Urban Forestry Commission (UFC)
May 9, 2012
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   Staff
Matt Mega (MM) – chair   Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE
John Small (JS) – vice chair   Brennon Staley (BS) - DPD
Tom Early (TE)
Leif Fixen (LF) – non voting
Nancy Bird   Public
Gordon Bradley   Steve Zemke
Jeff Reibman

Absent- Excused
John Floberg (JF)
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

Chair report
MM – no chair report

Update on DPD Tree Ordinance
BS – would like to share the schedule for tree protection update. Have a drafted ordinance, going through review at law. Ready to move forward as soon as the UFMP is ready to go out to the public, so we can present the whole packet to the public. Coordinated big outreach effort. Put up a website and mass email. Public outreach date will be driven by UFMP. July 11 potential date with a kick off with the UFC. Broad open house for general and individual pieces. Meetings with whoever is interested in August and September months. Finalize legislation in October. Sepa analysis in December. For cc consideration in 2013. Flexibility in the schedule but would like to get it to council early in 2013 to avoid getting into the elections cycle.

TE – what is the outreach plan?

SPdB – this is the other piece we are going to talk about. Maybe I can present the outreach plan now?

Information distribution channels:
- Urban Forestry Commission website
- reLeaf website
- City departments websites
- OSE blog and newsletter
- Urban Forest IDT
- Non-profits (Forterra, Seattle Audubon, Plant Amnesty, Seattle Parks Foundation, etc.)
- Volunteer groups: (Tree Ambassador, Trees for Neighborhoods, Urban Orchard Stewards, GSP Forest Stewards, etc.)
- Urban Forestry listservs (POSA, WATREETALK@LISTSERV.WA.GOV, TreeMonkey, etc.)
- Neighborhood blogs

Groups to approach:
- Urban Forestry Commission
- Parks Board of Directors
- Neighborhood district councils
- Freight Advisory Board
- North Seattle Industrial Association
- Downtown Seattle Association
- Great City – Talk to Nate Cole Daum (natekvcd@gmail.com) – brown bag
- Friends of… parks (Dewey Potter does PR for Parks)
- Scallops groups
- Real Estate and Condo association
- Property Managers Association
- American Planning Association
- American Association of Landscape Architects
- American Institute of Architects
- Washington Association of Landscape Professionals (http://www.walp.org/)

Events:
- Open house at Bertha Landes (late June, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.)
- Respond to invitations

NB – It's going to be important how we frame the conversation. Talk about progress made on DPD's ordinance. What's changed and when we review docs what can we do. Put together a matrix on how to review projects. Across the top we would look at measures, on the side we would look at regulatory and incentives. Does it meet the UFMP goals, does it increase canopy, # of trees to be saved, how politically viable is it? Have there been any major changes on the ordinance since we last reviewed it?

NS – is it possible to measure if the canopy will be growing?

BS – this is one piece of the whole framework. As it comes to development, the idea is that we are only allowed to mitigate loss during development. We are keeping exceptional tree requirements. We are not going to obligate people to plant trees.

TE – we are working towards figuring out what our review metrics are. We'll give you the form we are working on and have you respond.

NB – when you do your reporting and do outreach to the public it would be useful for people to provide feedback.

MM – you said something that struck me. This is one piece of the whole effort. Sending it forward with the UFMP which has the overarching goals, might be too much info for the public. But it's good to say here is the plan, the regulations and other things the City is doing. If we only present the ordinance then we are not using a holistic approach.

JR – when DPD went out to the public the last time, a lot of feedback seemed not to grasp the context of the work. So it's important to provide it. The presentation given last time was very good. If you can include big picture stuff it would help.

MM – other suggestion is to somehow allow the public comment to be out there. As the meetings are going along summarize what the meeting was about then use that.

JR – different meetings attract different crowds.

NB – will get the matrix typed up and available for people to review.

UFMP outreach strategy for public comment
Talked about this jointly with the DPD ordinance conversation above.

Review standards for UFC input for large projects – continues and possible vote
TE – presented his comments

JR – this is written to be about development projects. We don't get much of that. We get much more of policy projects. Are we expecting to see actual development projects?

NB - this was mean to be for things such as the Yesler terrace project.

TE – this is in response to two things: Major Institutions planning and Yesler Terrace.

JR – those are planning efforts. They don't know what's going to get built. It might be difficult to get answers to most of these questions.

NB – need a set of questions that addresses more the planning phase. With assumptions.

TE – still you understand building envelopes.

JR – there may be test cases involved.

MM – if it's a planning exercise we could ask how the project intends to encourage street tree planting.

TE – wanted to bring to bear more conversation about the variations.

MM – we need Peg. This might be for only a few projects that come in to us.

JR – I wouldn't want to have people spend two hours producing information that might not be very useful.

JS – some projects don't go through DPD. We should think about whether we are targeting those projects with high potential to impact a lot of trees. This doesn't seem to be set up to include those projects.

MM – what about tweaking it so we have one questionnaire that splits into different questions depending on the type of project: planning or development. Some things apply to all, see how they are impacting trees and how they are going to mitigate.

JR – the question about proximity to other projects is great. Can be beneficial for IDT to hear that.

NB – a point that is not here is talking about the UFMP goal. There is a goal and what the goal is. This is guidance and gives them an idea of what's important to the UFC. Is there interest to run the Amazon project through the questionnaire?

TE – there are three alternatives for the project.

JR – this is the time to get involved to see pros and cons of each and weigh in on why X scheme is preferred.

NB – we could also pass this on to the design review board for them to consider.

LF – maybe to include in UFMP update

JR – we would go to Amazon's public hearing. The neighborhood design guidelines are what the design review process looks into. We need to get urban forestry considerations into it.

MM – we could piggy back on the design team and DPD is revamping the whole thing. Good opportunity.
JR – Maybe we could invite Lisa Rutzick (DPD) to talk about the work she is doing on neighborhood design guidelines and the design review process.

SPdB – I'll get in touch with her and extend the invitation.

JR – design review is a point of tremendous leverage. It's subjective process that can delay your process for months. If design review board says we want more trees the project will likely put them in.

MM – can design review push for keeping an exceptional tree?

JR – if you remove an exceptional tree you have to get the design review board to sign off. The Board has right to grant certain departures from development standards. They can't grant additional height. If the design review board can grant departures for the developer to recover development potential loss by saving the tree, then it's likely that the tree will be preserved.

MM – if we can start influencing the Design Commission that has more power it's better use of our time.

JR – fits better into our mandate because it is more policy oriented.

Ecosystems Metrics position paper – continues
MM – the framing element of this paper is to try to look more comprehensively at ecosystems metrics. Even if we don't have the metrics right now, moving forward we would look into getting them. Two tracks we could take are to first look at the list and see if it's comprehensive and then look at what we have in iTree and see what we already have in the report.
This paper would also raise awareness. We would provide wording in a report format besides the mere metrics.

JS – works well for the more developed areas of the city. In the open space areas it comes up short in addressing issues of succession and then the functions that dying and dead trees perform. Look at the full equation in terms of large woody debris.

GB – structure and function. Structure is basically A and C, The function is more the benefits.

MM – arrested succession is going to be important

Commissioners provided comments and Sandra will put together a second version for Matt's review and to bring back to the Commission for adoption.

Public comment
SZ – trying to digest what Brennon said. He has concerns. This is the wrong approach trying to mix the two together (UFMP and DPD's ordinance). Both are big issues. Trying to use the UFMP as a non-controversial thing to attach an ordinance with lots of controversy to it. They'd be cutting meetings in half. Why is it being done this way? Two issues, this feels like a secret draft. Where is the UFC's involvement? Was offended when his comments were misinterpreted. DPD should make all comments public. Allow a dialog in terms of the comments.

BS made a comment that they are not going to require to plant new trees. This goes against the no-net loss. As long as DPD conduct a secret process that doesn't feel public. You should come up with how the public input should be. Like EIS, public comments get attached to the EIS. If

you are going to do all meetings, post the meetings on the website so people can participate and give input. BS told SZ 'we don't have to tell you who we are meeting, when and where"

MM – we should provide recommendations on how the public comment process should go. Increase public dialogue around it. How we gather comments can be creatively done as well. Have UFC also receive comments.

Next meeting agenda items
SPdB – we are incorporating the five-year implementation strategy to the action agenda section of the UFMP to avoid having two documents needing updates out there. This would provide a single location for the public to access urban forest planning. This is pushing our timeline slightly and we think we'll be ready to present the 2012 UFMP update to the UFC the first week in July.

We can include in next month's first meeting (June 6) the following agenda items:
- Holistic matrix (Nancy)
- Ecosystems metrics (Matt)
- Possibly Lisa Rutzick
- After we hear from Lisa, we can continue working on the Large Project review guidelines piece.

Adjourn

Community comment:

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-----Original Message-----
From: thouless1@comcast.net [mailto:thouless1@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 03, 2012 10:38 PM
To: Pinto_de_Bader, Sandra
Cc: (o.rhyan@gmail.com); Amber Vora; Andrea Okomski (okomski@msn.com); Bradburd,
Bill; Bonnie Miller; Cheryl Trivison; David Miller; Donna Kostka; Elizabeth
Campbell (elizabeth@campbellcentral.org); Eric Carlson; Eric Scigliano
(escigliano@seattlemet.com); Garrett Huffman (ghuffman@mbaks.com); Heidi Carpine
(heidicar@att.net); Murphy-Ouellette, Jeanie; JeanieMurphy; Jenkins, Michael;
John "Hooper" Havekotte; John Dixon (nativetrees@gmail.com); Kay Shoudy
(shoudypk@comcast.net); Kyle Stetler; larrylange36@comcast.net; Lauren Urgenson
(lsu@u.washington.edu); Liz Kearns; maxsilver@gmail.com; Melissa Poe
(mpoe@ifcae.org); Michael Oxman; Mike Ruby; Nelson, Sara; Nicholas Dankers
(nicholas@treesolutions.net); Pat Whempner; Patrick Mann; Richard Ellison
(richard_ellison@hotmail.com); Ruth Williams; Shelly Leonard; Steve Zemke; Wallis
Bolz
Subject: Re:Value of big trees

I found this on the UW WEB page. I hope you do not mind me sending it to you. I
think it is relevant to the Urban Forest situation how much more valuable large
trees are than small ones. The City of Redmond is allowing large trees to be cut
down on the Group Health hospital site and replaced with small trees elsewhere.

Margaret Thouless
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May 2, 2012

Handful of heavyweight trees per acre are forest champs
By Sandra Hines
News and Information

Big trees three or more feet in diameter accounted for nearly half the biomass measured at a Yosemite National Park site, yet represented only 1 percent of the trees growing there.

This means just a few towering white fir, sugar pine and incense cedars per acre at the Yosemite site are disproportionately responsible for photosynthesis, converting carbon dioxide into plant tissue and sequestering that carbon in the forest, sometimes for centuries, according to James Lutz, a University of Washington research scientist in environmental and forest sciences. He's lead author of a paper on the largest quantitative study yet of the importance of big trees in temperate forests being published online May 2 on PLoS ONE.

A handful of large-diameter trees per acre, such as these incense cedars, together with remains of big trees like the three-foot-wide white fir snag and downed debris account for half the forest biomass at a Yosemite National park study site.

J Lutz/U of Washington

A handful of large-diameter trees per acre, such as these incense cedars, together with remains of big trees like the three-foot-wide white fir snag and downed debris account for half the forest biomass at a Yosemite National park study site.

"In a forest comprised of younger trees that are generally the same age, if you lose one percent of the trees, you lose one percent of the biomass," he said. "In a forest with large trees like the one we studied, if you lose one percent of the trees, you could lose half the biomass."

In 2009, scientists including Lutz reported that the density of large-diameter trees declined nearly 25 percent between the 1930s and 1990s in Yosemite National Park, even though the area was never logged. Scientists including co-author Andrew Larson of the University of Montana, also have found notable numbers of large trees dying in similar areas across the West.

Because of this, scientists have been keen to study a plot large enough to detect forest ecosystem changes involving large trees, including the effects of climate variability and change, possible culprits in the declines, Lutz said.

The new 63-acre study site in the western part of Yosemite National Park is one of the largest, fully-mapped plots in the world and the largest old-growth plot in North America. The tally of what's there, including the counting and tagging of 34,500 live trees, was done by citizen scientists, mainly undergraduate college students, led by Lutz, Larson, Mark Swanson of Washington State University and James Freund of the UW.

Included was all above-ground biomass such as live trees, snags, downed woody debris, litter and what's called duff, the decaying plant matter on the ground under trees. Even when big trees die, they continue to dominate biomass in different ways. For example, 12 percent of standing snags were the remains of large-diameter trees, but still accounted for 60 percent of the total biomass of snags.

Live and dead biomass totaled 280 tons per acre (652 metric tons per hectare), a figure unmatched by any other forest in the Smithsonian Center for Tropical Forest Science network, a global network of 42 tropical and temperate forest plots including the one in Yosemite.

Washington State University's Mark Swanson pulls a tape tight around a 4-foot-wide sugar pine, one of the 34,500 live trees counted and tagged for long-term study in a Yosemite National Park study plot.

Washington State University

Trees in the western U.S. with trunks more than three feet across are typically at least 200 years old. Many forests that were heavily harvested in the 19th and 20th centuries, or those that are used as commercial forest lands today, don't generally have large-diameter trees, snags or large wood on the ground.

One implication of the research is that land managers may want to pay more attention to existing big trees, the co-authors said. Last year in the Yosemite National Park, for example, managers planning to set fires to clear out overgrown brush and densely packed small trees first used data from the study plot to figure out how many large trees to protect.

"Before the fires were started, crews raked around some of the large trees so debris wouldn't just sit and burn at the base of the tree and kill the cambium, the tissue under the bark that sustains trees," Lutz said.

In some younger forests that lack big trees, citizens and land managers might want to consider fostering the growth of a few big-trunked trees, Lutz said.

Another finding from the new work is that forest models based either on scaling theory or competition theory, which are useful for younger, more uniform forests, fail to capture how and where large trees occur in forests.

"These trees started growing in the Little Ice Age," Lutz said. "Current models can't fully capture the hundreds of years of dynamic processes that have shaped them during their lifetimes."

The research was funded by the Smithsonian Center for Tropical Forest Science.