

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Weston Brinkley (Position #3 – University), Chair • Joanna Nelson de Flores (Position #7 – NGO), Vice-Chair
Steve Zemke (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist) • Sandra Whiting (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist)
Sarah Rehder (Position #4 – Hydrologist) • Stuart Niven (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA)
Michael Walton (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA) • Andrew Zellers (Position #8 – Development)
Craig Johnson (Position #9 – Economist) • Megan Herzog (Position #10 – Get Engaged)
Megan Herzog (Position #10 – Get Engaged) • Whit Bouton (Position #11 – Environmental Justice)
Jessica Jones (Position #12 – Public Health) • Shari Selch (Position #13 – Community/Neighborhood)

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

June 13, 2018

Meeting Notes

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

Attending

Commissioners

Weston Brinkley – chair
Joanna Nelson de Flores – vice-chair
Megan Herzog
Craig Johnson
Jessica Jones
Shari Selch
Sarah Rehder
Michael Walton
Sandra Whiting
Andrew Zellers
Steve Zemke

Absent- Excused

Whit Bouton
Stuart Niven

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Aly Pennucci – Council Central Staff
Nicolas Welch (OPCD)

Guests

Barbara Downward – GSP Forest Steward
Andrea Mojkak - Forterra

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

Weston called the meeting to order.

Steve Zemke disclosed that he is the chair of TreePAC and is a member of friends of Seattle's Urban Forest. TreePAC is an appellant on the MHA EIS. He wanted to disclose that he is an appellant but has no financial interest.

Newly appointed commissioners Jessica Jones, Shari Selch, and Michael Walton were present. Jessica introduced herself.

Public comment

None

Preliminary Draft ADU EIS

Aly and Nick gave a presentation on the Accessory Dwelling Unit Draft EIS

A detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU) is a secondary unit located in a separate structure from the principal dwelling unit (i.e. the main house). DADUs are often called backyard cottages.

An attached accessory dwelling unit (AADU) is a secondary unit located within or connected to the main house. AADUs are often called basement apartments.

Why do we want to encourage ADUs?

- Increase ADU production is just one part of our overall housing strategy.
- Create new rental housing choices in single-family zones, where new housing options are few and housing is unaffordable to most residents.
- Make it easier for homeowners to generate supplemental income and adapt to their changing household needs.

ADUs in Seattle:

- ADUs have been allowed within a single-family house since 1994 and in backyard since 2010.
- Less than 2% of Seattle's 135,000 single-family lots have an ADU.
- Since their legalization citywide in 2010, about 550 DADUs have been permitted (average of 69 per year). They are dispersed throughout Seattle's single-family zones.

Removing barriers to ADUs:

- In 2014, City Council Resolution 31547 directed OPCD to study ways to remove code barriers to ADUs
- On May 10, 2018, issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluating proposed code changes:
 - o Removing off-street parking requirement
 - o Removing owner-occupancy requirement
 - o Allowing two ADUs on one lot
 - o Allowing slightly larger/taller DADUs to facilitate family-sizes units
- Comments welcome through June 25, 23018.

What we learned in the Draft EIS:

- The proposal would result in about 1,400 more ADUs across Seattle over 10 years, 390 would be additional new ADUs.
 - o This could reduce economic displacement by creating new housing choices
- If would decrease the number of houses torn down by about 16%
 - o This could reduce physical displacement by decreasing demolitions.
- Used residual land value (RLV) analysis to identify highest-and-best use for different lot types in different market areas.
 - o In most cases, the most profitable option is to build the largest possible house
 - In some cases, a new house with no ADU
 - In other cases, a new house with 1 or 2 ADUs
 - o In all scenarios, short-term rental is less profitable than longterm rental
 - o Proposal would decrease the feasibility of tearing down existing houses

What does the Draft EIS say about trees?

- Typical single-family houses are 1-2 stories, surrounded by yards and open space that support the growth of large trees. This open space provides much of the city's tree canopy.
- Comp Plan goal: increasing canopy coverage to 30% by 2037.
- 2016 Lidar data shows:
 - o Overall, Seattle has 28% canopy cover
 - o Single-family residential areas account for 63% of Seattle's canopy cover
 - o 72% of Seattle's tree canopy is deciduous and 28% is coniferous. Most conifers are in single-family residential areas (52%)
- 340-390 additional DADUs under the action alternatives could result in more vegetation and tree removal than under the No Action alternative (#1) as more property owners would use some of their rear yard for the footprint of a DADU.
- Single-family residential areas currently provide 9,574 acres of tree canopy cover. If all 390 additional DADUs maximize the size limit of 1,000 sqft, the total footprint of DADUs would be just under nine acres, or less than 0.1 % of the total tree canopy.
- Removing the off-street parking requirement in Alternative 2 reduces the amount of vegetation and tree removal otherwise needed for off-street parking.
- The proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limit in Alternative 3 would tend to reduce the footprint of new houses, which would also reduce the potential for impacts to tree canopy and vegetation.
- Under Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance (SMC 25.11) the City would review tree removal required for constructing a DADU as part of the permit application. Exceptional trees would be removed only if protecting the tree during construction would prevent use of the maximum allowed lot coverage.
- CM Johnson is leading an effort to update the tree protection ordinance to create stronger protections for existing trees and introduce new mitigation measures.

They incorporated feedback UFC provided in their November 2016 letter of recommendation.

Comment period open through June 25. Final DEIS in September. Council might move legislation before the end of the year if the final EIS is not appealed. There will be community meetings.

Lawton Park

Barbara Downward presented the work she and other volunteers have been doing to restore Lawton Park as part of the Green Seattle Partnership. Below are the notes she shared with the UFC:

"Thank you all for your service on the Urban Forestry Commission. Your diligence and insight are gifts to Seattle. I'm Barbara Downward a volunteer Green Seattle Partnership steward at Lawton Park in Magnolia, 10 blocks east of Discovery Park, adjacent to Lawton Elementary School. Today, June 13, 2018 here in Seattle, our City is changing. Lawton Park is changing too. I will share insights and experience about forest restoration at Lawton Park.

Friends of Lawton Park plants trees. We plant forests. Enter a ravine in Lawton Park and you can feel the temperature drop and smell a difference in the air. People say this is "forest bathing" and Lawton Park users love it.

Lawton Park volunteer forest restoration began when Jean Wheeler pulled ivy from its trees. Seattle Parks helped Jean and Clint Hall start Friends of Lawton Park. The Lawton Park Forest Restoration plan written in 1997 by University of Washington grad student Angela Kimpo was the basis of planning and work. Large, energetic work parties of incoming Seattle Pacific University students cleared big areas of Himalayan blackberry.

Seattle Parks suggested the King Conservation District as a source of plant material for newly cleared sites. Brandy Reed of the King County Conservation district coordinated large plant donations to Lawton Park, helping diversify native plantings in Lawton Park. Volunteers from Lawton went to the KCD nursery to earn "plant credits" to invest in Lawton's forest.

Friends of Lawton Park built the wetland boardwalk with a grant from the City of Seattle and help from non-profit Treemendous in 1999. In 2002, the University of Washington Restoration Ecology Network did wetland restoration around the boardwalk.

Friends of Lawton Park joined the Green Seattle Partnership volunteer program. We logged hours and hosted events. Joanna Nelson de Flores brought us along the restoration path and helped create the landscape of Lawton Park. Seattle Parks and especially the district staff of Central west division provided support as well. Green Seattle Partnership planting protocols and the shift to fall plantings achieved good results. At Lawton Park, availability of irrigation water helps new plantings survive the critical first few years.

GSP's introduction of best management practices were welcome. Because Cooper's hawks nest at Lawton Park, we were especially happy to adapt GSP's bird protocol aligning with Seattle Audubons' designation of Seattle as an Urban Bird Treaty City. Since 2012, Cooper's hawks have nested at Lawton Park -that's 6 consecutive years. Ed Deal and the Seattle Cooper's hawk Group. documented hawks in Seattle in the Journal of Raptor Research March 2017 issue.

Friends of Lawton Park have a rich history of partnership in the restoration community. We participated in programs with the Friends of South Sound Prairies. We went on plant salvages sponsored by King County and came back with gigantic Sword ferns for Lawton Park. I completed the Washington Native Plant Society native plant steward program and started volunteering with them, providing "double leveraged" plant material to the park. In 2009 Seattle Parks and WNPS taught volunteer park stewards the "live stake" propagation method for shrub material and the hedge rows at Lawton Park exploded. Live staking is a dirt free and pot free propagation technique for shrubs.

The "Junior urban forest steward" after school program was the brain child of Cassandra Bradberry. In 2015, students from Lawton Elementary School learned about ecological restoration from mason bees to Great Blue Herons with lots of mulching in between. Friends of Lawton Park partnered with Lawton Elementary School teacher Lyon Terry in 2008 to engage students in Lawton Parks' restoration. I contacted Lyon after reading about the "walking school bus" program he started at the school as part of Lawton Elementary Schools' "Green schools initiative". In 2016, one walking school bus leader estimated his group made 1,674 trips along the Williams ravine trail during one school year. The trail provides crucial neighborhood access. The Lawton Park segment of the Williams ravine is a triangle of land, less than an acre, nestled in a greenbelt of street ends and private property.

Now, Lawton Park's trees need care. Lawton Park suffers canopy loss that has left noticeable gaps in the forest. Falling trees have damaged the forest and destroyed thriving evergreens. Large alders and Big leaf Maples fall into Lawton's ravines. Cherry bark tortrix disease is present. There is a grove of dead, standing Bitter cherries that are shedding limbs. Lawton's trees need inventory, evaluation and care for public safety.

Crews come to Lawton Park to clear fallen trees. Crews came this year when Big leaf Maples fall across the trail that runs to 25th Ave W. Here is a large fallen Big leaf Maple leaning on an alder with a partially hollow trunk. Will they fall into the forest like the other 6 large trees that fell on the south side of the trail to 25th Ave W last year? Fallen Cherries from 5N rested, suspended on the fence at the edge of the paved path to Williams Ave W. Everybody had to duck under them to get to Lawton Elementary School and the adjacent neighborhood. Big leaf Maples fall across the Williams ravine trail. Last year, at the north end, a Big leaf

Maple fell across the trail destroying a fence, its large crown in a homes' back yard. The fallen trunk trapped a communications line beneath it; that line is still hanging between poles slung low across the trail. Multiple calls and messages to "find it fix it" for a year have not remedied the problem. The work number assigned to the hanging utility line is 17-00129154.

Working around fallen trees is easiest when the trunks are on the ground. Volunteers using hand tools can saw limbs to access space around the tree if the trunk is stable, but tree trunks suspended off the ground make access difficult and relegate the area around the fallen trunks to aggressive growth by ivy, holly and Himalayan blackberry. We would like to have fallen tree trunks sawed to the ground and cut into 10-15 foot lengths.

The beauty of Lawton Park depends on views and scenery beyond its boundaries. Many of the large trees that enhance the beauty of Lawton Park are not within the boundaries of the park but on Seattle Department of Transportation property or on private property. Every restoration area of Lawton Park has a border with SDOT property. Many areas are adjacent to private land.

In 2008, 11 and 12, Seattle Parks and Green Seattle Partnership hired professional crews to begin restoration in several areas in and adjacent to Lawton Park. "Contract crews" worked along the Emerson street easement- the southern boundary of the Park between 25th Ave W and 26th Pl W. A crew worked in the Williams ravine, area 7b and at the southern entrance to the ravine and its trail. We've seen those areas change from blackberry monocultures or laurel and holly jungles to vibrant native ecosystems. Friends of Lawton Park maintained and enhanced those areas until 2016 when we were directed by Parks to stop working in land not owned by the Parks department. Only with care can progress be maintained. We want Park's Department permission to start caring for them and other publicly owned areas around the park again.

Help is needed in areas of Lawton Park where there are ownership or jurisdiction issues. There is a retaining wall immediately south of Lawton Parks' wetland boardwalk in area 4. Water pours, spews from between the rocks and from 2 drainage pipes embedded in this wall during heavy rains. There are 2 large Red Alders growing from this wall- roots clinging like rain forest vines. Lately, water is leaking from an additional location along the wall. Failure of the wall or of the trees growing in the wall would be dramatic and damage the boardwalk and integrity of the wetland we have nurtured. I've toured visitors to this site for years, lately completing an incident report for Parks after the latest gusher this May. Does this site need professional evaluation?

During annual walk throughs with our plant ecologist. we reported problems of incursions and dumping along the east side of Lawton Parks' border here. Neighbors also complained to the City about the dumping and incursion at the site, some began doing the same things. I stopped going into the area or taking volunteers there. We believe this incursion deserves City attention. Parks referred the site to SDOT in 2017.

Lawton's beauty is tied to its trees. As the neighborhood around Lawton Park increases in density, the importance of Lawton Park increases too. Despite recent tree losses, Lawton Park has a growing forest, but its scenery is a creation not just of the Park but also adjacent properties. Lawton Park and adjacent public areas need protection. The beauty Lawton Park and its trees, trails and open vistas are an antidote for City living because Lawton Park and the surrounding properties are so well loved. Thanks to Rick Hemmen, Jim Davis and Andrea Mojzak (of Forterra) for help preparing this presentation, and thanks to Rick Hemmen and Michael Hanson for use of their photos."

ADU EIS letter of recommendation

The Commission discussed a draft letter provided by Craig.

ACTION: A motion to approve the amended letter of recommendation RE: ADU Draft EIS was made, seconded, and approved.

Public comment

None

New Business

None

Adjourn

Public input

From: James Davis <jamesdavis1400@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 12:45 PM
To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto_de_Bader@Seattle.gov>
Cc: 'Barbara Downward' <lavender@mindspring.com>
Subject: Lawton Park Presentation Modification

Sandra, thanks again for your walking visit to Lawton Park and your invitation to speak about the different accomplishments and challenges. I met with Barbara Downward and we decided it would be good to spend the presentation time on the park itself and Barbara will be doing that. The challenges I mentioned to you are in relation to the larger ecosystem the park property resides in. As you know, the park is bordered by property under the jurisdiction of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). The larger ecosystem also includes wetlands, steep slope areas and groves of trees that reside under the jurisdiction of the Seattle Department of Inspections and Construction (SDIC). At some future date I would offer to spend time presenting on these issues to the UFC and share how SDOT and SDIC responded to issues from my own experiences.

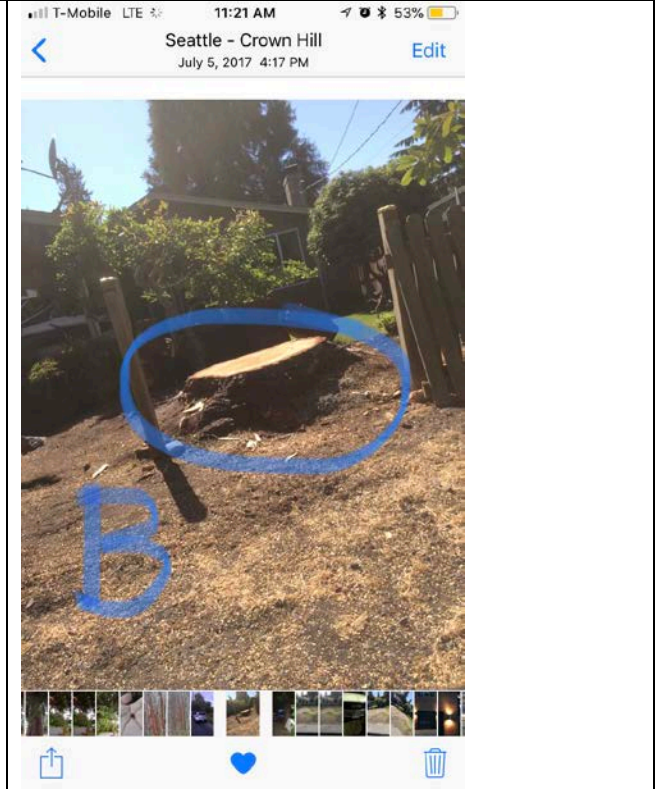
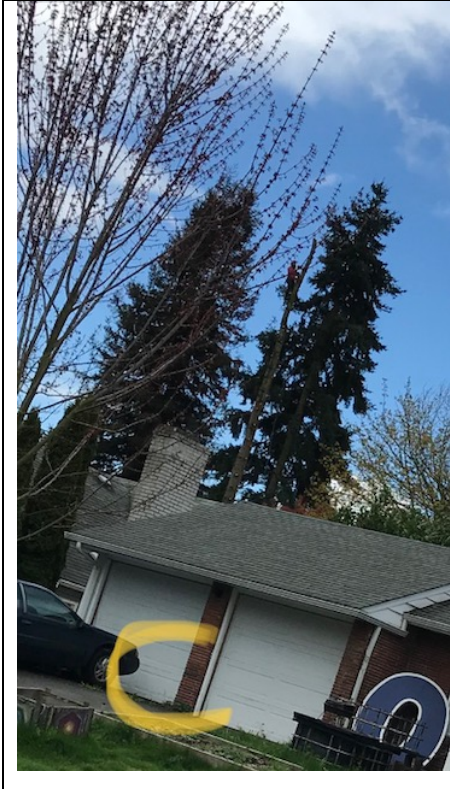
For example, at the north end of the ravine trail/greenbelt area – a walk along the ravine trail is a stellar example of “forest bathing”- there is an Exceptional grove of trees on private property. You may know there are wind tunnels traversing the ravine trail. I understand those winds are actually to be taken into consideration for building design in the area. The loss of that Exceptional grove of trees – several have been cut down by the new homeowners - will impact the durability of trees within the greenbelt as they are exposed to higher winds. And of course, wildlife habitat will be affected. In response to the trees cut down a SDIC inspector made a valiant effort to carefully hike through the greenbelt to check out the situation. Because of limitations on the access necessary to measure the trees’ diameters, the best that could be done was to issue a letter stating that the limit of trees that could be cut down annually had been met.

I mentioned other concrete examples to you in a previous email of situations impacting the overall ecosystem. Best regards and I appreciate your important work and that of the Commission.

Jim Davis - Lawton Park Neighbor

From: Cynthia Slate <cynthiaslate@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2018 11:57 AM
To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto_de_Bader@Seattle.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Protecting our trees-loopholes

Here are the photos that correspond to this email below-please excuse my cut and past email. I have taken this from my phone while I am in a doctor's office with bad WiFi, but I wanted to make sure I sent this by today.



To the Urban Forestry Commission-

I would like the Forestry Commission to recognize that the current system of reporting your neighbors doesn't result in anything once the tree has been cut down:

I will give you examples -photos correspond to A, B, C below:

A. The sidewalk was built around this tree-I know it was over 32 inches because I spoke some years ago to the person fixing the sidewalk -moving the sidewalk to go around this stately large tree-and he said it was an "exceptional tree" it was the largest of the four trees in the back lot, but this year when the house sold the new owners got an arborist to document the tree at only 29 inches at breast height.

I could not believe when the SDCI showed me the arborist's report and removal. I wrote back to SDCI and they just did not respond. We need site visits for removal of large trees that the neighbors know is exceptional. We now have arborists that will lie or ignore "exceptional tree" standards.

B. This Incense Cedar was taken out on the front set back with several other trees. The reason car/Boat Parking. This tree which I knew well would have been exceptional except it was on a less than 5000 square foot lot. In addition, like the other tree above, it was straddling the property line and front right-of-way and should (part?) also belong part to SDOT.

C. These three trees disappeared (only two in photo first tree was already down before I got this photo) the tree in photo-redwood is not one of the trees) in a day. I tried to get photos and reported the three trees to SDCI. The SDCI inspector (north of Greenlake) told me there is nothing he can do because he doesn't know what property/properties the trees were located on. I said use google earth he said he had to catch them in the act. "Sorry".

That's all for now. Each time I filed a complaint with SDOT or SDCI and it resulted in nothing.

Cynthia Slate
206 372-4271