergies in people based on 130 different possible factors. Some of these include:

- The amount of pollen produced (if any)
- The potency of the pollen
- How much of the year the plant is in bloom?

- The size of the actual pollen grains
- The specific gravity of the pollen grains
- How sticky or dry the grains are
- Whether the sap causes dermatitis
- Whether the smell of the flowers bother people

On Building C there is a sewer main going under the sidewalk. Street lights are at the back of the ROW pushing the sidewalk out further, which, paired with reduced soil availability will make it challenging to plant larger trees.

The reason why avoiding allergens has been a focus is due to the fact that air pollution has had an impact on children and them developing allergies. Building B – High School: provides more opportunity for tree planting. Two of the four sites are non-profits and the project team is focusing on supporting this development. The other sites have developers that would love to have more trees.

The team would appreciate the UFC’s recommendations in terms of trees for the project. There might be space for a dozen trees (not counting vine Maples). This site will be a hub for the community and could be a place to distribute trees for the community to plant.

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

Parks View Policy – Jon Jainga (Parks)

King 5 did a piece on Parks view sites. Sandra will share the [link](#) with the UFC.

They are working on updating both view policy and tree policy. In 2005 Parks designated 16 viewpoints to be maintained:

1. Bagley viewpoint – Mountlake neighborhood
2. Banner place/Rainbow viewpoint – Roosevelt neighborhood
3. 12th Ave S Viewpoint – North Beacon Hill neighborhood
4. Belvedere viewpoint – North Admiral neighborhood
5. Betty Bowen viewpoint at Marshall Park – West Queen Anne neighborhood
6. Charles Richey Sr. viewpoint – Alki neighborhood
7. East Portal I-90 overlook – Mt. Baker neighborhood
8. Hamilton viewpoint – North Admiral neighborhood
9. Kerry Park viewpoint – Lower Queen Anne neighborhood
10. Louisa Boren lookout – Stevens neighborhood
11. Mt. Baker Ridge viewpoint – Mt. Baker neighborhood
12. West Seattle Rotary viewpoint – North Delridge neighborhood
13. Emma Schmitz overlook – Alki neighborhood
14. Sunset Hill park – Sunset Hill neighborhood
15. Ursula Judkins viewpoint – South East Magnolia neighborhood
16. W 60th St viewpoint – Sunset Hill neighborhood

Many of the viewpoints have significant art in public places. Some of these sites have very steep hills.

UFC question/comment – is the policy to have viewpoints be available for pedestrian or for people driving by?

Answer: most viewpoints are inside a park (from the park). Only Alki viewpoints are visible from the road.

Tree Regs budget discussion

The UFC discussed and adopted a letter of recommendation on funding for the tree protection ordinance update.

ACTION: A motion to approve the tree regulations budget recommendation as amended was made, seconded, and approved

The UFC discussed sending someone to testify on October 23.

Public comment

Lance Young – Wants to thank the UFC for continuing to work on this. Budget and staffing are important to support exceptional trees. Affordability is also important for people to participate in the permit system and not try to avoid it. Science News article talked about air quality in cities where the majority of the people in the world live in. Seattle had smoky air this summer which caused worse air quality than any other city in the world. The results of an Emerald Ash Borer showed big impacts to public health.

New Business

None

Adjourn

Public input

From: Liz Brown <LizB@SeattleArtMuseum.org>

Sent: Wednesday, October 03, 2018 4:10 PM

To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto_de_Bader@Seattle.gov>

Subject: Disconnect between Seattle Urban Forestry and SDOT

Dear Ms. Pinto de Bader,

I am writing as I am hoping your commission might improve the nature of Seattle Urban Forestry by increased communication and possibly education of SDOT crews. I was devastated earlier this week when I returned home (3807 S. Lucile st.) to find all of the native plantings (Indian Plum, sword ferns, mahonia and mock orange) that I had been encouraging to grow over the past 6 yrs on the planting strip along Lucile st. in front of my house mowed/shredded flattened to small stubble by a street crew. I've encouraged them to grown in in part due to the many publications from the city regarding the advantages of providing native habitat and in part to prevent the trash dumping by improving the appearance of the area. Speaking with the crew chief apparently they had responded to a complaint regarding visibility around the corner on the other side of the street where there were large blackberry bushes and the crew, after mowing that down decided to flatten my area as well for unknown reasons (maybe they had extra time?) The plants were not high 30 ft from the curb and even more confusing they flattened all the growth over 100ft up the street from the curb. I've been told I can file a claim but I can't see how this is helpful as it's city property so in theory I imagine they can destroy it if they like. Additionally as I'm sure you know, to replant this area would cost thousands of dollars and years to regrow.

Although I cannot see anything that can be done to undo what was done, it does seem we could move to a better future if

- 1) The crews that are sent out to address plants along city streets are educated as to what is a native plant versus an invasive and what is a visibility hazard versus what is not.

- 2) Additionally if home owners in areas with no sidewalks and curbs are allowed to officially adopt the areas in front of our houses (as I understand is possible in larger King County) until there are sidewalks and curbs we would feel encouraged to spend time and money on the area without the fear that the city will come along and destroy all our hard work with no notification.

Thank you for your time and attention,
Liz Brown

ELIZABETH BROWN

From: James Davis <jamesdavis1400@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2018 3:22 PM
To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto_de_Bader@Seattle.gov>
Subject: Comments for the Urban Forestry Commission Meeting of October 10, 2018

Hello Sandra,

I was hoping the following could be shared with the Urban Forestry Commission in advance of their meeting tomorrow.

Dear Members of the Urban Forestry Commission,

I understand you are going to be discussing budgeting for the enforcement of Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance - both the current in-force ordinance and proposed ordinance. I also understand the Mayor's Budget has funding for one additional arborist.

I wanted to strongly state that we need three new arborists to enforce our trees protection laws. These positions can be one-year time limited FTE's with the intent they will be funded from permit fees and fines in the future.

To my knowledge, the one hardworking arborist for SDCI currently has a backlog of some weeks on project reviews. This is under the current in-force statute that does not apply to the 40 percent of Seattle's lots that are under 5000 square feet and exempt from tree protection statues (UFC Letter of May 9, 2018). As you know, under the new proposed Tree Protection Ordinance all lots will be impacted.

I have spoken with SDCI inspectors who work hard on investigating violations of our tree protection ordinance and issuing violations and fines only to have their results not get past the Directors Review Level because they are challenged by property owner paid arborists misrepresenting facts and attorneys declaring intentions to sue. The city needs arborists to support the inspectors during investigations and in court.

The city also needs to budget one position within the City Attorney's Office to support the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), including the enforcement of tree protections.

These positions will pay for themselves as efficacy increases in enforcing our tree protection statues.

Finally, I don't believe the need for enforcement will decrease with the new Tree Protection Ordinance under consideration but increase as ways to evade the impact of the new ordinance proliferate. There is a lot of money at stake here.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to protect our trees - one of our most important public health infrastructures.

Jim Davis

From: Elaine Ike <elaineike@hotmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2018 1:37 PM

To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto_de_Bader@Seattle.gov>

Cc: sgsc-board@googlegroups.com; Elaine Ike <info@seattlegreenspacescoalition.org>;
stevezemke@msn.com

Subject: The First Priority of all Government Today is to Protect the Environment

Dear Sandra Pinto de Bader and the Urban Forestry Commission:

In the opinion of Seattle Green Spaces Coalition, the environment should be the #1 issue of concern for our city. A proper financial valuation of our Natural Capital is the starting point. The preservation of trees on both private and public property, with a clear acknowledgement that most of the Tree Canopy exists now on private property, must be supported. (Clearly, backyard cottages could be a threat to our canopy without consideration of likely tree removal.) Finally, we need a strong Tree Ordinance that reflects that trees are critical to the environment, not amenities. It is our duty as citizens to ensure that real environmental protection underlies **every action performed by our local government.**

Please share this statement with members of the Forestry Commission and any government officials who will listen.

Thank you,

Elaine Ike, Co-Chair

Seattle Green Spaces Coalition