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.

Attending

Commissioners
Matt Mega (MM) – chair
Nancy Bird
Tom Early (TE)
John Floberg (JF)
Peg Staeheli (PS)

Staff
Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE
Roy Francis (RF) - SDOT
Nolan Rundquist (NR) - SDOT
David Bayard (DB) - SCL

Public
Nicholas Dankers
Leif Fixen
Steve Zemke (SZ)

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
MM – Call to order

Chair report

SDOT report on Street Tree Ordinance Public Comment and Outreach

Roy Francis and Nolan Rundquist from SDOT briefed the Commission on the outreach process for the Street Tree Ordinance (posted below).

RF – Received comments supporting having penalties for damaging a street tree. Comments from tree service companies asked for more outreach and training.

JF – Were there any comments about the Tree Ambassador program?

RF – It did come up.

NR – It was more about how to train homeowners, because we are asking home owners to care for their trees. SDOT has been actively supporting the Tree Ambassador program.
Street Tree Ordinance Outreach Summary
SDOT's Urban Forestry section has proposed a revision to the street tree section of Title 15 of the existing Street Use Code to strengthen the requirements for protecting and preserving trees to increase the tree canopy for the City of Seattle. The proposed changes will not affect the permitting process; the permits which are required remain free of charge unless associated with other street improvements.

Public Meetings

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>12/14/11</td>
<td>Van Asselt Community Center – public meeting</td>
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<td>Magnolia Community Club</td>
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Announcements/Correspondence
- Public meeting announcements were sent to 100 individuals.
- Mailing to Business Owners -2250 letters in English and Spanish, from business license database and the Office of Economic Development were sent. (Of these letters, 150 were returned as not deliverable.) The business license holders we sent letters to included:
  - Landscaping Services,
  - Lessors of Residential Buildings/Dwelling,
  - Lessors of Non Residential Buildings
  - Retail Offices,
  - Real Estate Offices,
  - Residential Property Managers, and
  - Nonresidential Property Managers.

Public Comment Summary
Overall, in the public meetings we received good support for the direction of this proposed ordinance. We did receive a couple of comments in the public comment website as well as nice letters of support from the community groups who invited us to give them a presentation regarding this draft ordinance. Through this outreach, we have not reached the conclusion that we will need to make any substantive changes to the draft ordinance. We may consider a delayed implementation for the certification.
RF – some people said the ordinance was unfair because of the impact it would have on low income people. Also that homeowners shouldn’t be stuck with trees planted by prior owners. There were also comments about SCL pruning and whether or not the ordinance applied to them. There was also mention that 2-weeks posting for removal is too little.

NR – if there are landscape companies that do a lot of pruning and don’t have a certified arborist on staff. We are asking for a certified arborist to supervise and make sure they are doing good tree work. Also, someone mentioned that their neighborhood covenant gave him the right to top trees for views, and I explained that the SDOT Street Tree Ordinance prevails.
PS – we need to educate people on pruning for views.

JF – to do appropriate pruning instead of topping. Were there any comments around gardens and need for access for solar?

RF /NR – no specific comment was made about that.

RF – Crews must be supervised on site. This gave concern as being financially onerous as a requirement for smaller companies. The City has the ability to revoke registration if work is poorly done repeatedly.

JF – what’s the process for identifying badly pruned trees?

NR – Usually get calls from neighbors. Tree work companies are expected to have the permit and registration on site and need to submit it if anyone asks to see it.

RF – People usually hire a tree company if they want to prune a mature tree.

PS – the UFC talked a lot about the certification and on site supervision requirement.

MM – does this apply to all pruning or just on trees of certain size? The bigger issues is, is SDOT planning on ramping up enforcement at the beginning?

RF – we have limited resources, but SDOT has inspectors doing other permit related work. We could educate them to be extra eyes for us.

MM – how many permits and fines did you process last year?

NR – There were only 8-10 fines. They were all for non-permitted work. When people apply for a permit, they usually do a good pruning job.

MM – we need to think creatively about how to work together

TE – If applying AINSE 3000 we would be setting the bar for legitimate business people and would be citing infractions for people that don’t bother to apply for a permit.

RF – through public education we can raise public awareness about improper/illegal pruning.

JF – The main issue is unpermitted action.

NR – typically the work done poorly is by people who have no training.

RF – We would also need to determine how we are defining supervision

PS – maybe take a more defined and reasonable approach to supervision

TE – It doesn’t look like that’s the problem.

PS – have seen it. Something that indicates showing the permit gives the residents supervisory capacity. They are able to ask to see the permit and certification.
RF – they will work on a definition that would include something along the lines of ‘before work begins, a certified arborist needs to be there providing instruction and direction.’ They could then rotate around different jobs. Also the CA should rotate back and inspect the work done and address any issues.

MM – talk about the threshold on tree size. Have a permit with sign-off at the end of the job. Provide a hook to the owner group and keep everybody honest.

RF – the next steps are:
- Capturing all comments
- Respond (they already responded to most of them)
- Brief SDOT director
- Brief Mayor
- Submit to Council in late spring

They have been meeting with Council central staff all along as well has had the City attorney’s office review.

TE – noticed that you have hazardous tree definition but it doesn’t identify what the rating is for a tree to be determined hazardous.

NR – We are adopting the 12 points systems. Will use risk assessment to determine level of hazard. Risk management, not risk elimination.

PS – installation of street trees in ROW that might impact sewer lines is still an issue in my mind. How to clarify levels of responsibility? It hasn’t been enforced but the wording is there.

NR – the ordinance applies to Main lines.

RF – we have an MOU with SPU to deal with conflicts between street trees and utilities.

Urban Forest IDT briefing on 2011 Progress Report and 2012 Work Plan
Sandra provided a briefing on the 2011 UFMP progress report and the 2012 work plan. Documents can be found at:

JF – Are you planting saplings?
NR – We plant 1.5” DBH trees
RF – we provide establishment maintenance for three years
JF – do you have mortality statistics?
NR – about 5%

PS – need to come up with a more creative way to protect our conifers while planting. Do we know how many trees were planted in the ROW by developers?

SPdB – I’ll ask DPD
JF – we probably won’t see more conifers if the UFC doesn’t push for them
MM – we need to find opportunities in wide planting strips to get conifers in there.
PS – we need to increase
MM – need to stress that conifers are better for diversity in the education piece.
PS – there is the fear factor about safety
TE – that’s another education issue
MM – Maybe SDOT can find groups to do joint workshops to further educate
RF – SDOT is planning to hire an intern to field research and help inform the canopy cover goal.
NR – had a conversation with the Freight Advisory Board. They want freight mobility.
JF – could some of that field work be done to provide a snapshot of the industrial area?
RF – yes.

**UFC comment to Yesler Terrace Tree Protection Plan - vote**
MM – had a conversation with Dave LaClergue and made changes to the recommendation draft.

**ACTION:** A motion was made to approve the recommendation as amended subject to quorum. The motion was seconded and carried. Commissioner Staeheli recused herself. Commissioners Bradley and Reibman voted via email.

**Public comment**
SZ – Thinks it’s a good idea to require an arborist’s signature at the end of pruning work. In redevelopment situations they frequently build to the lot line. In the Ingraham case they could have planted bigger trees. Outreach could use environmental groups besides blogs. Send the information to community councils also. He hasn’t heard talk about habitat value in the argument for trees. Discussion on what type of wildlife we’d like to see in the city.

MM – things get tougher. Birds are height dependent. We also need to talk about the understory.

**Next meeting agenda items**
MM – I’ll make a presentation on my findings on city-wide canopy cover. The following week we’ll work on creating review standards for large projects.

**Adjourn**