

## SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Weston Brinkley (Position #3 – University), Chair • Steve Zemke (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist), Vice-Chair  
Sarah Rehder (Position #4 – Hydrologist) • Stuart Niven (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA)  
Michael Walton (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA) • Joshua Morris (Position #7 – NGO)  
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*

**July 10, 2019**

### Meeting Notes

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

#### Attending

##### Commissioners

Steve Zemke - Chair  
Steven Fry  
Bonnie Lei  
Josh Morris  
Stuart Niven  
Sarah Rehder  
Shari Selch  
Michael Walton

##### Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE  
Brian Chu – CM Bagshaw’s office  
Jon Layzer - SDOT

##### Guests

Elijah Selch  
Aaron Assis – Community group Recharge the Battery

##### Absent- Excused

Weston Brinkley – Chair  
Whit Bouton  
Jessica Jones

##### Public

Laura Keil  
Billie Guillott  
Nat Goodby

**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

#### Silvia Terra project

Bonnie briefing the group on the Silvia Terra project that she leads at Microsoft. Microsoft is working on innovation in the computer science space to be able to handle larger amounts of data. Learning technology (Artificial intelligence or AI) has yet to be applied to environmental science. Artificial Intelligence for Earth empowers people and organizations to solve global environmental challenges through technological innovation.

AI for Earth works on four areas:

- Agriculture: to feed the growing world population
- Water: to conserve and protect water sources
- Biodiversity: to monitor and protect species from extinction
- Climate change: to reduce climate change impact on communities

They curate and store key environmental data sets on the cloud; develop a back-end infrastructure to allow for the sharing of the data; develop algorithms, APIs (application programming interface), and applications.

They work with different types of organizations: nonprofit, private and public sectors. SilviaTerra is a small company based out of the Bay Area. They use cutting-edge satellite imagery and machine learning to transform how conservationists and landowners inventory forests, producing more accurate data while saving time and money. Their process is:

1. Satellite imagery: satellites capture high-resolution images of the entire continental US.
2. Microsoft Azure: Satellite imagery is stored on Azure, where SilviaTerra pairs it with field data from the US Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis program to train machine-learning models for predicting the sizes and species of trees.
3. Detailed forest maps: SilviaTerra uses Azure HDInsight to apply these machine-learning models to terabytes of satellite imager covering all forests in the US.
4. Improved insights: the first ever high-resolution, tree-level map of the continental US provides conservationists, governments, and landowners with unprecedented information about their forests. Better data drives better forest management, helping improve ecological, social, and economic outcomes for America's forest owners.

They have created the first nation-wide map of the continental US covering 537 million acres and capturing 92 billion trees. Microsoft has been working on increasing computation capacity.

Land cover classification use cases:

- Deforestation (contractual obligations – save 20% of land)
- Coastal resiliency
- Monitoring flood waters
- Preparing for class 3 hurricane
- Urban planning
- Figure out the best places to plant trees
- Landslide prediction and root cause analysis.

Land cover maps help visualize everything that covers the earth. Armed with highly accurate spatial data, conservationists can precisely track changes in the landscape over time, helping them address environmental challenges and develop climate resilient communities. The mapping process includes:

- Land area to study is identified
- Imagery of the studied area is collected from platforms like drones, airplanes, and satellites.
- Microsoft Azure stores all this data for ready access by AI systems.
- *BatchAI* leverages hundreds of opportunities to train the model
- *GeoAI* expedites the processing of new imagery, providing rapid mapping results.
- Detailed maps give researchers insights to monitor climate change, understand the impacts of urbanization, and better plan for natural disasters.

Commissioners asked questions.

**NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive, especially for the Q&A portion of the presentation. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:**

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

### **Recharge the Battery/Belltown Orchard and P-Patch**

Aaron Assis, community member representing Recharge the Battery, reminded the group that in the fall they did a presentation about the potential opportunities with the decommissioning of the viaduct.

They recalibrated their efforts and they looked at other opportunities to provide more greenery to the neighborhood.

West and South Portals are the focus of today's presentation.

Connections between Denny Park and the new Waterfront. Denny park has a lot of mature trees and this connector would be very important for the neighborhood.

Battery street is pretty grim, it has no greenery and most businesses avoid having frontages on Battery.

West Portal site:

- It's where the viaduct began elevating. This is the staging area for the decommissioning of the viaduct through the end of 2020.
- The site is not doing much at the moment.

Portal update:

1. Advocate to change plan to fill the west portal
2. Provisions for flat landscape for meaningful greenscapes
3. Preserve aspects of Belltown's infrastructural history
4. Design to preserve views and provide gathering space
5. Develop p-patch and urban orchard for community use
6. Incorporate large trees for air and stormwater.

20 ft grade change between 1st and Western can provide opportunities to plant larger trees.

They are looking at all the different opportunities from large trees providing canopy, to fruit trees, to areas for people to explore.

Aaron shared renderings of potential ideas for different uses of the site.

The UFC asked questions including the needs WSDOT and SDOT have. An example is the structural condition and where maybe the fill material will provide stability.

Jon Layzer (SDOT) explained that those walls were constructed at the same time of the tunnel (60-70 years old), additional analysis would need to be done and potentially rebuild stability to those structures if they are not filled. Safety standards for pedestrians would also need to be considered. Leaving the walls exposed might cause problems.

Jon stressed that any changes at this point, any change will cost money and WSDOT is open to changing things as long as Seattle pays the cost. SDOT and SPR would need to start planning for an alternative use and provide budget for the planning to take place and for implementation of the plan.

A commissioner asked about alternative uses for the site. An elementary school is of interest for the school district. The potential idea is to build an elementary school with a park on the top. But the plan's timeline would be at least six years away. CM Bagshaw is supportive of a temporary use that would be responsive to the community priorities.

The community is confident that they can come up with design solutions that can accommodate a school in the future. The community wants something in the nearer future vs waiting until the school is built. They want to leave the door open to accommodate the school, but really would like to weigh in on interim solutions for a green space.

The community is interested in having something, even if it's temporary, that provides more value than a grassy area partially fenced. Maybe look at frontages of the site that could accommodate permanent trees?

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

#### **Strategy conversation around tree protection ordinance update**

CM Bagshaw asked the UFC to help circulate the draft with the UFC input. A good way for OSE to support this would be to post the draft on the UFC website and gather public input and post it so it's public.

#### **Public comment**

None

#### **New Business**

None

#### **Adjourn**

#### **Public input:**

**(see posted notes)**

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**From:** David Moehring <dmoehring@consultant.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 07, 2019 12:21 PM  
**To:** DOT\_SeattleTrees <Seattle.Trees@seattle.gov>; DOT\_LA <DOT\_LA@seattle.gov>; SCI\_Code\_Compliance <SCI\_Code\_Compliance@seattle.gov>  
**Cc:** Roberts, Ben <Ben.Roberts@seattle.gov>; Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto\_de\_Bader@Seattle.gov>  
**Subject:** Missing Street Trees for 3400 23RD AVE W (3026260)

**CAUTION: External Email**

There is still no sign of the two to three missing trees that were to be planted within the ROW ... and now it appears as if the property developer has sold the 3 townhouse units at over \$850,000 each.

Rhetorically, does this mean the green calculations are null and void and that the buildings' 20% bonus floor area will be removed in compliance with the Seattle Municipal Code? Realistically, what does it take to get these trees planted - which a small price to pay with so much revenues generated from the sale.

The lack of the alley's parking backing distance of being about 4 to 5 less than 22 feet is a bigger problem. If this was permitted, who will be accountable?

David Moehring AIA NCARB  
Concerned neighbor  
3444B 23rd Ave W

**Sent:** Monday, April 01, 2019 at 9:21 AM  
**From:** "DOT\_SeattleTrees" <[Seattle.Trees@seattle.gov](mailto:Seattle.Trees@seattle.gov)>  
**To:** "David Moehring" <[dmoehring@consultant.com](mailto:dmoehring@consultant.com)>  
**Cc:** "Roberts, Ben" <[Ben.Roberts@seattle.gov](mailto:Ben.Roberts@seattle.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: 3026260 Street Trees for 3400 23RD AVE W

Hello David

Since the planting strips are sub standard at that location, the tree planting requirement was to put trees in the right of way on the back side of the sidewalk. There has been no communication from us, waiving a tree requirement since our initial communications to them back in January and March of 2017.

NR



**NOLAN RUNDQUIST**

*City Arborist*

[Seattle Department of Transportation](#)

Maintenance and Operations Division

**Urban Forestry/Asphalt-Concrete Paving &**

**Engineering/ROW Infrastructure Maintenance/Emergency Response**

ISA Certified Arborist / Municipal Specialist PN-1624AM

206-615-0957 (Tel)

**From:** David Moehring <[dmoehring@consultant.com](mailto:dmoehring@consultant.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 01, 2019 8:56 AM  
**To:** DOT\_SeattleTrees <[Seattle.Trees@seattle.gov](mailto:Seattle.Trees@seattle.gov)>  
**Subject:** 3026260 Street Trees for 3400 23RD AVE W

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you!

If possible, please check on a project on my block wrapping up shortly.

The approved Plan set shows 5 trees to be added to the development - and there has been zero (0) trees planted with small bushes and floral plants being installed last week. This corner needs some trees, for sure.

Check out the set: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/GetDocument.aspx?id=3615047>

[Approved Plan Set](#) 17 MB 02/22/18 [3026260-LU](#) Master Use Permit

David Moehring  
3444 23rd Ave W  
312-965-0634

**Sent:** Monday, April 01, 2019 at 8:32 AM

**From:** "DOT\_SeattleTrees" <[Seattle.Trees@seattle.gov](mailto:Seattle.Trees@seattle.gov)>

**To:** "David Moehring" <[dmoehring@consultant.com](mailto:dmoehring@consultant.com)>, DOT\_LA <[DOT\\_LA@seattle.gov](mailto:DOT_LA@seattle.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: 6627537 Street Tree removal at 6712 22nd ave NW

Hello David

I checked the permit for that address, and it does include the requirement for a new tree to be planted.  
NR



**NOLAN RUNDQUIST**

*City Arborist*

[Seattle Department of Transportation](#)

Maintenance and Operations Division

***Urban Forestry/Asphalt-Concrete Paving &  
Engineering/ROW Infrastructure Maintenance/Emergency  
Response***

ISA Certified Arborist / Municipal Specialist PN-1624AM  
206-615-0957 (Tel)

**From:** David Moehring <[dmoehring@consultant.com](mailto:dmoehring@consultant.com)>

**Sent:** Sunday, March 31, 2019 5:24 PM

**To:** DOT\_SeattleTrees <[Seattle.Trees@seattle.gov](mailto:Seattle.Trees@seattle.gov)>; DOT\_LA <[DOT\\_LA@seattle.gov](mailto:DOT_LA@seattle.gov)>

**Subject:** 6627537 Street Tree removal at 6712 22nd ave NW

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear DOT arborist,

Please clarify with the permit to remove a street tree at 6712 22nd Ave NW also includes replacement within the right-of-way.

It appear that the proposed single family house of 3800 square feet is removing the tree for a driveway.

Thank you,

David Moehring  
TreePAC Board member

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**From:** Annie Thoe <annie@sensingvitality.com>

**Sent:** Friday, June 07, 2019 8:47 AM

**To:** Mockos, Alexander <Alexander.Mockos@seattle.gov>; Scarlett, Holly <Holly.Scarlett@seattle.gov>

**Cc:** Pacheco, Abel <Abel.Pacheco@seattle.gov>; O'Brien, Mike <Mike.O'Brien@seattle.gov>; Herbold, Lisa <Lisa.Herbold@seattle.gov>; Juarez, Debora <Debora.Juarez@seattle.gov>; Gonzalez, Lorena <Lorena.Gonzalez@seattle.gov>; Mosqueda, Teresa <Teresa.Mosqueda@seattle.gov>; Sawant, Kshama <Kshama.Sawant@seattle.gov>; Harrell, Bruce <Bruce.Harrell@seattle.gov>; Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto\_de\_Bader@Seattle.gov>; PRC <PRC@seattle.gov>; Durkan, Jenny <Jenny.Durkan@seattle.gov>

**Subject:** Concern over legality in developer clearcutting in swale area & upcoming developments

**CAUTION: External Email**

Dear Ms.Scarlett and Mr. Mockos, (and Seattle City officials)

We have a serious problem in our **neighborhood swale area** with **several developments** removing or **clearcutting mass amounts of mature, native tall trees** to be replaced with mini-mansions (3000'+with 400-500'garages) which will be packed into a lot that was priorly wooded with beautiful native trees and singing birds.

The permit issued in this case called "Victory Pines" indicated this area was not deemed "environmentally sensitive." (See photos and permit information below)

One of the trees in this recent clearcut on **11345 - 20th Ave NE, Seattle** was exceptional, healthy and over 200 years old. We have photos to document this and the developer is suspiciously fast to build — in just two weeks they've emptied and demo'd house, cleared the entire lot of trees, removed everything and now putting in the sewer lines. Neighbors including myself have issued complaints about the permit and inspection process and not heard back from the zoning and permit department- meanwhile building continues.

We feel extremely concerned since **the block east of this clear-cut development is on a sensitive land-slide area and also targeted for major development by this same developer and in the water run-off path.** Those two lots have stands of some of the most exceptional old growth trees in North Seattle. An environmental impact of this project must not have been done.

Audubon and many birders recognize this area as prime habitat for multiple species and the only nesting area in the city for Merlins. When Gamut-360 clearcut the trees, the birds went crazy— screaming all day long over the destruction of their nests. Our neighbors are horrified and devastated by the loss: a giant gaping hole in the canopy, damage to nearby trees from heavy equipment and now lack of protection from the sun for their own habitat, air quality and water retention.

**Can your department of Combined Sewer Overflows, groundwater and watershed people — work with the city council and zoning/permit folks, EPA to help put pressure for stronger inspections, zoning and ordinances to prevent this environmental and financial impact from continuing?** This abuse of our land and environment should be a crime— not just a fine— and this developer was not fined as of yet. The damage they've done is so extensive and permanent. The developer clearcut 32 trees (one was 42 inches — over 200+ years old, the neighbor counted 200 rings in the tree). Preserving and protecting old growth and mature trees reflects a mission to provide diverse and healthy communities. Isn't healthy old growth protected in Seattle? in our State?

**What can you do to help protect our neighborhoods from flooding, landslides, deforestation, etc? What can we as neighbors do to protect our trees?**

A group of neighbors have contacted the City Council, the media and many other organizations, but two other large critical lots full of old growth trees have been bought by this same developer only one block east and slotted to be developed with 7 mansions- ~3000 foot homes with ~500 foot garages.

I'm concerned about the impending zoning legislation to allow all single-family lots to build tri-plexes. **We need to also restrict allowing permits for mini-mansions for single family homes in the city to be built that extend beyond a reasonable footprint which removes forest canopy.** 3000 foot developments use up our resources in numerous ways. Developers will find away to justify logging lots like this with large and exceptional stands of trees by hiring arborists who say the trees will be a "danger" or need to be removed for the development.

**The tree ordinance laws stand now with little or no protection or enforcement for mature trees and stands of trees.** If Cambridge, MA city council can issue a one-year moratorium on tree cutting, I believe we in this "Emerald City" can do that, too.

**\*We need to issue a moratorium on tree cutting of native and exceptional trees,** declaring these areas environmentally sensitive until we have better protection to prevent atrocious like this.

**\*We also need a moratorium on single family footprint size** as well to ensure sustainability building in Seattle.

This kind of development in removal of mature trees will not only impact trees but are air quality, storm water runoff, water quality, soil erosion, temperature increase, livability, etc.

We want to protect these other critical lots in our area, truly gems in North Seattle and also our region at large. **Would you please forward the email request to anyone in your departments who might help us? I'm CC'ing this to City Council, Zoning, Sustainability and the Mayor but hope you can contact them as well to come up with solutions with this issue.** I have a list of working suggestions I'm attaching here.

Thank you so much for your assistance and how we can also help protect and preserve our precious region!

Sincerely,

Annie Thoe

This is just one tree among many trees of the two lots to be developed by this same developer - Gammut360 on **11340-23rd NE, Seattle 98125**





**Clear Cut on 20th NE:**

**11345 - 20th Ave NE** Record Number:6621671-CN 3030 square feet **473 soft detached garage**

<https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/Portal/Cap/CapDetail.aspx?Module=DPDPermits&capID1=17HST&capID2=00000&capID3=70510&agencyCode=SEATTLE>

**11347 20th Ave. NE** Record Number:6621656-CN **3261 square feet with 582 soft detached garage**

<https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/Portal/cap/CapDetail.aspx?type=1000&fromACA=Y&agencyCode=SEATTLE&Module=DPDPermits&capID1=17HST&capID2=00000&capID3=70495>

32 trees, 8 large trees were taken down - many on the property line

*Annie Thoe, GCFP*

[annie@sensingvitality.com](mailto:annie@sensingvitality.com)

[www.sensingvitality.com](http://www.sensingvitality.com)

youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/c/SensingVitality>