Urban Forestry Commission (UFC)
May 11, 2011
Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower Room 2750
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 (NB)
Gordon Bradley (GB)
John Floberg (JF)
Jeff Reibman (JR)
Peg Staeheli (PS)

Staff
Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE
Brennon Staley (BS) - DPD

Public
Steve Zemke (SZ)

Absent- Excused
John Hushagen (JH)

Call to Order
MM called the meeting to order once quorum was present

Chair report
MM – Have a fairly busy agenda today. Don't have a big chair report. Went through the agenda. Work Plan item UFC has gone back to being in a reactive mode. Would like to have a check-in on the work plan and get feedback from commissioners.

Urban Forest Symposium (Plant Amnesty and UW)
MM attended. This is the third annual event. It's good because it's a diverse crowd. People working on trees through the region. Majority are government staff, arborists and non-profit. The visioning session has been done before. He is part of the steering committee and wants to shake things up next year. If you have ideas send them to him. He would like to get things that are going on "on the ground".

PS – comments she got, is that energy dropped off at end of day. Figure out who your audience is. Davey group is trying to put together a similar event. More community oriented?

JF – Ordinance session – any take away? Silo ordinance by department. Ordinance needs to be broader. Other localities have simpler ordinances. They are smaller.

SPdB – there was a lack of context for the visioning exercise. It was impressive how the facilitator was able to actually come up with a statement from the crowd at the end. We have a pretty good vision in the UFMP.

JF – did you learn anything new regarding tree ordinances?

PS – The silo ordinance vs. the…. It's harder for a larger city. We are doing ordinances by department… that's what was clear in the presentation. That ordinance needs to be broader. For Seattle, we should step up high, have a master ordinance that then goes into detail.

GB – the outline of the presentation, there are articles on what makes a good tree ordinance. The model they have is if you are a city with one ordinance and it shows the different components. Here we are dealing with different departments dealing with it. Maybe the plan is what … there should be a matrix in the UFMP addressing issues, ordinances, and departments. Sara Foster is on top of what other cities are doing. If we have questions it might be a good resource. They talked about policies around views.

JF – maybe have Sara Foster look at ordinance when we are getting closer?

PS – It was interesting, they mentioned that it's important to have standards be in a separate manual, so the ordinance can be fairly streamlined. Then the departments would have their Director's Rule or Client Assistance Memo…

JR – would that have to be adopted as a Director's Rule?

PS – when worked in Ped Plan that's they approach. Because they adopt plan by ordinance.

BS – adopted plans are not code

JS – is there a precedent for DPD coming up with clarification CAMs?

PS – SPU and SDOT are working on drainage in the ROW. The subdivision code brings SDOT and DPD together… that's the combined kind of thing..

BS – we coordinate. We have joint standards

JS – if we come up with an ordinance that is general enough and everyone likes. The standards needed would be developed by DPD and the UF IDT?

BS – construction BMPs are shared by depts. If you are talking about code it would have to be in two different places. Legally, as the code is structure it would need to be in two places. Code could be re-structured.

JS – there are cities that have whole sections of redundant code

BS – that doesn't have legal implications. Just see here.

JF – one more question about conference. Peg you were presenting but wearing an SvR hat? We don't have speaking points. Was there a mention of the UFC at the conference. Is there awareness that UFC might be a conduit for Ordinance?

PS – it was broader than Seattle.

MM – quite a few people from outside of Seattle. Peg did mention being a commissioner. So did he when he was a panelist. The name was dropped.

PS – Great City asked the same thing. She did a brief presentation on the UFC. Land use and tree cover came up at another meeting. Maybe one thing to do at symposium is to bring boards, commissions and IDTs working on UF issues in the region. Getting more commonality would be helpful. Do a check in about things that are going on.

JF – DNR could do something on best practices data incompatibility – at a higher level meeting.

PS – APWA does pre-conference seminars and a lot of urban forestry issues are inside public works.

Comp Plan recommendation – possible vote
NB – Not sure where we are at. I wasn't at the meeting when you reviewed. There are very few changes but enough to make sure it's compliant. Under natural systems approach, make sure there is no net loss. We achieve a higher goal of 40% gives us something to work towards.

Inventory to be done at least every 10 years. To make it more clear. There was conversation with City staff to introduce this for the annual update.

> **ACTION**: **A motion was made to approve the recommendation. The motion was seconded and carried.**

MM – the discussion adds a lot to it.

SPdB – my understanding is that we provide the request for changes, and when we are asked to provide additional detail, we have the information already captured in the discussion piece. When this is requested, I'll put something together for your review with the rationale behind it.

MM – Not public yet, but Council will discuss a resolution that he put together that basically says that Council promotes the update of the UFMP after the plan is updated they will adopt it and that it guides the UFC. That the UFC is instrumental for the update. This empowers the UFC.

JF – did it say that the UFC will do the update?

MM and SPdB: the resolution talks about the UFC being involved and providing advice to the IDT.

NB – it's going to be important to be in synch with the IDT. For a meeting like the half-day retreat it's going to be important to be clear on how we are framing issues to have a productive time. We'll need materials to inform the discussion. We'll need to put out challenge statements and

SPdB – we talked about that during yesterday's UF IDT meeting. We'll set up the meeting for a date after the Mayor has announced his budget. It might help us all better understand the situation as we look forward to 2012. I'm also going to be expediting preparatory work on the UFMP update so that the IDT can be prepared to answer questions around original goals, current situation, and gaps. It would be helpful if the UFC also proposed items for the agenda. I've asked the same of the IDT. We will put together a strong agenda prior to the event. Would the UFC want to receive departmental briefings?

NB – would those briefings help the other depts.?

SPdB – the IDT is already in synch. That's the purpose of the IDT. For example the situation with the Troll's Knoll, when I asked them about this issue, they told me that Parks, SCL, and SDOT were communicating and coordinating all along the process. It was not until the IDT took place that they were able to brief other departments. It's important to find a balance regarding sharing these day-to-day work items so that we don't spend the whole time communicating about what we are doing minute-by-minute. But it's important to keep everyone up to date on issues.

PS – how often do you meet?

SPdB – once a month. A Parks, SDOT, and SCL group worked on updating the current Street Tree list to update and remove invasive species. We work on those kinds of issues.

JF – you are asking UFC and IDT for ideas?

SPdB – yes. My understanding is that the purpose of that meeting is to get both 2012 work plans in synch.

NB – Do they have a work plan like we do?

SPdB – yes. I can present it. That work plan is the format that I use to do the annual progress report.

JR – It would be helpful to take a look at the work plan in preparation to the meeting. Are there separate workplans?

SPdB – it's one work plan the IDT has as work relates to the UFMP

MM – we've already reviewed it a couple of time.

NB – I didn't know if they had a separate plan outside the UFMP

MM – would like to suggest to review the work plan and the current UFMP to see where are disconnects. Use the work plan to help us inform what we would like to see in the update. We need to come prepared to that meeting. Folks to have some thoughts on what's missing. As we read these things we need to really dive into it to see what's missing.

SPdB – I can send out the UFMP, its 5-year Implementation Strategy, the 2010 Progress Report and the 2011 Work Plan for commissioners to review in preparation of a work session. Also, we are scheduled to meet with SDOT for the Torchlight Parade route tour on June 8. I'm confirming the location and I will then make it public.

MM – that might not be two hours. We could also take the final vote on the recommendations.

SPdB – they are scheduled to prune in June. I requested that they don't prune until after the UFC has had a chance to take the tour. I believe SDOT already met again with Seafair. Maybe have a conversation around cost sharing or any other questions you might have. I also requested SDOT to provide a budget.

JF – Won't be able to be there

JR – In the interest to educating himself he brought up the issue with a guy from the downtown association. He will invite him to the meeting for him to get information on what's going on. His immediate response was, this is tough because both one-day events and trees are important.

JF – do we want a video of the tour? To raise awareness and for me to see since I can't be there?

JS – If we are going to work towards downtown I can look to see if we can use a meeting room in my office in Olive.

GB – Still a bit confused with the UFMP and work plans related to that. Then there is the update taking place. That's going to affect the work plans. What's the process to getting to the update in terms of the timeline and who is involved. Are the some aspects that are not up for grabs? There is quite a public process….

SPdB – yes, and we are going to go through it again.

GB – can you map out the process?

SPdB – I had an original timeline which included SEPA review. Now we need to do the review earlier to be ready for the meeting in the fall. The update can be as simple as updating the canopy numbers from the LIDAR used for the original plan to incorporate the results of the satellite that is not reflected in the 5-year Implementation Strategy. It's important for people to understand that the numbers are different because they have been updated, so that they don't think we are fumbling around with the numbers. There is a reason why they are different. A very streamlined update of the UFMP could be simply bringing up to date the canopy cover

numbers. But I would like the update to go deeper by incorporating information from the iTree survey. Although the survey will not give us equivalent information to the aerial satellite canopy cover analysis, it's going to give us more the composition, and health of the urban forest in Seattle (from the ground up) and the calculations they might do to extrapolate a canopy cover assessment might not give us the same results as another aerial satellite inventory would. It will be very important to properly communicate this at the update. I don't envision the overall changing to 45% or 20%. It's more how we get there. Especially with the budget situation that has been affecting the work over the last couple of years and will probably continue. Are there gaps, have we been taking on things that were not included in the original plan, are there things we have been doing that haven't make much of a difference and do we want to drop those? That kind of conversation…

I will be working on a timeline, which will include the SEPA review. It will be available for our next meeting.

MM – the roadmap is a timeline? Your question is about scoping what the UFMP update is going to be. We'll review the documents and come up with what we would like to see in the update. This joint meeting is aligning work plans and scoping what the UFMP update would entail.

SPdB – also building relationship between the UFC and UF IDT

JF – this is looking into the future in 2012. Will we have a strong work plan?

JR – we should try

MM – We can look at the five year plan. It's not going to be so hard.

JF – how about the UF IDT

SPdB – our UFMP work plan doesn't change much since it's dictated by the plan. For example SDOT will continue to do planting with BTG funds.

MM – opportunity for the UFC to push at the boundaries of the UFMP. If we see holes we'll need to address it. JS was interested at looking at goals and targets by zoning.

PS – We kind of dug into that and then we got sidetracked.

JS – thinks it's more part of the ordinance

PS – believes it is part of the UFMP. Haven't played around with the spreadsheet. It's tough to meet the goals.

MM - might want to stay at higher level and not dive into details

PS – it isn't diving into the details. The spreadsheet had the math behind it… by that analysis we were not getting the corridors, and the habitat

MM – I've been working with Columbia City and I don't see how they are going to meet the goals. I might share some of the data

SPdB – another thing to look at is that we won't know where we stand until we do another satellite inventory. It's not scheduled. It's more a matter of budget. But if the UFC feels it needs to be considered it's important to mention it.

MM – His students have a satellite process with better than 80% accuracy.

NB – the inventory is important, but we need to go with the assumption that we are losing canopy.

MM – I'll share with you the program I'm working on in Columbia City

NB – We should be prepared to have three options to meet canopy cover. Think that through and have a conversation with the IDT about it

MM - yes important to have that conversation with the IDT.

PS – when we were playing we the zones we were coming up with new numbers by zone

JR – did we have at that point any real ability to back it up. If residential can't make it, we'll just add more here… can we justify it?

SPdB – we have scope, schedule, and budget. That might be part of the conversation.

MM – use canopy cover as generalized trends and indicators. Your need to ground-truth some of those things. It's an incremental process. The City wants to do it across the city so they can make policy.

PS – do we know what the cost is to do an inventory? What did Portland do?

MM – Shoreline just did a satellite analysis.

JS – when analyzing the trends you have slow growth and then have that storm and lose 10% of your stock. With climate change we'll see more of that.

MM – you are always going to have push back.

JF – I don't want to go into a room with the IDT or anybody else and throw a number that we can't defend.

JR – the best we can do is levels of accuracy within trends. If you use the same technology…

GB – there is changing technology. Years ago there was no LIDAR, and now we have satellite. If you are trying to make a statement you want a certain level of confidence. Do we have the programs in place and related ordinances to ensure that the trend is going to take us to our goal?

MM – a lot of the canopy doesn't grab the new trees, but as they grow they will provide more services.

JR – how to integrate the efforts of Seattle night out and the Trees for Neighborhoods program. Brochures?

PS – Use design drawings to do a CAD analysis of the canopy cover. That would be an interesting project for an intern.

MM – different groups are doing inventories of different Seattle neighborhoods.

JR – how can we incorporate that with the Neighborhood tree Ambassadors.

MM – he is participating in the first Tree Ambassadors meeting that Jana is working on to talk about ways to incorporate this work.

Approve 4/13/11 minutes
SPdB – We only had three people present at the 4/13 meeting. Only Gordon was present and now that JS and MM are here we can approve the minutes.

JS- just to clarify, I was not acting-chair. So that needs to be removed.

> **ACTION**: **A motion was made to approve the April 13 meeting notes as amended. The motion was seconded and carried.**

Community Tree Planting and Education Programs SLI response update
SPdB – gave an update of the proposal moving forward to Council regarding the Tree Community Planting and Education Programs. Last year we put together a proposal to put together these programs under SPU. Council felt they were lacking information and they issued a Statement of Legislative Intent and placed a proviso on $185K of the $235K budget. Jana has been working on moving forward the program with the money available.

We put together a group with DON, SDOT, SCL, and SPU, and City Budget Office and looked at what a good consolidated program would be and where it should reside. We agreed that Seattle reLeaf was a good program to consider. We talked about the different existing programs and the assets different departments bring to the table. We are proposing the creation of a new, full time position to implement the program and for the program to reside in SPU. This would comply with the Office of City Auditor's recommendation "to implement education and outreach activities for the UFMP, the City needs to fund a full-time position to implement education and outreach activities for the Urban Forest Management Plan." OSE will also

propose for the program to remain in OSE to deliver the 2011 work plan and do the transfer as part of the 2012 budget process. We will be signing an MOU with SPU to borrow the new position.

JR – Is the new position Jana's position transferred?

SPdB – Jana's is not a permanent position. The program started with her as an intern and then she became a temporary employee. What we want to communicate to Council is that prior programs have not had dedicated staff or funding. We are very excited to be proposing the creation of a new position to implement this program.

PS – why SPU for this position?

SPdB – Sandra walked through the rationale and the five criteria that the SLI IDT considered. Used the first criteria as the main filter: "is canopy increase and urban forest health a primary focus of the department? Is work in private property aligned with the department's core mission? Using this criteria a filter, the group eliminated DPD, Finance and Administrative Services, City Light, Seattle Center, and SDOT (because their mandate is trees in the ROW). Departments furthered considered to house the consolidated program were OSE (in charge of UF policy), Parks (mandate is to care for trees in developed parks and forested parklands), DON (was considered because of the role they played for years with the Tree Fund), and SPU (who has a direct interest in tree health due to its storm water retention and water quality benefits). Parks doesn't have a mandate for work on private property, which is what this program focuses on. DON uses trees in order to build community. The group also decided that technical ability is a very important component, so we are proposing that a certified arborist be considered for the position. We eliminated Parks, DON, and OSE.

SPU has the mandate to work in private property, have existing programs (Restore our Waters, Rainwise, Aquatic Habitat Matching Fund, already support Trees for Neighborhoods, the Green Seattle Partnership, etc.) and outreach mechanisms (newsletters, bill inserts, etc.) that would complement the program. They have highly qualified technical people, foresters, ecologists, naturalists, and biologists.

PS – this is the planting program?

SPdB – there is more to the program than the planting piece

PS – not quite following the logic that it has to be a certified arborist for the position

SPdB – I'm giving a very high-level presentation here. The Seattle re-Leaf has three components: Program Evaluation and Development, Outreach and Engagement, and the tree planting piece. This person is going to do the analysis of the i-Tree survey results. The SLI IDT thought that scientific rigor and technical expertise was important.

JR – I can see benefits to that. A person with outreach

PS- You will be hitting a mix of qualifications. Have the science… City Arborists department that Roy Francis' group leads. Are we breaking a silo?

SPdB – I think we are breaking the silos. Even though this is a private property focused program, if participants want street trees to supplement tree planting in their yard, then the program provides street trees (involving SDOT when appropriate). This will be clearer for the public.

PS – Still is confusing for me, how did you discuss all the people, the urban forestry section of SDOT. Was there consideration to move an SDOT position to SPU. Having two people in the program and make it a stronger program.

SPdB – it was not something the SLI IDT considered. We worked on finding a permanent home for a program with a defined body of work that would require a 1.0 FTE to implement. Everyone at the table was willing to provide support to the program, SDOT (technical support for street tree planting), Parks (technical expertise and resources such as community centers and environmental learning centers), DON (community connections), etc.

MM – you are just giving us an update. This is a done deal.

SPdB - It's not a done deal. I'm just now able to present this to you because today the Mayor approved the proposal and transmitted it to Council today. We are going to be making a presentation to Council on May 17. We are going to talk about our findings and recommendation and answering questions.

JR – this proposal was made and pushed back. The Mayor was in agreement to push this through again. I think this would be the appropriate time for UFC to weigh in and issue an official piece of support.

PS – SPU is pretty big. Where in SPU would this position reside?

SPdB – it would be under Miles Mayhew in the Restore our Waters program.

JR – that makes sense

PS – it seems to be the right place. I'm not getting the logic behind having a certified arborist.

SPdB – this is just the recommendation we are moving forward. We have seen how effective the pilot program can be led by a certified arborist.

PS – is Jana a certified arborist?

SPdB – yes

PS – that's an unusual bent. That's an unusual set of qualities.

JR – this is being written to attract a certain skill set.

MM – is this going to become isolated in SPU, or will the position interact with Green Factor and incentivizing trees for reduced rates.

SPdB – We did have that conversation. This person would participate in the Urban Forest IDT and OSE would make sure it is supporting the needs of the IDT in the implementation of the UFMP.

MM – how many members does SPU currently have in the IDT?

SPdB – one, Deb Heiden

MM – important to have the person be part of the UF IDT

PS – it's good that it moves to SPU because of the rate connection. Wondering if for a permanent thing you should broaden the definition for the position. You are going to find great people with the skills set to successfully carry on the program and they might not be a certified arborist.

SPdB – at this point we are requesting the creation of a position as the proviso is lifted. It will be filled by SPU, the interview panel will include IDT members. Moving forward the general fund that OSE currently has would be transferred to SPU and SCL will also be funding the program.

PS – the sewer, water policies from SPU…

SPdB – we are very excited with the idea of a new position being created. This is budget that already exists. We are not asking for new money. It's money that has been provisoed. The UFC can express their position on this.

JR – One thing he would like to include. To maintain a direct counterpart with the urban forestry section in SDOT.

SPdB – As long as we are talking about streets in the ROW it is a given that SDOT will be involved.

PS – did the tree list get resolved?

SPdB – There is a master list. Today Parks, SCL, and SDOT met to make sure no invasive tree species are in that list.

JR – there is inherent need for them to work together for certain things. Important that they work together at a larger planning level. Reviewing % of trees targeted in the ROW vs. private property.

SPdB – that's what the UF IDT brings to the table.

JR – I have serious questions reviewing the matrix and planting goals (private property vs. ROW). If dollars were more fluid it would help.

PS – when it comes down to position dollars they don't get along as well as in the IDT

JS – Consistent set of rules for Street Trees and private trees.

SPdB – I will bring SDOT's street tree ordinance as soon as it is ready to share.

MM – Does this group want to send a letter of support?

JF – sounds like it will happen without us?

SPdB – if you think this program and the recommendation makes sense, it would be useful to get your support.

JR – process being what they are, we have the information and we have now to do it.

SPdB – I did not know if the Mayor's Office was going to have a different proposal

PS – would like to second and amend that the position description be broadened to focus on skills not on title.

SPdB – is not that is a certified arborist. It's one of the preferred qualities. There is going to be a different piece to lift the proviso that will include the position PDQ for the specifics.

PS – I still think it should have some qualifications and need to be broader. Like ecologist.

JR – Arborist or this, or….

PS – it's the science side they better have something that tweaks the science.

MM – we have write this and take it to…. This is a position with potentially diverse skill sets and therefore include other professional standards like an ecologist.

SPdB – the SLI response doesn't mention anywhere that we are looking for a certified arborist. June 7 is when they are going to review the legislation. The person with the right skills can always go get certified.

PS- it's the diverse set of skills, outreach, planning, scientific basis.

SPdB – it will need to have the program management skills

MM – let's keep it simple.

PS – the consolidation of outreach programs and the creation of a new fully funded permanent position that is a member of the IDT.

> **ACTION**: **A motion was made to make a statement of support for the consolidation of the community tree planting and education programs in SPU and the creation of a new, fully funded, permanent position that is a member of the Urban Forest Interdepartmental team. The motion was seconded and carried.**

MM – is everyone okay with Sandra and I to finalize this?

2011 Work Plan review
MM – This was agenda filler because I'm concerned that we are getting off track. I would like to hear from people on what they think. Maybe look at what can be moved to next year's.

Public Comment
Steve Zemke:
Adding to what was said about the urban forestry symposium. State DNR will be happy to look over ordinances. They are a resource. Interesting things came up. Do cities prevent trees from being cut for views, Bellevue was one.

PS – I got it

SZ: some cities specifically mention in their ordinances

PS – Kirkland has overwritten private covenants.

SZ – Also there was discussion on licensing of tree care professionals. WA does not have provisions.

PS – it's of our venue

SZ – Tacoma has revised their street tree ordinance and it was determined that the property owners own street trees. In Seattle SDOT owns trees they planted. Other cities don't have that in their ordinances and run into problems.
Another issue that came up was the panel that Matt was in. Criteria of what trees people like and don't like. Good point in terms of what the city comes up with their list. Drought issues were talked about. In terms of Seafair parade there is a document "effects of trees on stormwater runoff" in SPU's website. Done in 2008. Trees over impervious surfaces… If the trees are not covering impervious surface they are not fulfilling their function.

PS – be careful with that because that's literature research. It's mixing forests and urban trees. There is better, more recent work out there. What was different is who wrote the ordinance and who was involved.

SZ – another piece that came up on this related search was Portland grants tree credits for stormwater mitigation. You guys might want to look closely at. Portland is re-doing their tree ordinance.

SZ – Planning Commission may be more involved. Maybe you might want to invite them to talk about mutual interest. They would likely be a more likely allied.

Next Month Agenda Items
PS – can we have the conversation about messaging at the next meeting? Roughly 10 hours a month. The public doesn't really know we exists and the way to outreach is through attendance at community meetings but need a clear message.

MM – we'll have the conversation next time. It might be a little bit simpler.

SPdB – do you want me to send out the UFMP related documents. With discussion on the agenda for next meeting?

MM – Do you guys want to talk about the UFMP or tree inventories in neighborhoods.

JS – we can do your piece as a second half of the tour meeting. We should be setting goals for the tree protection ordinance. That's a message the UFC needs to get out. We said what we don't like but haven't said what we want. This is an opportunity to get ahead of the process. I'd like to have that discussion.

Possible items for next meeting:
Messaging
UFMP review
Work Plan as it relates to ordinance
Bell Street briefing

PS – it would be nice to clarify that so the public will better understand the UFC role.

MM – Make sure Bell Street is first?

PS – I will recuse myself from Bell Street

Adjourn

Community input:
SZ: Effects of Trees on Stormwater Runoff:
(http://www.psparchives.com/publications/our_work/stormwater/lid/clearing_grading/Effect%20of%20Trees%20on%20Stormwater%20Lit%20Review-Herrera.pdf)