

Urban Forestry Commission
May 5, 2010
Regular Meeting Summary

Seattle Municipal Tower Room 1940
700 5th Avenue, Seattle 3:00pm – 5:00pm

Attending

Commissioners

Elizabeta Stacishin-Moura, Chair
Matt Mega, Vice-Chair
Kirk Prindle
Nancy Bird
John Hushagen
John Small
Jeff Reibman
Peg Staeheli

Staff

Dave LaClergue, Mike Podowski - DPD
Tracy Morgenstern – OSE
Brent Schmidt - SCL

Guest

Ara Erickson, Cascade Land Conservancy

Absent- Excused Gordon Bradley

Tracy introduced Jill Simmons, Acting Director of OSE.

Community sign-in sheet (name and topic addressing in public comments)

Steve Zemke- permits, conflict of interest/disclosure white page
John Barber- changes in land use code
Ann Hirshi
Wallis Bolz
Margaret Thouless
Brent Schmidt
Rich Ellison- change in land use codes, Ingrahm HS, Arboretum
Michael Oxman – tree protection

Low-Rise Zoning Proposal

- Tracy handed out questions to the Commission provided by Councilmember O'Brien concerning the Low-Rise Zoning Proposal:

The Council is currently considering updates to the low-rise portion of the multi-family code. Councilmember O'Brien would appreciate the Urban Forestry Commissions response to the following questions by May 25, when the Council will hold a hearing on the proposed changes.

- 1) How effective is the Green Factor as a tool for preserving trees in low-rise, multi-family zones?
- 2) Do you recommend any additional policies for the preservation of significant trees in ways that do not to deter good development in low-rise multi-family zones,? For example, are there other incentives or benefits that could be offered in exchange for the preservation of a significant tree?

- Mike Podowski & Dave LaClergue presented on the Low-Rise Zoning Proposal
Comments included:

- Concern that the tree planting density is not sustainable
- Vegetated walls are over-credited in green factor
- Concern that DPD is unaware of City's canopy cover goal for multi-family zones

- Suggested ways to incorporate canopy goals into green factor – could there be a minimum required for the tree credit?
- The draft lowrise rule regarding average setback of 7 feet with 5 foot min might work against canopy coverage and GSI techniques.
- It was suggested to refer to the management committee meeting

The Management Committee will develop a formal response to Councilmember O'Brien at the May 12th committee meeting. DPD will send a representative to this meeting to support the discussion.

Seattle Urban Forest Inventory

Ara Erickson from Cascade Land Conservancy provided an overview of a regional urban forest research project which includes statistically significant sampling effort of Seattle's trees. The sampling will be conducted this summer.

Comments included concern that this is another 1,000'-level effort and that community generated inventories are important in collecting data and engaging residents. The Green Footprints Action Works effort was noted as an example. We will request a briefing from them at a future full commission or committee meeting.

New Business

John Small proposed that an ad hoc committee reporting to the management committee be formed to draft a framework for making recommendations to the tree protection regulations. Volunteers for the committee are John Small, Jeff Reibman, and Peg Staeheli. After the meeting, Kirk was included as one of the four members of the ad hoc committee including John S, Jeff R, Peg S, and Kirk P. They will coordinate meeting times.

Given the concern over the accuracy of the minutes, the city budget issues that pose a significant constraint on staff and the guidance given in Robert's Rules of Order in the capturing of official Commission minutes, Matt made a motion for documenting meetings:

1. Official meeting minutes will include a public sign-up sheet with a self recorded summary of key issues that the member of the public wishes to be conveyed to the Commission.
2. Written comments by the public are encouraged and those comments will become attachments to the official minutes for the Commission. The public is asked to keep these written comments brief.
3. Urban Forestry full Commission meetings will be audio recorded by commission members when possible.
4. Urban Forestry full Commission audio recordings will not be transcribed but a copy of the raw discussion will be made available to the public via Mp3 files uploaded to the Urban Forestry Commissions web page.
5. Official meetings minutes, until additional funds become available, will be recorded in the current format, where city staff captures the basic action items and briefly summarizes discussion by Commissioners.

The motion was seconded and approved

April 7, 2010 Minutes

Kirk had amendments to the April minutes and will provide them in electronic form to Tracy.

The minutes were approved as amended.

John Hushagen expressed concern about the amount of corrections required for the meeting minutes. It is intended that adopting the motion concerning minutes will reduce errors in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____

Elizabeta Stacishin-Moura, Chair
Urban Forestry Commission