

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)
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

September 12, 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
Stuart Niven
Shari Selch
Sarah Rehder
Sandra Whiting
Andrew Zellers
Steve Zemke

Absent- Excused

Whit Bouton
Craig Johnson
Jessica Jones
Bonnie Lei
Michael Walton

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Jon Layzer - SDOT
Aditi Kambuj - SDOT

Guests

Carri Ferrence – City Fruit

Aaron Asis – On the Battery
Jon Kiehnau – On the Battery
CM Lisa Herbold

Public

None

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 August 1, 8 and 31 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the August 1 meeting notes as written was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the August 8 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the August 31 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

City Fruit

Carrie Ferrence, Executive Director of City Fruit.

City Fruit is officially harvesting, and they are very busy. She brought fruit for treats.

2018 is their 10-year anniversary. When they first started they only served a few communities, now they are serving the whole of Seattle.

City Fruit's mission: put Seattle's fruit trees to their best and fullest use, so that everyone in our community shares in the value of fruit.

City Fruit's goals are:

- Grow the harvest
- Make the best & fullest use of fruit
- Ground out work in Seattle's communities
- Enhance organizational capacity
- Make sure everyone benefits from the harvest

The Great Seattle Fruit Harvest

2018 represented their biggest expansion: they grew to serve all of Seattle and reached into South King County.

Their growth:

- Already harvested more than 25,000 pounds of fruit
- Registered more than 200 new trees
- Will host up to 15 harvest hubs, with volunteer harvesters
- Will collect fruit from 100 harvest boxes, to increase efficiency

Stewardship and Education:

They re-launched their education workshops to include an active stewardship component, to reach a more diverse population; embed their work deeply in service, and connect more neighbors to the City's orchards

Their impact:

- Engaged several hundred volunteers in direct service
- Graduated 18 new master fruit tree stewards
- Trained 4 new orchard stewards to support City trees
- Training workshops resulted in care for additional 50 City trees

Youth programming

More than 300 underserved youth connected to their City's orchards and harvest through their Harvest Club and Harvest Team programs.

The training program:

- 20 middle schoolers became trained as Master Fruit Tree Stewards
- 1 intern trained as Harvest Team member
- Youth worked together to assess and map trees at three orchards

Save Seattle's apples:

They launched their third year of the campaign to protect our City's apple and pear trees!

Their reach:

- Distributed 10,000 pest prevention packs across Seattle
- Netted more than 50 trees in public spaces
- Launched a pilot study of net & design efficiency at Meridian
- Distributed more than 100 yard signs to participating homes

Tree care services

They launched tree care services in January and blew past their annual projections by may

Their services

- Tree care assessments
- Pruning
- Netting

City Fruit has grown by increasing efficiency in collection and have achieved dramatic growth in engagement and volunteerism.

What's next:

- Dig deeper into the City's collective orchard
 - o Break down barriers to the trees and fruit
 - o Create a comprehensive map of city's fruit trees
- Continue to increase efficiency in collection
- Invest more in community engagement and volunteerism
- Update City contract
 - o Align the value of the contract with the value of the work
 - o Focus the contract on public trees, volunteerism, and youth programming
 - o They will work with Department of Neighborhoods and Parks to update the contract which has been the same since 2014.

They want to encourage people to think of their fruit tree as part of a larger orchard ecosystem.

UFC question: what are other sources of funding?

Answer: Annual budget is \$300K, City funding in 2018 is \$68,000, the rest comes from community donations, their membership program, and grants. They sell some of their fruit and collect for fruit tree services. Do have corporate sponsors.

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

Battery street project

Jon Layzer works in SDOT. He's been working on the Alaskan Way Viaduct and decommissioning the Battery street tunnel. They looked at potential adaptive re-use of the tunnel for transportation and open space uses. The bottom line is that it's a structure built in 1950s that has failed. It looks as a free asset we should use but in reality, it's a liability. Retrofitting it for safe use by people would have cost over \$100M and were no feasible alternatives to re-use the tunnel. The tunnel being filled in takes care of the safety concerns. The lid is a structural component that will remain, as will the utilities currently in place (SCL electrical systems, etc.). There are barriers to planting street trees on top of the tunnel, but once it's filled, there might be opportunity to plant trees.

The utilities present a challenge in terms of what type of trees might be able to be accommodated. They have been in conversation with WSDOT to find ways to beautify the street. It will be expensive to plant trees due to excavation costs and soil availability. One option could be above-ground planting. There are several challenges to consider: Loading, sight distances, CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design), etc. WSDOT will be filling the tunnel in the next 18 months.

UFC question: are you compacting the fill-in material.

Answer: the fill needs to meet compaction standards for any City street. They'll do some combination of placing regular fill (not good for trees), and then use cement material to retire the structural liability (especially in case of an earthquake).

UFC question: who owns the right-of-way?

Answer: SDOT does.

UFC question: what's on top of the tunnel?

Answer: Battery street is on top and will remain. It's one of the most transited streets with the E line running through it.

UFC question: does SDOT has minimum standards for greening a street with businesses?

Answer: working on increasing the ability for people to comply with their requirements.

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Jon Kiehnau and Aaron Asis from On the Battery:

Provided the context on the neighborhood. This present an opportunity to make Battery street more walkable.

Would like to explore opportunities to enhance the area for the community before the tunnel is filled. Look at connecting this area with the waterfront. There was a purpose for the street to look the way it looked for the past 65 years (because of the tunnel). There is no longer that need. And the street can look differently for the community moving forward.

The group's next steps are:

- Develop strategic project guideline
- Identify potential project partners
- Initiate preliminary project discussion
- Develop collaborative agreement
- Create implementation strategy
- Secure funding to develop plan.

Jon lives on Vine street which is very beautiful with rain gardens and some trees. Bell street had challenges around utilities. The street is busy north of 3rd/4th. There is an opportunity to find a way to green the street. Because it's empty under the lid right now, this could be an opportunity to think about tree planting now.

UFC question: does the re-development of the waterfront touches this area?

Answer: no, it's not included. The waterfront plan extends to Bell.

UFC question: is there an estimate for how much it would cost to plant trees?

Answer: SDOT doesn't have that estimate

UFC question: is there an estimate for tree planting cost in the future (if WSDOT doesn't provide planting).
Answer: he doesn't have the funding or staff capacity to do at this time.

The UFC would advocate for at least have a minimum standard for tree planting in the ROW. The UFC will consider issuing a letter of recommendation to that effect.

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CM Herbold visit

CM Herbold joined the UFC. A statement came out today from PLUZ committee addressing critical elements of the content of the ordinance, and community requests on process and timing. The statement addresses:

- Replacement is not sufficient
- Need to consider how we are measuring trees
- Protection for street groves
- Funding to enforce the ordinance
- Commitment to considering the next step of the ordinance after budget.
- Identifies some of the things that have already been included in the ordinance due to community input.

It's been unusual for the public to see a bill that hasn't been formally introduced to council and a committee. The idea was to give opportunity to the community to provide input. In terms of exceptional tree protection, her proposal will be to replicate current Exceptional trees.

CM Herbold will send an editable version of the current draft and mark it up for her to consider. Sandra to follow up.

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Public comment

None

New Business

None

Adjourn

Public input

From: MartinWesterman <artartart@seanet.com>

Sent: Friday, September 07, 2018 3:16 PM

To: Johnson, Rob <Rob.Johnson@seattle.gov>; Herbold, Lisa <Lisa.Herbold@seattle.gov>; O'Brien, Mike <Mike.O'Brien@seattle.gov>; Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto_de_Bader@Seattle.gov>; Finn Coven, Jessica <Jessica.FinnCoven@seattle.gov>

Subject: Fwd: Is OSE at the table?

Greetings, Esteemed Leaders,

The Council meeting Wednesday, Sept. 5, helped me appreciate your challenges in crafting a new tree ordinance. Thank you for your work so far.

As I noted in my comments, however, there are several items missing from the draft you are crafting:

- a statement of value: trees are necessities, not amenities. The value of natural capital is perpetual, and needs to be stewarded. The value of grey capital (built environment, vehicles, etc.) is temporary. As I noted, Seattle's green infrastructure is worth \$2 billion a year in benefits and savings — including public health (incl. reducing depression), oxygen production, absorbing carbon, filtering water, controlling erosion, providing habitat.
- (That number is extrapolated from the 2011 Trust for Public Lands \$500 million valuation of Seattle Parks' benefits & savings. As Parks only occupy 11% of Seattle's area, and 67% of Seattle trees sit on private land, \$2 billion worth of natural capital value city-wide is a conservative estimate).
- Without stating a clear value for natural capital, it doesn't matter which classes of trees you allow to cut and which to keep, where they can be cut and where replaced are moot. It's not value-based, it's administrative.
- A requirement that departments coordinate their efforts: SDOT already conducts a tree inventory; OSE is an unused, or overlooked but logical monitoring & enforcement arm, the City Attorney would back OSE and SDCI, which must review and approve permits. These departments must work together
- Why was no OSE representative sitting at the table?
- Arborist certification for tree evaluation is unenforceable; it also supports not valuing trees, rather than valuing them.
- Require that replacement trees contribute to biodiversity
- Incorporate all the 2010 Urban Forestry Commission guidelines
- Show a clear pathway stating that the proposed changes will get Seattle to a healthy 30% canopy cover?
- Offer economic incentives to move citizens toward tree (and natural capital) stewardship. They can be separate, through SDCI, or incorporated into the Proposed Tree Ordinance
- Make a clear statement on how the Proposed Tree Ordinance complements other city plans and goals — tree canopy increase, carbon reduction, natural capital stewardship, social justice, etc.
- Use best practices. Nowhere in either the Wednesday hearing and ordinance proposal was any reference made to best urban practices we can incorporate from successful examples in other cities (Portland, OR, Ithaca, NY)
- Likewise, neither at the hearing or in the proposal is any discussion of science & economic analysis that support the proposed ordinance. Changes to legislation should be based on scientific and economic data.

As I noted Wednesday, if private sector executives didn't account for two billion dollars worth of company assets, the board of directors would fire them. Yet the City Council has been sitting on that much in assets for years, and not accounted for a penny of them. One might ask how that is possible?

None of this is news to you. Most of you — Councilmembers Bagshaw, Harrell, O'Brien and Sawant — voted unanimously to study natural capital in the 2015 natural capital SLI. As a staffer, now-Council Member Herbold helped write that SLI on which you voted yea — for Council sponsors Licata and Rasmussen. But you only voted yes on a statement of intent, not a commitment.

You can't intend to meet goals, like increasing Seattle's tree canopy, stewarding its natural assets, or reducing its carbon output, and succeed. Basically, that's like that sad little blue sign Seattle posts at bridges and ferry docks: "Waiting? Please turn off your engine. Idling pollutes." Please increase tree canopy. Please don't negatively affect public health.

You must commit and take action. The Tree Ordinance is a step in the right direction. Funding the natural capital consultant is an equally strong step, and long overdue, that would help the tree ordinance succeed.

I urge you to take those actions, improve Seattle's resilience, livability and sustainability., and meet the goals you and other Councils have been setting since Seattle signed on to the Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement in 2007.

Thank you,
Martin Westerman