



SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Becca Neumann (Position #4 – Hydrologist), Co-chair

Joshua Morris (Position #7 – NGO), Co-Chair

Alicia Kellogg (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist) • **Stuart Niven** (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA)

Hao Liang (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA) • **David Baker** (Position # 8 – Development)

Logan Woodyard (Position #10 – Get Engaged) • **Jessica Hernandez** (Position #11 – Environmental Justice)

Jessica Jones (Position # 12 – Public Health) • **Lia Hall** (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

Draft meeting notes

September 20, 2023, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Via Webex call and in-person at the
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1872 (18th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

(206) 207-1700

Meeting number: 2490 389 5404

Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair

Becca Neumann – Co-Chair

Alicia Kellogg

Hao Liang

David Baker

Logan Woodyard

Lia Hall

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Toby Thaler

Nathan Collins, Position 9 pending confirmation

Absent- Excused

Stuart Niven

Jessica Hernandez

Jessica Jones

Public

Steve Zemke

NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:
<https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocuments>

Call to order: Josh called the meeting to order and offered a land acknowledgement.

Public comment:

Steve Zemke offered support for the CMT amendment to the tree ordinance. The issue needs to be resolved; it's state law but not incorporated into city process. The Trees and People Coalition filed a petition with the Growth Management Board; they believe the city is out of compliance with the Growth Management Act.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Patti noted that last week the USDA announced the grant awards for the Inflation Reduction Act funding coming through the U.S. Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry program. The City learned with this announcement that our combined city project was awarded \$12M out of the almost \$18M project ask that was submitted. The project included three components: 1) stewarding a connected, resilient forest, by managing natural areas holistically across boundary lines; 2) elevating community urban forestry leadership by equipping and empowering communities to participate in urban forest planning, and 3) training youth for future careers in urban forestry by expanding the Youth Green Corps. In addition, SDOT submitted a project separate from the combined city project – the Delridge Native Forest Garden – and that project was granted \$900,000.

Patti provided information on a green Jobs event happening September 29th – the first annual Green Jobs, Green Futures Summit at the Fremont Foundry in Seattle! King County, in collaboration with the Port of Seattle, City of Seattle, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, and Seattle Good Business Network, is hosting an interactive, one-day event geared towards creating community connections and highlighting businesses in the local green economy contributing to a more sustainable future.

Patti offered two reminders: 1) the annual joint UFC-IDT meeting will be on October 18, 2:00-5:00 with an option social hour afterward to provide more opportunity to network and talk with each other, 2) Seattle Forest Week will be October 28 – November 4, starting with the Arbor Day celebration on October 28 and culminating with Green Seattle Day on November 4.

Josh noted he left a long message for Christy Carr at SDCI about the UFC's feedback on the tree measurements Director's Rule. He also updated that he attended this month's meeting of the Green New Deal Oversight Board, and thanked them for the work they are doing generally and also their work specifically with trees.

Philly Tree Plan – Erica Smith and Alexa Bosse

Erica explained that the Philly Tree Plan was released early this year and is a ten-year strategic plan with a main goal of equitable planting and care of the urban forest. Key values leading throughout the plan creation were environmental justice, community engagement and sustainability. They aimed to include the entirety of the urban forest, including that on public and private lands. They did a tree canopy assessment using LiDAR data before embarking on the planning effort, which showed they had 20% tree canopy, had lost 6% in the previous decade, and that it is not equitably distributed. The results reinforced the importance of preservation and protection of trees. It also emphasized the role of residents and how crucial they were to the future of the city's tree canopy. The residential land had the most tree canopy and had the most space for new tree canopy. This pointed to the need to engage with people and residents in what they're doing on their private property, as well as what the City is doing with the public tree canopy.

Before embarking on the planning project, they brought together all the pertinent partners for a tree summit, with the aim of explaining the scope, getting comments and guidance from attendees. They brought together a large project team (31 people), two steering committees (city and community), and a consultant team. The consultant team included a lot of people also: Hinge Collective provided project management, then there were five other consultants in three categories: urban forestry, policy, and engagement.

One of the first actions was to map priority areas for planting/increasing canopy, based on poverty, health and heat. They identified five priority neighborhoods through this.

Getting input and earning trust was key to the effort, for which they followed the values of truth-telling, using plain language, honoring expertise, listening without ego. Many engagement strategies used: citywide survey, community meeting tour, neighborhood ambassadors, stakeholder workshops, virtual open house, and Instagram photo challenge.

The Summit happened in 2019, they developed the community engagement over the next year, and started the planning effort in spring 2021.

They received more than 7,000 responses to the survey; 60% of respondents were in the priority neighborhoods, and were in eight different languages. Key takeaways: trees have value and residents recognize that; there is disparity in tree canopy by neighborhood; trees are a burden to homeowners (known and surprise costs); there is poor access to programs and services; the existing tree canopy is not well taken care of – need to manage existing canopy before adding new in order to build trust, and there is a need for clarity, consistency, coordination and collaboration.

From the input received, they developed 8 goals:

- Coordinate support for trees – different types of staff, higher level staff who can work across depts.
- Protect existing and future trees
- Grow canopy equitable
- Reduce burden of trees on residents
- Invest in people and communities
- Communicate with residents, increase customer service
- Advocate for communities to benefit from trees
- Celebrate and support ways community engages with trees

They learned that more than 400 lives would be saved by reaching that 30% canopy goal. They have a 30-year goal for getting there. Ten months after plan adoption, implementation to date includes:

- Updated tree code to increase requirements for planting in buffers, planting strips; new yard tree requirement; new fee-in-lieu charged for removed trees that are not replaced; removed exceptions for open space, single and two-family developments
- Added new staff: 3 community organizers, 2 customer service representatives, 1 office clerk. Also will be hiring: City Forester position, new development review, inspection, and enforcement team (4), Natural Lands team - 4 new positions, communications team - 2 new positions, Grants Manager
- Fundraising
 - o Almost \$3M city funding for operations and capital funds for street trees
 - o \$1M from William Penn Foundation
 - o \$12M in USDA funding

New initiatives will include:

- Comprehensive assessment of the city's natural lands
- Commercial corridor tree planting and care program
- New planting and education at Philadelphia Housing Authority sites

They determined that 67 new staff members will be required to implement all of the things included in the plan. They have 6 approved/hired/being hired so far. They also determined that it will take \$25M per year to care for all of the forest.

Questions and comments from Commissioners included:

- Was there any indication of the drivers leading to the 6% canopy loss?
- Are there permit processes required for when homeowners want to remove trees?

- Does the fee in lieu take into account tree characteristics like species and size?
- What are the reasons people cite for concerns about trees?
- Protecting large old trees comes with a lot of maintenance; complicates the effort to do so, need additional support/resources.
- Are there survival requirements for trees planted as mitigation?
- The recently passed TPO has level of review on plans that increases staff burden – does the city know yet what that burden is and do they have strategies to address?

Presentation debrief

Comments from Commissioners included:

- The UFC should be fully staffed in order to do more community engagement.
- It's very valuable to hear from other cities' about their work.
- It's very interesting how they developed their fee in lieu.
- The D.C. work and ordinance is worth looking more into and potentially having them provide a briefing also.
- There was appreciation expressed for the "love trees or hate trees" question to begin community engagement with.

Rather than a thank you letter, Josh will send a thank you email with feedback from Commissioners.

Tree Protection Ordinance

- [GNDOB Joint Task Force Letter](#)

Josh provided a recap of the discussions around and purpose of this letter. The joint Task Force would be convened to do a climate enhancement review of the tree protection ordinance and issue recommendations for the new City Council to review in 2024. Josh walked through a draft joint letter developed by the UFC's ordinance subgroup and Maria Batayola, calling for the establishment and funding of the Task Force. Commissioners discussed and edited the letter.

Action: A motion to adopt the Climate Enhancement Task Force joint letter as amended was made, seconded and approved.

- [CMT amendment to the tree ordinance](#)

The amendment ordinance was accepted for introduction by City Council; it will go for vote in late October-early November. The UFC will consider their feedback letter at the October 4 meeting.

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>

Public comment:

None

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 PM.

Meeting chat:

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:11 PM

<https://attachment.outlook.live.net/owa/MSA%3ASSHETTLER%40msn.com/service.svc/s/GetAttachmentThumbnail?id=AQMkADAwATcwMAItODBiMCI1mOTeZLTAWAi0wMAoARgAAA66pRmjZ7uVKtI8GawNoQggHACeMi7I5RIhJpFC9Z0UWJ44AAAIBDAAAACeMi7I5RIhJpFC9Z0UWJ44ABrqDzcsAAAABEgAQAHcPjLbILupAjCHaB3qo2Yc%3D&thumbnailType=2&isc=1&token=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsImtpZCI6IjczRkI5QkIjFRjYzNjc4RDRGN0U4NEI0NDBCQUJCMtJBMzMSRDIgOTgiLCJ0eXAI0iJKV1QiLCJ4NXQiOiJX3VidnZmMmVOVDM2RXRFQzZ1eEtqT2RuNWcifQ.eyJvcmlnaW4iOiJodHRwczovL291dGxvb2subGl2ZS5jb20iLCJ1YyI6IjgwNDMwZmM5Nzg3MjQ1NTZhMG>

Such a good point Lia. We need much more public engagement in crafting tree policy. Our ordinance was based on some very small listening sessions which happened several years ago. A more representative sample would have likely resulted in a better ordinance!

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:34 PM

Working smarter not harder! You have enough to do commissioners:)

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:43 PM

lost 225 acres total. in 5 years according to Tree canopy report

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:44 PM

115 or 255?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:44 PM

225 or 255?

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:45 PM

Actually much more was lost--this is the net loss. after factoring growth of other trees, and less likely, replanted trees.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:47 PM

255 is correct , sorry for confusion

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:52 PM

Will Climate TPO Enhancement Task Force be public meetings?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:57 PM

I think should be publicly open as drafting amendments so much was done outside public eye until end of process.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:58 PM

Yes replacement trees from in lieu funds are on public lands

from Elise Rasmussen, OSE she/her to everyone: 5:00 PM

thanks all

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 5:01 PM

Welcome Councilmember Pedersen!

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 5:01 PM

Input on draft letter concerning TMP-9902: • Use CB 120670 noted above. • Add to needed

outreach/consultation: City's Indigenous Advisory Council (link

<https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/public-participation/boards-and-commissions/indigenous-advisory-council>), and please add to copies-- Tim Reynon, Tribal Relations Director in OIR

from Alicia Kellogg she/her to everyone: 5:02 PM

Sorry all, I need to leave to pick up my child from daycare or we get fined \$5 for every minute I'm late.

Thanks!

from Hao Liang to everyone: 5:07 PM

I need to drop off. Thank you Councilmember. Thank you everyone!

Public input (additional comments received):