

**SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION**

Weston Brinkley, Chair • Joanna Nelson de Flores, Vice-Chair  
Tom Early • Megan Herzog • Craig Johnson  
Sarah Rehder • Sandra Whiting • Andrew Zellers • Steve Zemke

*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*

**February 7, 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  
Tom Early  
Megan Herzog  
Sarah Rehder  
Sandra Whiting  
Andrew Zellers  
Steve Zemke

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE

Public

None

**Absent- Excused**

Craig Johnson  
Weston Brinkley – chair

**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.

**Public comment**

None

**Approval of January 3 and January 10 meeting notes**

**ACTION: A motion to approve the January 3 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.**

**ACTION: A motion to approve the January 10 meeting notes as written was made, seconded, and approved.**

**Welcome letter to the Mayor – discussion and possible vote**

Commissioners discussed the draft letter, made edits, and adopted it.

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

## **Discussion on strategy for conversation with CM Johnson on 2/14**

Several residents met with CM Johnson to express concern about climate change and the importance of trees. Steve suggested inviting him to one of the UFC meetings. Spencer Williams (CM Johnson's aide) drafted the Portland, OR tree ordinance. CM Johnson is interested in trees and housing affordability. The Commission agreed that the discussion needed to be focused and that the UFC should provide a brief history of the efforts the Commission has done over the years to support the City in updating the tree ordinance.

Welcome CM Johnson: Weston

Background/overview: Tom

- UFC has been encouraging the City to update the tree ordinance since its inception in 2009
- Permit system for tree preservation and monitoring is important
- City has been doing good work including updating Street Tree Ordinance, enforcing tree protection in Parks lands, and improving coordination by creating an Urban Forestry Core Team with members of 7 of the 9 City departments working with urban trees.
- Last year the City undertook a LiDAR Canopy Cover Assessment showing us at 28% (of the 30% goal). Which provides a good baseline.

Challenges: Weston

- Historic lack of data on the impact development has on trees. UFC is excited with the forward movement started by OSE/SDCI undertaking the Tree Regulations Research Project and Mayor Burgess Tree Protection executive order.
  - o EO recommendations
    - Status quo improved: code improvements, process improvements, incentives
    - Permit system to protect more trees, and
    - Permit system plus to protect even more trees
- SDCI has limited enforcement capacity. Full funding is needed for this effort.
- Replacement trees are removed once project changes hands.
- Ask CM Johnson – which committee will hear a tree ordinance?

Current successful efforts:

- Mention GSP and the success of those efforts. Thoughts on continued funding for program.
- Street Tree inventory and planting
- Parks enforcement of tree protection (example: recent settlement for West Seattle illegal cutting)

We would like to see:

- Tree removal permit
- Canopy impact assessments
- Simpler guidelines
- Register tree care service companies
- Fee in lieu to fund planting and maintenance

Sandra PdB to put together a one-pager for Weston to review. Maybe to share with CM Johnson ahead of the meeting?

## **2017 Annual Report and transmittal letter – discussion and possible vote**

The Commission discussed and provided input. Sandra PdB will update the document based on UFC input and bring back for discussion next week.

**Thank you letter to Bruce Stotler on sell of property to be added to Schmitz Park – discussion and possible vote**

Commissioners discussed the draft letter, made edits and adopted it.

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

**Ship Canal Water Quality Program/3<sup>rd</sup> Ave Water Main project planting plans review and discussion.**

The Commission discussed. Sandra W will rework the letter based on UFC comments and will bring back for discussion and adoption next week.

**2018 Work Plan – move to next meeting**

**Public comment**

None

**New Business**

Interest in having someone come talk to the UFC about native trees/plants that can thrive in Seattle’s urban environment.

Jefferson Park golf course – Parks department will be removing 90-100 trees – REQUEST A BRIEFING

Steve responded to the building they are doing at Ingraham Highschool – needs to be in tree ordinance. Proposing to build again and remove trees that were mitigation from a previous project.

**Adjourn**

**Public input:**

From: Livia Jackson [mailto:lijac@me.com]  
Sent: Tuesday, February 06, 2018 4:31 PM  
To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto\_de\_Bader@Seattle.gov>  
Subject: Re: Urban Forestry Commission meeting alerts request

to: Sandra Pinto de Bader- Urban Forestry Policy Advisor City of Seattle, Office of Sustainability and Environment

Hello- I’m writing to express my concern about the distressing loss of our tree canopy here in Seattle. In the 20 years I’ve been here, we’ve suffered a loss of more than half of our tree cover. In my own neighborhood in 98115 I’ve seen huge stands of trees cut down by developers, often after hours. When I asked the contractors if they had permits to take down so many big trees, they threatened to call the police for my “harassing” them. I called the city tree arborist in that case, and in 2 other cases where people were cutting down very large trees for nonsensical reasons, but no one ever called me back. Seeing the loss of the trees at the site of Bryant Heights was very painful, as is the prospect of losing the stands of trees at Talaris. I can’t understand why we could not have saved these extraordinary parkland spaces right in town.

I urge your office to consult the 3 wonderful articles by Investigate West on the plight of our trees here. The last of the articles was last November in Seattle Weekly. Without preserving our trees which provide us with protection from heat and pollution, absorb huge amounts of CO2, provide biodiversity to creatures, and give

us thousands of other “ecosystem services” we will soon be a cement heat sink bereft of the extraordinary forests that made the Northwest such a unique place to live.

I hope that you all will quickly enact and implement policies to protect our trees, and provide stiff penalties for their illegal removal. This is our last chance to preserve what little urban forest that we have left. These magnificent trees still standing will not come again...it is up to you to prevent the tragedy of the loss of the last vestiges of these forests.

Yours truly, Livia Jackson