

Urban Forestry Commission (UFC)

March 2, 2011

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower Room 2750
700 5th Avenue, Seattle
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Attending

Commissioners

John Small (JS)– vice chair – acting chair
Nancy Bird (NB)
Gordon Bradley (GB)
John Floberg (JF)
John Hushagen (JH)
Jeff Reibman (JR)
Peg Staeheli (PS)

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE
Tracy Morgenstern (TM) - OSE
Jana Dilley (JD) - OSE
Brennon Staley (BS) - DPD

Public

Steve Zemke (SZ)

Absent- Excused

Matt Mega (MM) – chair

Call to Order

JS called the meeting to order once quorum was present

Public Comment

Steve Zemke – Attended Regional Development and Sustainability Committee. Conlin put emphasis on taking an eco-systems approach and highlight the values the urban forest brings to the city. Conlin emphasized that this is the Urban Forestry Commission, not the Tree Commission. Conlin is offering the opportunity to not have to wait for DPD to take the lead on the tree protection ordinance. Feel free to approach him with ideas. He encouraged commissioners to thinking outside of the box.

Consider using the no-net loss of canopy concept not just a permit system as a tree loss tracking mechanism. Keep in mind the idea of native vs. non-native species. Look at how we protect the forest within the City, work with interdepartmental team to figure out where the protection function should reside.

JS – the UFC position papers don't need to be reactionary

Approve February 2 and February 9 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the February 2 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the February 9 meeting notes as written. Jeff Reibman and Nancy Bird were absent on 2/9 so they abstained. The motion was seconded and carried.

Urban Forest Management Plan goals briefing – Tracy Morgenstern

TM – the team putting together the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) started with American Forests' recommendation and looked at all land uses, the current tree cover, available space for planting, and opportunities and challenges to determine the canopy cover goals. The result was a challenging but achievable 30% canopy cover goal for the city.

The process included external stakeholders in 2006. They looked at the data and agreed that the 30% goal was challenging yet achievable.

JR – what were the factors that were taken into consideration to arrive at a zero percent growth goal for parks and developed boulevards?

TM – we set targets and then, once data arrived, we realized that we were already there in those zones. This was done assuming no net loss.

JF – where did American Forests get their numbers from?

GB – canopy cover is a good surrogate for the health of the urban forest

TM – trees over concrete are more valuable than trees in parks

PS – what did Council approve?

TM – Council has not formally approved the UFMP. They have adopted the Comprehensive Plan.

PS – why the difference in the numbers? Comp Plan shows 40% canopy cover goal and the UFMP 30%.

BS – the Comp Plan is not a regulatory tool. It affects how City does other plans. During the period of time where the city lost trees according to the American Forests data (1972 – 1996) the city had negative population growth.

NB – It's important to have consistency of goals in both the Comp Plan and UFMP to send one message to the city.

JS – Seek Council adoption of UFMP update in 2012

JF – American Forests made aspirational goals (did not use a scientific approach)

TM – 30% is ambitious goal but conceivable

PS – What's Portland's goal?

JS – the US Forest Service has a tool to calculate the dollar value of canopy cover.

PS – don't have data to assess stormwater benefit. It's a gap Portland may have better calculations.

TM – how much canopy cover could we get in a typical Seattle parcel. Portland has larger parcels.

JH – are we still losing canopy?

TM – will be interesting to see the i-Tree data

Seattle reLeaf Program briefing – Jana Dilley

Jana gave an update on the reLeaf Programs:

- Trees for Neighborhoods: Building a greener, healthier Seattle by engaging residents in tree planting and care
 - o 2010 program:
 - Planted 978 trees with 480 residents
 - 82.7% of participants learned something new
 - 98.7 of participants would recommend the program
 - o 2011 program:
 - April: pruning workshops with 2009 participants
 - May: watering letters
 - May – Sep: watering reminders
 - Oct-Nov: planting training workshops and free trees
- Tree Ambassador: Empowering residents to become stewards of the urban forest and serve as resources for their local community
 - o Partnership with Cascade Land Conservancy
 - o Funded by two-year US Forest Service grant
 - o 2011 goals:
 - Recruit 10 volunteers in five neighborhoods
 - Train volunteers through a series of workshops
 - Support volunteers in development and implementation of neighborhood plans
- Urban Orchard Stewards: Engaging neighbors in the care of fruit trees on public property
 - o 2010 successes:
 - Recruited 24 stewards in five pilot parks: Martha Washington, Jose Rizal, Burke Gilman trail near Gasworks Park, Metal brook, and Bradner
 - Developed management plans for each park
 - o 2011 goals
 - Train volunteers in basics of tree biology, fruit tree pruning, and pest and disease management
 - Secure grant funding from State DNR
 - Recruit nine more stewards in three orchards
 - Host five community events
- Website maintenance, brochures, ask the Expert

JH – thinking outside of the box – assume State DNR will not renew the grant for the Urban Orchard Stewards. We'll need to tap into rich people's money.

Jana – That's why we are working on public/private partnerships – non profits are more able to work with philanthropists.

JF – the Cascade Land Conservancy and the City are working together, inside of the Green Seattle Partnership and were able to obtain \$3M in private funding for this effort.

PS – thinks industrial land use could have more emphasis. Use incentive programs in industrial areas. Create habitat corridors using industrial lands.

JS – can also work on restoration of sites in the Duwamish corridor

JH – can't ignore the industrial area.

PS – What are the plans for 2012?

NB – Trees for Neighborhoods could expand to industrial areas

GB – Seattle reLeaf is one example of how the City is working to get the Urban Forest Management Plan implemented. How goes the battle? At this rate, will we make a dent? What's the gauge of success at this point?

JF – tracking people taking workshops. Tracking survival rate?

Jana – this summer she will find out the survival rate from 2009.

NB – Can you open workshops to the public?

Jana – need to manage for quality purposes

JR – last year goal was to giveaway 1,000 trees. What are the limiting factors?

Jana – she would need bigger trucks, bigger crew. Money to hire more people (she contracted with Earth Corps last year). Logistics is a bigger issue than demand

JH – Root washing would stretch the money.

Jana – Working with home owners so need to keep things simple

Presentation to Council debrief

JS – Conlin was the most engaged of the Council members. He seems to be moving away from regulation of individual trees to more of an ecosystems approach. He kept on saying that they want to do things right. Matt made recommendation to do more outreach, Town Hall meetings, etc, to get the public more engaged.

PS – Additional outreach needs to be funded. Ask Council to fund the effort. There is very little guidance on retaining mature trees. The Code is weak in regards to tree planting.

JS – Conlin seems to be happy with interim tree ordinance

PS – she thinks it's going to take two more years. Do a framework responding to City Council's extended timeline

JS – gives UFC the opportunity to get ahead of issues and frame the discussion a bit more.

JF – the pressure is to go slower

SZ – the pressure is to get it right

JR – reconsidering the framework would be a good idea

PS - delay in tree ordinance will impact when adopting the Climate Action Plan... tree growth is important

JH – there used to be visionaries. That’s gone. Is the UFC supposed to be the cheerleaders for urban forestry?

Urban Forest Management Plan adoption letter to Council

PS – ask Council to provide UFC guidance as to what they are not adopting. What does Council want us to do.

JH- Meeting with potential client in Wallingford and realized that City Light and SDOT are providing two different messages

JR – Adopting the plan

JS – He proposed a new last paragraph talking about the UFMP 2012 update

GB – have Conlin come visit and ask him questions. Invite those that have interest.

JH – member of Parks Board. It has helped to have a Council person on their side

JS – Creating an update that we can all support

PS – Canopy coverage is a driver to go out with a message

PS – City has a guidance. UFC doesn’t. This is confusing.

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the letter with the changes proposed by Sandra and John Small. The motion was seconded and carried.

The final text of the letter is as follows:

“Dear Council President Conlin,

In April 2007, the City of Seattle’s Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) was created by the City of Seattle’s Urban Forest Coalition (now know as the Urban Forest Inter-departmental Team), a group representing nine City departments with tree management or regulatory responsibility. This visionary plan recommends tangible measures to preserve and expand Seattle’s urban forest, which has experienced significant decline over the past several decades. The Coalition’s objective in this plan was to ensure that Seattle would be worthy of its name as *Emerald City* and “a city among the trees.”

The Seattle Urban Forestry Commission was created in 2009 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. The UFMP’s overarching goal is to increase city tree canopy

from 23 to 30 percent by 2037. In order for the Commission to effectively answer its charge and advise the City on issues related to important initiatives including tree permits, planting programs, and incentives, we respectfully ask for the full support of the City Council by formally adopting the UFMP.

It is the opinion of the Commission that only through a strongly aligned City Council, Mayor's Office, and Urban Forest IDT can we hope to achieve the ambitious goals of the UFMP. We strongly encourage the City Council to adopt the UFMP. If it is in the Council's opinion that a substantive change needs to be made to the document prior to adoption, please articulate this need to the Urban Forestry Commission as soon as possible.

The Commission is strongly interested in facilitating the inclusion of those changes in the 2012 update of the UFMP so that this update can be formally adopted by Council."

Shoreline Master Program

JS – he worked on this as a consultant and he provided a disclaimer to that effect. JS provided the text of the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) with comments and due to lack of time. This will be discussed at next week's meeting.

New Business and Announcements

None

Adjourn

Community input:

None