

EMERALD CITY TASK FORCE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2007 MEETING SUMMARY

On September 27, 2007, the Emerald City Task Force (ECTF) held their fifth meeting at the Seattle Municipal Tower. The meeting included a review of draft recommendations.

Task Force Members in Attendance

Randy Bannecker, Seattle/King County
Association of Realtors
Dan Duffus, Soliel Development LLC
Deb Guenther, Mithun

Garrett Huffman, Master Builders Assoc.
John Hushagen, Seattle Tree Preservation
Amalia Leighton, SvR and Seattle Planning
Commission
Eric Pravitz, HomeSight
Paul Tomita, Weinstein A/U

City Staff in Attendance

Scott Dvorak, Department of Planning &
Development (DPD)
Brennon Staley, DPD
Tracy Morgenstern, Office of Sustainability
& Environment (OSE)

Eli Levitt, OSE
Dianne Kelso, DPD
Janet Osland, DPD

Robert Knable, DPD
Nolan Ruhnquist, Department of
Transportation (SDOT)
Bill Ames, SDOT

Members of the Public

Favero Greenforest
Michael Oxman
Rich Ellison

The notes below are meant to capture the various points made during the course of the meeting – they are not a literal transcript, nor are they meant to imply that there was agreement on any one point. Instead, they only serve as a reminder of the discussion and the points made.

The bulk of the meeting was used to review the draft of the Task Force's recommendations.

Comments on each of the recommendations were made and a revised, a final draft was created separate from this meeting recap. The comments listed below were either general comments or comments made by members of the audience at the end of the meeting.

Please review this set of meeting notes in conjunction with the final recommendations letter in order to get a full recap of the September 27th meeting.

General Comments

- Include supporting documents with the recommendation letter, such as summary of meeting notes or key themes from the meeting notes.
- General working principle for the group – Development Rule 6-001 is very prohibitive and difficult to work with – this group seeks to revisit tree rules to ease the process and make the rules more straight-forward/ simple.
- Some members feel that if you promote or require trees, then you are contradicting a focus on urban density.

- Some members feel that if you promote or require trees, then you compromise the affordability of housing in the city.
- A key counter-point was made: as we build more densely but accommodate more urban trees, we achieve a greener and more welcoming city.
- SDOT helps with sidewalk repairs related to tree damage. SDOT maintains all trees in the right-of-way.
- In a discussion about electric trolley lines in the city and their impact on street trees - SDOT staff feels there isn't a conflict between them.
- The recommendations should approach the discussion about trees and Seattle's quality of life in terms of economic vitality and climate protection.
- Add something to the "over-arching goals" section in context of social, environmental, and economic benefits of urban trees.

Public Comments

- Heritage trees- trees that qualify as Heritage trees must be preserved/protected. Permits should be required to cut Heritage trees – if allowed at all.
- Funding – there needs to be funding from the get go. Developers and homebuilders should contribute dollars per project and get more from everybody to create a sizeable tree fund.
- Even if you can get a free permit on-line, you need someone to go out and verify the situation. There is a need to create hoops / prevent exemptions.
- The new arborist position the ECTF recommends should go under a broader umbrella than DPD (should be supervised by the city arborist).
- City Council emphasized thinking out of the box on urban forestry. The City and ECTF should consider hiring an urban forester/consultant from out of town to review the recommendations.
- Create a department for trees and lobby for urban forestry in Olympia – tell people in the capital what is happening in Seattle.
- One stakeholder was hoping to hear more about potential recommendations on requiring a "tree protection plan" – if you have a requirement for a plan then you build in criteria for people to follow and understand.
- Get creative and consider a program like adopt-a-plant with Plant Amnesty. Consider protecting and replanting shrubs when necessary as well.
- Arborists working in Seattle need to be certified by the International Society of Arborists (ISA).
- The City needs to wield a bigger stick with those who break the rules.
- One stakeholder agrees that we should tie the value of the penalty to the value of the tree in a broad sense.