

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)
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

November 7, 2018

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners

Weston Brinkley – chair
Whit Bouton
Craig Johnson
Jessica Jones
Bonnie Lei
Sarah Rehder
Michael Walton
Sandra Whiting
Andrew Zellers
Steve Zemke

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Chanda Emery - SDCI

Guests

Garrett Esperum
Thomas Palm
Matt Van Deren

Public

John Brosnan
Joshua Morris

Absent- Excused

Joanna Nelson de Flores – vice-chair
Stuart Niven
Shari Selch

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 October 10 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the October 10 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Discovery Park inventory and assessment

Garrett Esperum spoke about this collaborative project. He mentioned that this is an initiative they are working closely with SPR. Parks is in the process of updating vegetation management plan from 2002. The group wanted to think bigger and holistically to create an online platform to track metrics AND CHOSE Discovery Park as a pilot project.

Partners they are working with include: UW's Department of Geography (main developers of the platform within ARC GIS system), Seattle Audubon, Friends of Discovery Park, Earth Economics, Tableau, the Trust for Public Land, Seattle Green Spaces Coalition, Seattle Trails, ICF, Green Seattle Partnership, and Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Since 2010 there have been significant landscape changes to the park. Areas of the Park are being reforested and, in a few months, it will be open to the public.

Why they chose to start with this park?

- Current vegetation management plan is 16 years old
- The park has a breadth of landscape topography, flora and fauna.
- There are active stakeholder organizations
- There are many ongoing restoration projects
- Usage patterns will be considered
- Size and complexity

The Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) platform attempts to consolidate a number of booklets including:

- The Discovery Park Master Plan
- Vegetation Management Plan
- Forest Steward Field Guide
- Grassland & Thicket Management
- Fort Lawton Landmark District
- Native Pollinator Habitat Restoration Guide
- Daybreak Star Vegetation & Management Plan
- Soft surface Trails Management Plan
- Wetland Best Management Practices
- Forest restoration Related to Breeding Birds
- Preventative Tree Maintenance Program
- GSP Reference Map/Targeted Forest types

They are looking for one holistic platform (Garrett shared the [link](#) with the Commission). They have created their own database to populate with partner and collaborator databases. They will also be looking at different development plans for improvements and assess impacts.

They collaborated with Earth Economics to determine how do Seattle's green/open spaces affect the whole system. They are trying to track how many trees have been planted and how many benefits they are providing, but also look at how those efforts fit inside the regional strategy.

The lack of a coordinated vision continues to be an issue. But just looking at the quantity of rules and guidelines, there is a need for coordination. They hope that this platform would provide a single place for all this information to reside.

Seattle Audubon's neighborhood flyways project is looking at elevating the importance of protecting habitat in Seattle. They run a community science program: Neighborhood Bird Project. The goals of Neighborhood Flyways are:

- Connect habitat corridors across our urban landscape
- Elevate the importance of protecting habitat within Seattle, and
- Conserve green space that benefits all of Seattle's residents and wildlife.

The project has been running volunteer-led surveys for Discovery Park since 2003 and provides the potential to document effect of habitat restoration to bird populations. This is an opportunity to aggregate bird observation data by species by year. They can track changes over time based on changes in environmental conditions. But it's problematic to aggregate data if the protocols are not the same. They are hoping to use all the data Seattle Audubon has with what GSP is doing and what SPR is doing.

Earth Economics produced a report on The Natural Value of Discovery Park. They are using Bullitt Foundation grant to participate in this project. Earth Economics is a leader in ecological economics, and has provided innovative analysis and recommendations to government, tribes, organization, private firms, and communities around the world. Natural capital performs natural functions that provide goods and services that humans need to survive. They focus on ecosystem services as quantifiable benefits humans receive from nature. They provide support to be able to speak of these benefits in terms of dollar figures.

They worked on determining the value of the natural capital of Seattle's Discovery Park including:

- Air regulation: \$55,000/year
- Carbon storage & sequestration: \$100,000/year
- Climate stability: \$226,000-\$375,000/year
- Water quality & storage: \$203,000 - \$469,000/year
- Biological control: \$6,000/year
- Habitat: \$14,000/year

Something that they haven't considered yet is the recreational value. They try to use local data as much as possible to establish the value of ecosystem services provided by Discovery Park. They are looking at starting this type of platform to be able to calculate the benefits (economic valuation) provided by all Seattle's parks and open spaces.

Garrett shared with the UFC current functionality of the system that volunteers have been working on. They are interested in getting this work properly funded by the City. Functionality includes:

- 2018 land cover classification and carbon sequestration valuation
- Visitation analysis
- Weed index surface map
- Moisture index surface map
- Plant community map
- Plant community use by birds map (horizontal)
- Ecosystem services calculator
- Before and after analysis
- Land cover type (based on selected aerial imagery)
- Partner data layers
- Bird count data correlated to vegetation classes
- Illustrative 'living' vegetation management plan
- Stewardship connection - communication tracking, and
- Collector-based CRUD (Create, Read, Update, Delete) analysis tool. "Development Path" forecasting using Earth Economics Ecosystem Services Discovery Park data.

UFC question/comment: Could this effort help the City determine whether we are moving closer to our 30% canopy cover goal? And it would also be important to determine tree species and condition.

Answer: as long as the data exists, they can plug it in.

Garrett's ask of the UFC is to bring this effort to the attention of the powers that be and to figure out how to support this type of effort throughout Seattle. He would also appreciate the UFC feedback.

UFC comment: when the City looks at canopy cover, it doesn't necessarily account for tree types (whether it's native or not). It's important to have the biomass to support wildlife. Consider different elements: bigger trees are more valued, user type, etc.

The UFC will consider a letter of support to encourage the City to use this type of platform to aggregate data. Sarah will get a draft started.

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>

UFMP update listening session continues

- a. What are the Urban Forest Commission's goals for the next 5 years? How would you like to work with the City in the future?

Goals for next five years:

- Establish a new goal for UF that is not a canopy cover (CC) number and is a better proxy for how UF is doing.
- Increasing the CC goal above 30%.
- Look at three-dimensional measure of canopy.
- Look at seasonality as well. Conifer vs. deciduous.
- Integration. Departments, data, benefits – bring different things together to work towards the common goal: integrated budget, policies, etc.
- Passage of new tree ordinance and monitoring implementation and success. Do necessary work to make it successful. Changes if needed.
- Look towards what comes after hitting the CC goal.
- Like to receive letters from the public and be aware of issues.
- Tree ordinance rollout. First hearing in Council Chambers is a problem (should start at community events, festivals, etc.)
- Update on an annual basis on how the new tree protection ordinance is doing. Ongoing tweaks.
- Get beyond just doing letters and maybe creating some products more directly related to community education - which seemed to be a key issue for commissions.

Working with the City

- Works toward improving the relationship with City staff so they come to the UFC first. The UFC could contribute with the expertise around the table. Use UFC as a sounding board for UF issues early in the process.
- Have meetings where things are generally discussed and incorporate UFC feedback early on. The more interaction, the better ideas.
- Include UFC members in the strategic conversations with the Urban Forestry Core Team (CT) as they develop the UFMP update.

- It sometimes feels very reactive and ad-hoc. UFC gets bits and pieces of info from different departments. Hard to tie a thread throughout all of those bits of information. Have an annual brief snapshot from every department to understand what each dept is trying to do in the next year. To guide UFC input throughout the year.
- Integrated group (CT)
- Communicate better with other boards and find ways to collaborate
- Clarify the role the UFC has with the public – not clearly defined.
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- b. How can the City better communicate with the general public?
 - T4S newsletter, Mayor’s weekly – hard to keep up with those. More interactive ways to present information? Maybe incorporate art and other means to communicate.
 - More education to tree service providers – more effort on educating this group.
 - Tree festival – i.e. what Cass Turnbull did years ago, as a way to celebrate our trees.
 - Educating the public will be crucial for the new ordinance and tree-care practices. Might get into this with the UFMP update. Maybe there is a way for the UFC to get more involved to look at different ways to do that.
 - The communications are mostly opt-in. Think of ways for information be distributed more broadly.
 - Maybe information at hardware stores as an example.
 - A “hackathon” could be a great way to get people involved. Create events to draw people and get them engaged with the topic.
 - Lowes and Home Depot – a project to evaluate what the stores offer in terms of tree species, sale of invasives, clone trees, etc.
 - What’s the UFC’s role vis-à-vis UF with the public – mouth piece, sounding board, etc.?
 - UF policy should begin in community spaces, events, locations – not at Council chambers.
 - Better communicate the value of trees to the community. Strengthen the outreach to communicate why we are doing UF work.
 - Don’t engage with community only when there are problems with trees.

Tree regulations language discussion continues

The Commission discussed the initial draft and provided feedback. Weston will incorporate the changes and bring a revised draft for discussion at the November 14 meeting.

For more details on the discussion please listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:

<http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocs.htm>

Public comment

None

New Business

None

Adjourn

Public input

From: seattleposa@googlegroups.com <seattleposa@googlegroups.com> **On Behalf Of** Michael Oxman

Sent: Tuesday, October 23, 2018 12:07 PM

To: Graves, David <David.Graves@seattle.gov>; Jainga, Jon <Jon.Jainga@seattle.gov>; Williams, Christopher <Christopher.Williams@seattle.gov>

Subject: [SeattlePOSA] Public comment on bike path proposal in Cheasty Greenspace

Howdy Parks staff,

Please accept my statement for the public comment period that ends Monday, October 29th, 2018.

The proposed Cheasty bike trail does not account for unknown tree root damage by excavation of soil and removal of associated understory plants, along with duff that insulates the forest floor.

The failed plantings from previous forest restoration attempts show that predictions are imprecise about how the site modifications will affect existing trees and other steep slope conditions.

This steep slope has a feeder root zone that is twice the diameter of the dripline of the trees, as shown in the diagram at SMC 25.11.050. The feeder root zone is not noted in the plans.

The proposed plan does not recognize that all of the proximate vegetation must be removed to accomplish the grade changes. This clearcutting will change the temperature, humidity and other factors

Preservation of the vegetation is the only solution for the problem of erosion. The qualities of the wetland areas would be reduced to prevent ecologic function.

Offsite effects will occur from the project site drying out in some parts, and concentrating water in other parts. The proposal would negatively affect the housing development and P-Patch downhill, and the uphill road, city utility yard, and golf course.

Thanks!

Michael Oxman
(206) 949-8733

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