

## SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Tom Early, Chair • Steve Zemke, Vice-Chair  
Weston Brinkley • Leif Fixen • Mariska Kecskes • Donna Kostka • Richard Martin • Joanna Nelson de Flores  
Erik Rundell • Andrew Zellers

*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 10, 2016**

### Meeting Notes

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

#### Attending

##### Commissioners

Steve Zemke – vice-chair  
Reid Haefer (not voting)  
Mariska Kecskes  
Donna Kostka  
Joanna Nelson de Flores  
Erik Rundell  
Andrew Zellers

##### Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE  
Andy Scheffer - Parks

##### Guests

None

##### Public

Cass Turnbull

#### Absent- Excused

Tom Early – chair  
Weston Brinkley  
Leif Fixen  
Richard Martin

**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

Steve called the meeting to order.

#### Public comment

None

#### Arboretum Multi-use Trail follow up – Andy Scheffer (Parks)

Andy Scheffer updated the Commission on the Arboretum Loop Trail project. The project is going well, ahead of schedule and on budget. They have removed 15 fewer trees than anticipated thus far. They have been particularly careful around potential hazards, especially after the unfortunate Seward Park incident. Trees need to be monitored because they have more exposure to the sun and have lost adjacent tree support when neighboring trees were removed. Following the Commission's recommendation, they placed large banners and signs to provide project information to residents.

The project team is concerned about their ability to open the trail from a public safety point of view. They are doing everything they can to minimize tree removal. As they continue building the trail, the UW is planting collection trees to replace hazardous trees. They treat all the plants in the Arboretum as part of a museum. All trees are scrutinized and entered into a database. They are looking at adding ways to share information (perhaps via interpretation) for visitors.

Andy described the loop trail plan and gave details about the trees that are slated for removal. One of them was so heavily infested with English Ivy that it was leaning very precariously.

UFC question/comment: Are there other areas in the Arboretum that have invasive plants?

Answer: This specific area of the arboretum has not been actively maintained and has significant ivy. Now that they are going in there, they are going to address the English ivy issue.

There are 28 additional trees identified for removal. They are working on getting this number down to 20. Some of these hazardous tree situations are not obvious during project planning and design. Some hazardous situations usually get discovered during construction.

They are utilizing the cut trees in the wetlands (except for the birches that need to be disposed of to avoid spreading the disease).

UFC question/comment: how do you take into account climate change impacts that might require different species?

Answers: Seattle has a climate that allows for a wide spread of species to establish. They are considering climate change impacts when they choose plants.

UFC question/comment: Are you looking at the wildlife implications of the collections? And how it might impact the whole area?

Answer: Wildlife habitat is an underlying consideration. They put in plants that provide similar habitat conditions to the plants removed. One of the unique things about the Arboretum is the native matrix of Northwest plants providing a common thread for the collection.

Thus far the project has removed 120 trees (out of 135 originally scheduled for removal).

UFC question/comment: is there a lesson learned in the planning side of this? It would have been very hard to predict, but when planners are walking the trail, the logical next step would be to look at the adjacent plants and assess their health.

Answer: it would have taken a long time and delayed the project. The UW was working with the project team during construction. This is the case because they own the collection. In a Parks project Parks arborists would have been involved.

### **New Get Engaged Member**

Introduced Reid Haefer as the new Get Engaged member. He works for the PSRC as a planner. He has done work with Seattle Audubon and the Green Seattle Partnership.

### **2016 UFC Work Plan update and possible vote**

Sandra talked about the work that the City is doing to provide enhanced urban forestry customer service to Seattle residents. Commissioners reviewed and provided input on the revised work plan.

**ACTION: A motion to approve the revised 2016 work plan as amended was made, seconded, and approved.**

### **Backyard cottages and impacts to trees discussion**

Sandra, Steve, and Cass Turnbull shared information on ADU and DADU. The Commission discussed implications this legislation will have on trees.

It would be useful to include mitigation measures for tree loss. The ordinance is on hold. The EIS is currently with hearing examiner due to an appeal. The UFC has time to review and put together a recommendation. Erik will lead the effort to create a draft recommendation for the Commission to discuss in October.

### **UF budget discussion**

Continue to have budget briefings from departments in preparation for a recommendation. Look at the ways departments are investing their funding like SDOT and Parks. Sandra will find out when the Mayor is releasing his proposed budget. This will be an ongoing conversation.

### **Public comment:**

Cass Turnbull talked about the impact DADU's will have on trees. The building, parking, and curb cut will all have impacts on trees. Maybe include a mitigation component to plant trees in public property. This will affect the urban forestry directly.

### **New Business:**

None

### **Adjourn**

### **Community input**

**From:** Cass Turnbull [mailto:cassturnbull@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 10, 2016 11:11 AM

**To:** Pinto de Bader, Sandra

**Subject:** DADU commentary

For the commission.

To: URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION August 2016

From: Cass Turnbull

Re: DADUs impact on tree canopy

Maximizing density for housing in Seattle is a recognized goal of Seattle. This is largely because of the Growth Management Act adopted by the state to reduce sprawl. Sprawl can result in global climate change, reduction of natural ecosystems and their services, segregation of populations according to income, over utilization of resources, etc.

The DADU helps preserve the aesthetics of SF neighborhoods while increasing density.

**35 % lot coverage by one large house allows for much more tree canopy than 35% coverage of the same lot by two houses.** See illustration.

900 sq feet is the city's number for that amount of land needed to support a medium sized tree. 35% is the amount of lot coverage allowed for a SF 5000 sq foot lot. Parks Urban Tree Canopy Report 2009

There are now fiscal incentives, and less restrictions on DADUs (we use to require that the main house be owner occupied with a relative in the second house) so **many more DADUs will be being built** soon, and this will continue to impact tree cover for an indefinite period of time. This should be taken into account by urban foresters and perhaps mitigated.

**63 % of Seattle is impermeable** land as of 2015

The Single Family zone has **56% of the land**  
And **63 % of the City's trees**

That is more than the next three management zones combined

Industrial	= 11% of the land	4% of the trees
Multifamily	= 11% of the land	17 % of the trees
Parks	= 11% of the land,	21 % of the trees

Single family is 48 % impervious of that 23 % is lawn and 29% UF