

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Tom Early, Chair • Steve Zemke, Vice-Chair
Weston Brinkley • Leif Fixen • Reid Haefer • Craig Johnson • Donna Kostka • Richard Martin
Joanna Nelson de Flores • Andrew Zellers

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

May 3, 2017

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners

Tom Early – chair
Steve Zemke – vice-chair
Reid Haefer
Craig Johnson
Donna Kostka
Sarah Rehder (non-voting)

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE

Guests

Grove Cleveland – King County
Jessica Engel – King County

Absent- Excused

Weston Brinkley
Joanna Nelson de Flores
Andrew Zellers
Richard Martin

Public

None

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

Tom called the meeting to order.

Public comment

None

Adoption of April 5 and April 12 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the April 5 meeting notes as written was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the April 12 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

King County Million Tree campaign update – Grover Cleveland and Jessica Engel

Grover and Jessica talked about the Million Tree Campaign that King County (KC) is working on and gave the Commission an update on partnerships and other collaborative efforts.

King County’s Strategic Climate Action Plan (Nov 2015) provides a five-year blue print to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to prepare for climate change impacts. One of the 2050 goals is to re-tree of KC.

King County Council adopted the goal to increase canopy cover over 30 years by planting one million trees by 2020. King County will comply with half and regional partners will plant the other half.

King County already does a lot of plantings and partners like Forterra and The Nature Conservancy also do a lot. They are working on tracking tools to be more effective.

UFC question/comment: The Commission recommended creating a single tracking system to capture progress.

Answer: Good idea. They calculate that they'll have to plant around 130,000 trees per year to get to the goal. Generally, they are talking about net new trees. The idea is to significantly increase tree canopy. They have thus far planted 60,000 trees.

UFC question/comment: KC might need to extend their timeline out a bit to succeed.

Answer: KC utilities have a goal to be carbon neutral. They are expecting to get a significant infusion from them to help them with their goals. The way they are generally looking at it is this is the marketing campaign to launch their larger 30-year plan.

UFC question/comment: Is the intent to plant only native species?

Answer: King County will plant native species but they are not going to require this from partners. They have some of that information on their website. Grover and Jessica walked the Commission through the website.

UFC question/comment: it would be interesting to do this as a "trees per capita" competition. Maybe partner with Tree City USA (Arbor Day Foundation).

UFC question/comment: might want to include all plants nurseries not necessarily nurseries that sell native plants.

Answer: They have a public facing area of the site where residents can count trees they have planted.

UFC question/comment: It would be helpful to also provide information on invasive species so that people are discouraged from planting them.

They are working with the King County Parks Foundation. Their goal is to target Millennials to get involved.

Arboretum follow-up letter – discussion continues

Leif introduced the new iteration of the letter. The goal being to shift the culture for the City to lead by example. He feels that the Arboretum example is not well connected to the last two paragraphs. He welcomes input.

Sandra shared with the Commission information that Garret sent her: they have removed 123 trees thus far and are planting 700 trees.

The letter originated from conversations with other departments that are not meeting their 2 for 1 goals. Tom proposed waiting to hear the results of the 2016 canopy cover assessment and then use that information to inform the letters.

Tree Regulations letter of recommendation – discussion continues

The Commission proposed holding off for now on this letter.

Creative ideas to expand Seattle's urban forest – discussion continues

Tom is thinking of this as an exercise to carve out opportunities to plant more trees, such as install more roundabouts in neighborhoods.

CM Bagshaw asked last year for the UFC to explore creative ideas. Tom and Steve will be presenting the annual report next week and Tom would like to mention some ideas to convey the message to Council.

- Plant different types of trees on a street to showcase trees that are part of the tree list. Like a tree showcase street. The blank slate could be Ballard or Mercer.
- Use a hybrid poplar as a source of woody plant material to create bio fuels. They get coppiced every two years and get used for bio fuels. This could be done in WSDOT areas as long as the trees get harvested before they are fully grown.
- De-pave to accommodate more roundabouts and pedestrian curb bulbs (work with SDOT to figure out sight line requirements)
- There are areas in the city that are inundated by blackberry and knotweed. Those areas can be cleaned up and used to plant trees.
- Plant trees in undeveloped ROW
- Landscape stairways
- Plant streets on the back side of the sidewalk, adjacent to front yard of properties to enhance root zone (in areas of the city that don't have sidewalks – not in collectors or arterials, mostly on neighborhood streets).
- Alternative Silva cells or structural soil to support root area.
- Seattle to make a commitment to contribute to King County's million tree campaign by increasing tree planting through Trees for Neighborhood.

Public comment

None

New Business

Tom participated in two meetings. One with Shoreline resident Lance Young and Seattle City Light. Mr. Young expressed concern about lack of clarity in terms of language used in SCL's website and other documents about their tree pruning for power line clearance. The second meeting was about Parks Department's work on a tree species failure database.

Steve shared having participated in Seattle Audubon's Flyways Symposium.

Adjourn

Public input:

None