

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 8, 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
Megan Herzog
Craig Johnson
Jessica Jones
Stuart Niven
Shari Selch
Sarah Rehder
Michael Walton
Sandra Whiting
Andrew Zellers
Steve Zemke

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE

Guests

CM Lisa Herbold's office staff Alex Clardy

Public

Michael Oxman

Absent- Excused

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

Michael Oxman – Thanked the Commission for all their work and asked them to keep in mind that the Comp Plan has a goal of 40% canopy cover. The draft ordinance states that any trees over the goal in a certain property can be removed. The draft ordinance was written by Central Staff and they are not considering the higher goal.

Kathy Kerkoff – She is a native Seattleite who has lived in Ballard for 24 years. She feels the City talks a good talk about the environment, but given a choice between the environment and development, it always goes the way of development. She has seen many large trees removed in her street. What has been built are

town homes and 6-story apartment buildings. Four trees were planted in the planting strip in front of one of these developments. Two are dead, one is declining, and the fourth one probably won't make it. There is no ground preparation, no watering bags. Who is responsible for keeping these trees alive? She would like to urge people to look at the Small Water Cycle and see the desertification we are causing by tree removal and soil exposure. Seattle news.org published an article on April 14, 2018 about urban heat island effect showing the impact of increased heat and how people are dying because of higher temperatures.

Draft Tree Regulations Update Ordinance letter of recommendation

The UFC discussed. Some of the points made include:

Weston would like to first have a policy discussion based on a sheet he put together to guide the conversation. Steve talked about different pieces from the original code that were removed in the draft ordinance.

- Lidar data is not meant to be used to determine canopy cover to the parcel level. Expensive and cumbersome to implement. Will probably not get enough funding to be successful.
- A number of tools should be used jointly. iTools are actually accurate and can be accessed from a desktop but it's hard to determine whether something is a bush or a tree. A hybrid approach might be more effective.
- A home owner is not in control of the canopy that bleeds into their property from an adjacent property tree.
- Consider different standards for different zones and how zoning might change in the future. Probably multifamily development will increase, so then the tree canopy goal will be harder to achieve.
- Stick with individual tree removal as the basis. Enforcement would be very important.
- The equity piece is not properly solved.

The current draft ordinance appears to contain numerous ambiguities. The UFC would like to have a working meeting with CM Johnson, his staff, Central Staff, and other subject matter experts to discuss the draft ordinance. Sandra PdB will make the request and work to schedule the meeting.

The UFC will call an extraordinary meeting to discuss and vote on a letter of recommendation before the September 5 public hearing. Sandra PdB will coordinate. Weston will produce a draft letter of recommendation to be discussed

ACTION: A motion to request a meeting with CM Johnson, staff, Central Staff and other subject matter experts to have a working meeting with the UFC in advance of a letter of recommendation was made, seconded, and approved.

Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) update presentation

Sandra presented the process staff is undertaking to update the UFMP. She mentioned that the Urban Forestry Core Team (CT) is working on the update and they discussed changing the name of the plan back to "Management" instead of "Stewardship" to emphasize the need for City departments to continue to actively work to maintain and grow Seattle's urban forest.

The CT with representatives from OSE, OPCD, SCL, SDCI, SDOT, SPR, and SPU, is working on the plan update. Departments are also providing funding for the different elements of the plan. We began by establishing the purpose of the plan update: To improve interdepartmental vision and coordination on urban forestry efforts and make the document more meaningful to the public.

Update Key objectives:

- Define ***audience and plan purpose;***

- Redo **goals** to align with citywide and departmental goals and incorporate community input and currently underdeveloped topics like equity and risk management
- Redo **action agenda** to identify and prioritize new actions to align with the new plan goals.
- Update **monitoring** section to have clearer performance metrics and process for monitoring
- Inform **budget priorities**

The CT has been keeping the UF Management Team abreast of progress to make sure departmental leadership support the effort. The team agreed that specific pieces of work will need to be moved forward by sub-committees. We created the inclusive engagement sub-committee to create a plan to engage historically underrepresented communities.

In 2015, OSE applied the City’s Racial Equity Toolkit to the 2013 plan update and found that we didn’t do adequate inclusive engagement.

Public outreach will be carried out in two phases, with initial outreach focusing on inclusive engagement of historically under-represented communities and key stakeholders. The information gleaned from the first phase will inform the first draft of the update which then will be shared for public comment (Phase II).

The bulk of resources are focused on reaching out to historically underrepresented communities through SPU’s Community Connections, an inclusive engagement program administered by SPU’s Environmental Justice and Service Equity division. Its goal is to create sustainable partnerships that aim to improve quality of life for people of color, immigrant, refugee and low-income communities. We will work in partnership with CC to develop culturally tailored strategies and will be translating key materials to facilitate this work. We will translate to the top tier languages (Cantonese, mandarin, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese).

Several key principles were identified that shaped the engagement approach. They are:

- A commitment to the intentional engagement with historically under-represented communities:
 - As defined by the City's Equity and Environment Initiative (EEI): people of color, native peoples, low-income populations, linguistically isolated households, and foreign-born populations.
 - We seek to engage with these communities city-wide
 - The bulk of available resources for engagement will be dedicated to seeking input from these communities.
- Traditional key stakeholder groups will also be given opportunities to provide input prior to plan drafting: tree advocates, City implementation partners, and government agencies.
- All stakeholders will be engaged at a collaborative level.
- We will provide transparency by making all comments publicly available and posting a summary with staff feedback regarding resource availability and feasibility of submitted suggestions.

The CT would like to engage the Urban Forestry Commission throughout the plan update process and would like to come back in September to engage in a more in-depth conversation for the UFC to provide input to the values, goals, strategies and actions of the plan.

Besides getting input from underrepresented communities and key stakeholders, the CT will engage a consultant to do an initial assessment and technical review of the draft plan. The initial assessment will look at current departmental roles and perspectives and determine opportunities/challenges related to the plan’s goals, strategies, and actions. This effort will include analyzing current policies and programs using the [Vibrant Cities Lab Urban Forestry Assessment Tool](#) to assess current strengths and determine opportunities for improvement.

The CT issued an informal RFP, since this is a small engagement, with responses due at the end of August. This project deliverable will be a report on assessment findings and recommendations on gaps and opportunities in current programs and policies. The CT will incorporate feedback along with community input prior to beginning plan drafting.

Once CT have input from the community, key stakeholders and recommendations from the Initial Assessment we will incorporate that into the first draft plan. The CT will create the plan's goals, actions, performance metrics, and monitoring framework and will produce a webinar to share the content of the draft plan.

Once the draft plan is in place, we will ask the consultant that provided recommendations based on the Initial Assessment to do a technical review of the draft. The goals of the technical review are to:

- Get an external, experienced, and objective review to ensure the plan's goals, strategies, and actions are achievable and are moving Seattle in the right direction based on specific resource constraints.
- Include nation-wide best practices to leverage Seattle's circumstances
- Review plan metrics to ensure they reflect our actions and are connected to the plan's goals and outcomes.
- Recommend other improvements identified by the consultant to make the plan stronger and more impactful.

The consultant will produce a written report detailing the process followed, findings, and final recommendations.

We will share the draft plan with the community and key stakeholders as part of the public comment, which is the second phase of public engagement.

We will record the webinar to make sure people have a chance to watch it.

We will look at public comment input and the recommendations from the technical review and incorporate them into the draft plan.

We will produce a final draft for the Mayor to review and approve.

The last part of the plan update is to submit to City Council for their adoption

Update timeline:

- Inclusive engagement: July - October, 2018
- Initial assessment: August - October, 2018
- Plan goals, strategies and actions draft: Nov, 2018 - March, 2019
- Draft plan public comment: April - June, 2019
- Final plan production: July - November, 2019
- Submittal to Mayor's Office for approval: November, 2019

We want to make sure people are able to follow the plan update process. We are creating a webpage for the 2018 UFMP update and will include a link to the survey for people to provide input. We are going to be posting the comments (just like we did when we last updated the plan in 2013) and Sandra is going to be the point of contact

Councilmember Lisa Herbold visit

CM Herbold staff Alex Clardy attended in stead of the Councilmember who is still at Council chambers. They have concerns about the ordinance as drafted now. One of the concerns is that it doesn't include protection for exceptional trees. CM Herbold staff Newell Aldrich worked with then CM Licata on tree goals and legislation.

NOTE: the conversation with Alex Clardy was very detailed and the UFC notes are not exhaustive. For more details, please listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:
<http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocs.htm>

Public comment

Michael Oxman: Council Resolution 31138 introduced by Nick Licata in 2009 formed the UFC. Open Spaces Coalition and Organization for a better tree ordinance have not been invited to brief the UFC. Consider equivalent replacement of the asset.

New Business

None

Adjourn

Public input

None