

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Peg Staeheli, Chair • Tom Early, Vice-Chair

Gordon Bradley • Leif Fixen • Donna Kostka • Joanna Nelson de Flores • Jeff Reibman • Erik Rundell • Steve Zemke

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

September 3, 2014

Meeting Notes

SMT 2750

700 5th Avenue, Seattle

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Attending

Commissioners

Peg Staeheli - chair

Leif Fixen

Donna Kostka

Joanna Nelson de Flores

Jeff Reibman

Erik Rundell

Steve Zemke

Staff

Tracy Morgenstern (OSE)

Guests:

Greg Scheiderer

Public

Absent- Excused

Gordon Bradley

Tom Early

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

The Chair called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

Public comment

None

Urban Forestry Communications toolkit – Scheiderer Partners

Greg Scheiderer provided an overview of the Urban Forestry Communications Toolkit which was developed based on local market research which took an approach focused on the unconscious elements of decision making. A key overarching outcome of the work is to use stories and words that evoke emotions to capture people's attention and imagination and then follow that with data that supports more specific messages as appropriate to the audience. The toolkit provides message framing and sample messages based on the research.

Commissioners reflected on the value of this work in pushing them beyond what they already know to reach a broader audience and the need to tailor messages to different audiences. The need for more detailed research to best tailor messages was noted.

Brainstorm media outreach opportunities/strategy

Commissioners discussed outreach opportunities and strategies considering information from the presentation. Ideas included:

- Incentive for retaining space for mature trees: Can the City quantify the value of trees and provide a related tax credit?
- Incentive for parcels or blocks that meet the canopy goal for their land use: Create a prize or certification with yard signs for blocks or yards as tree havens. This could help create competitions within and between neighborhoods.
- Create canopy scores (similar to walk score) that compare each yard to typical yards, similar to the electric bills which provide information on your use as compared to the average similar home. I-tree may be able to provide the data for the score. It was noted that this approach should focus on the positive – households doing well.

Audubon would be a good organization to partner with on something similar to these ideas.

- A photo contest based on words identified in the Urban Forestry Toolkit as words to use more often. Could create a calendar of the photos. Plant Amnesty does a monthly photo contest- perhaps they could select one of the words to feature each month.

Upcoming tree events

October 11th tree planting event

October 18th Arbor Day

November 8th Green Seattle Day

Commissioners discussed a possible recommendation to SDOT to plant a variety of recommended trees along one long corridor as a planting event and label the trees with species and other information. An option would be to label the names of approved street trees along major corridors in each quadrant of the city.

ACTION: Steve Zemke will draft a recommendation to SDOT.

Draft letter regarding City Tree Replacement Executive Order

Peg shared a draft letter to the Mayor recommending changes to the 2 for 1 tree replacement policy. Commissioners discussed the minimum caliper size recommended change from 2” to 1” including benefits such as the improved plant establishment and survivability, faster growth due to reduced shock, the ability to plant in smaller places, greater species availability, ease of handling, and lower cost.

Commission amendments to the draft were text edits: In the intro paragraph change “two” to “three” and “modifications” to “improvements.”

ACTION: A motion to approve the draft letter was made, seconded and approved as amended.

Comprehensive Plan – subcommittee volunteers

Jeff and Erik agreed to meet with DPD to provide input into the Comprehensive Plan as it is being developed.

Approval of August 6 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the August 6 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and approved. Later an incorrect date was noted in the upcoming events list in the draft meeting notes which was corrected.

New business and announcements

Tree protection regulations

Considering new tree protections regulations will not move forward in the near future, members discussed opportunities to improve implementation of existing regulations such as enhanced inspector training.

ACTION: Peg volunteered to draft a letter to DPD making recommendations on operational improvements to the tree protection code.

Adjourn