Urban Forestry Commission (UFC)
February 8, 2012
Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower Room 1940
700 5th Avenue, Seattle
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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

Attending

Commissioners
Matt Mega (MM) – chair
John Small (JS) – vice chair
Nancy Bird
Gordon Bradley
Tom Early (TE)
John Floberg (JF)
Jeff Reibman

Staff
Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE
Dave LaClergue (DL) - DPD

Public
Nicholas Dankers (ND)
Margaret Thoules (MT)

Absent- Excused
Peg Staeheli (PS)

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
MM – Call to order

Approval of January 11 minutes

ACTION: **A motion was made to approve the January 11 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.**

Yesler Terrace update – DPD (Dave LaClergue)
DL – Same proposal he briefed the Commission on in December. Will be releasing documents for public review next week. He will send link to Sandra to distribute to the Commission. They will be taking comment through March 19, then they will send draft proposal to City Hall.

NB – the tree protection element will identify trees?

DL – Yes, it identifies all trees into Tier 1 (preserve), Tier 2 (on the face about preserving or removing), and Tier 3 (to be removed with mitigation)

JF – is this a new system?

DL – it's site specific. There is an EIS that includes all trees. Were able to get into more detail on the tree preservation plan because there is enough information available.

NB – How will mitigation take place?

DL – Tier 1 trees can't be removed, Tier 2 will have 3x1 replacement, and Tier 3 will have 1x1 replacement for trees with comparable size at maturity.

MM – was this a new zone classification?

DL – yes, it's a new zone

JF – would this zone be applied in the future in other areas?

DL – The tree protection component yes, as part of Planned Action, they might apply to other areas. The zone is tailored (Master Plan Community Yesler Terrace). The tree protection plan will be online. The public meeting will be March 7 at the Yesler Community Center.

JF – who made the decisions about tier classification for trees?

DL – SHA made the first pass and then Bill Ames and Shane Dewald from SDOT got involved. Mitigation is all on site.

MM – would be good for UFC to comment. I'll take a first pass. The comment can be introduced at the March 7 meeting and voted on at the March 14 meeting.

NB – Planned Action can be a very good tool for mitigation

MM- maybe we can do a planned action for SCL action on trees under power lines?

JS – it would be good to set a precedent ahead of the tree regulations. Mitigation, bonding, assurance.

UFC 2012 Work Plan – review and vote

> **ACTION**: **A motion was made to approve the 2012 Work plan as amended. The motion was seconded and carried.**

2011 UFC Annual Report – review and vote

> **ACTION**: **A motion was made to approve the 2011 Annual Report as written. The motion was seconded and carried.**

UFMP Update: Trees in the ROW and Cost Review

SPdB – When the IDT got together to talk about this piece we realized that we have done a lot of work to make clear how we prioritize work in the ROW. We have an updated tree list, ongoing SCL/SDOT coordination, the ROW manual, and the Street Tree ordinance/standards.

There is no policy that ties it all but we feel the mentioned tools and actions speak for themselves.

MM – SDOT mentioned that the way they prioritize is reactive. They did not mention pruning for health.

Cost review:
Commissioners would like a benefits column to be added to the cost spreadsheet.

JF – trees in industrial zones have greater relative benefit

JS – one consideration for the UFMP is that the per tree cost will continue to rise when you get to harder to plant trees. Planting opportunities will become more expensive. Consider accounting for escalation.

TE – Roy mentioned he was collecting data for low hanging fruit

JS – SCL has spent a lot of money maintaining trees. Perhaps there is a more efficient way. Maybe mitigate by planting in other locations so in the long term gain ecosystem function and save money.

JR – SDOT wants to keep trees and SCL wants to avoid conflict with utilities

MM – come up with guidelines to creating a master plan to deal with trees conflicting with utilities.

GB – SCL/SDOT talk to UFC on how they make those decisions

JR – on a project by project basis, both SCL and SDOT are at the table, but the SCL rep has no knowledge of trees, so they can't discuss cost-benefit of trees at that meeting.

JS – Also, contractors have conflict about making ecosystems decisions and cost savings

MM – for the cost conversation we have three points to make:

- How do we account for meeting UFMP goals when planting gets harder and more expensive?
- Aggregate maintenance costs are expanding as we increase canopy cover
- Include a column monetizing benefits of the urban forest to compare with the cost to implement the plan

For the research agenda – maintenance costs and benefits

Use UFC time as match for grants

UFC recommendation on canopy cover goals for UFMP update – initial discussion
MM – The goal for Single Family could go to 35%

JR – Being realistic, given the regulatory environment, it is feasible for SF to achieve 35% canopy cover.

Industrial area canopy cover goal
JR – We could say that we are not in a position to set a goal given the misunderstanding of the existing condition in industrial areas

NB – Walked commissioners through the draft recommendation. Tacoma is doing studies on stormwater benefits of trees.

JR – Likes recommendation #1. Would like to get more specific. Recommend a study of the area and set a timeline by when the information should be collected.
One recommendation #2 add pollutants, runoff, highest percentage of pervious surface in the city, proximity to water front, habitat corridors.

TE – the Port is under a big push on air quality improvement – add that

JS – Would talk about the Green Ports Initiative 0 emissions, runoff, stormwater management. The Port of Seattle is committed to becoming the greenest port in the country. These agencies need to be mandated. Keep pollutant piece separate from habitat

JS – green belts affect single family and Parks. They benefit from them. In industrial area we have BNSF rail and they will say they are exempt.

Public comment
Nicholas Dankers: there is a lot of invasive ivy on our lands. Include having ivy up in the canopy be a code violation? Needs to be controlled.

Margaret Thoules: The are closing the Group Health hospital in Redmond (selling the property) and Council decided that if they wanted to develop the property (28 acres with 65 landmark trees with 30-50" DBH trees) they can cut down the trees.

Send letters to Group Health's headquarters here in Seattle.

Next meeting agenda items

Adjourn