



SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

- Julia Michalak** (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist), Co-chair
- Joshua Morris** (Position #7 – NGO), Co-Chair
- Elby Jones** (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist - ISA) • **Weston Brinkley** (Position #3 – University)
- Stuart Niven** (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA) • **David Moehring** (Position # 8 – Development)
- Blake Voorhees** (Position # 9 – Realtor) • **Jessica Hernandez** (Position #11 – Environmental Justice)
- Jessica Jones** (Position # 12 – Public Health)

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

Draft meeting notes

January 5, 2022, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Via Webex call
(206) 207-1700
Meeting number: 2485 086 0870
Meeting password: 1234

In-person meeting are not being held at this time due to the pandemic. Meeting participation is limited to access by joining the meeting through a computer or telephone conference line.

Attending

Commissioners

- Josh Morris – Co-Chair
- Julia Michalak – Co-Chair
- David Moehring
- Weston Brinkley
- Blake Voorhees

Staff

- Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

- Toby Thaler

Public

- Steve Zemke
- Michael Oxman
- Heidi Siegelbaum

Absent- Excused

- Stuart Niven
- Jessica Hernandez
- Elby Jones
- Jessica Jones

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: Josh called the meeting to order and offered a land acknowledgement.

Public comment:

Steve Zemke – regarding the draft Comprehensive Plan letter, it’s good to look at what was in the last plan, but should also look at what was in the previous two plans, to inform what should be updated. Also, the Land

Use and Neighborhoods Committee's schedule has changed so that meetings are now on Wednesday afternoons, and the members of the Committee have changed.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Josh thanked Weston for his service as Commission Chair for the last two years, and is looking forward now to serving as Co-Chair along with Julia. He provided the news that Commissioner Shari Selch let us know that she will no longer be able to serve on the Commission, effective immediately. He noted that anyone who might be interested in taking on the third Co-Chair role can let Patti know. He also noted changes in membership and schedule of Council committees; the Commission will need to stay tuned to those.

Patti provided the following updates:

- Laura Keil will be the new Get Engaged member on the Commission. Her appointment is being finalized and she is not yet a voting member, but is here at this meeting to start to get acquainted with the Commission. Laura expressed her excitement in being on the Commission and is looking forward to working with the Commissioners.
- The changeover in Mayor administrations has meant a pause on some ongoing things:
 - Recruitments for Commission positions – processing of the applicants received for positions 4 and 6, and posting the announcements for positions 2, 3 and 13 – position 2 being Elby's position, position 3 being Weston's position which term ends in March this year, and position 13 being Shari's position that now also needs to be filled.
 - Tree protection updates – outgoing Mayor Durkan put a pause on issuing the proposed updates in December, in order to give incoming Mayor Harrell time to get up to speed on this effort and provide direction for moving it forward. In the meantime, SDCI staff have heard concerns from folks over proposed updates to how Environmentally Critical Areas are handled, and these updates have implications for trees and other vegetation, so they are offering a briefing and discussion with the Commission on this, so will be on next week's agenda.

Approval of November 3 and 10 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the November 3 meeting notes as written was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the November 10 meeting notes as written was made, seconded, and approved.

New Mayor Letter

Josh drafted this letter, and provided background on the intent of the letter, noting that it would be beneficial for the Commission to do whatever it can to build relationships with Mayor's Office, including identifying appropriate staff with whom the Commission can work to effectively move things forward, and clearly identifying Commission goals. Importance of investments in the urban forest and how it overlaps with other stated goals. There is much agreement between the Commission's goals and Mayor Harrell's stated goals and important issues. The letter includes background on the ongoing, drawn-out effort to update tree protections, noting the current code doesn't adequately protect trees and urging Executive support for this effort. There is language from the Commission's establishing legislation, as well as what the Commission and Commissioners can offer as a resource to the Mayor and an outline of current priorities.

Commissioners discussed the letter and the needs for communicating and developing constructive relationships with the Mayor. Commissioners made edits to the letter to improve content and effectiveness, and discussed Co-Chair Josh Morris also making a phone call to the new Mayor in addition to sending this letter.

ACTION: A motion to adopt the letter to Mayor Harrell as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Ordinance 123052

The Commission sent a letter to outgoing City Attorney Pete Holmes last month, requesting consultation on questions around this enabling legislation. No response was received and we now have a new City Attorney. The Commission discussed sending a similar letter to the new City Attorney, which can also include a welcome. A letter can also be sent welcoming the new City Councilmember. Those two letters can be developed for next week's meeting. Weston volunteered to draft a letter to the new City Attorney, and Josh volunteered to draft a letter to the new City Councilmember.

Seattle Comprehensive Plan follow-up letter

David outlined the draft letter that he and Stuart prepared. The letter provides a recap and a thank you for the staff providing the presentation. They included visuals from the 2016 Canopy Cover Assessment report, as it covers equity as an important issue for the city and its tree canopy, ensuring all communities have adequate canopy coverage. The table of canopy cover goals for each management unit is included, to show that there are canopy targets for each; it's important that the Comprehensive Plan include this type of data to avoid considering that some areas don't need canopy coverage because other areas have it.

Josh had made some additions to acknowledge OPCD's comments that this update effort would not be a usual plan update due to the ongoing crises, and also pointing out that urban forest considerations overlap with Comprehensive Plan goals in many ways. Commissioners noted that this update effort is on the work plan for the year, and discussed ways to make sure that the Commission is engaged as much as possible and as appropriate throughout the process; edits were made to the letter to cover this. Commissioners discussed having a subcommittee to commit to working with OPCD on this process; Josh and David expressed interest in participating on this subcommittee. Commissioners further edited the letter to emphasize the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the Comprehensive Plan values and the urban forest (they are each relevant to and important to the other), as well as other clarifying and emphasizing edits.

Action: A motion to adopt the letter regarding the Comprehensive Plan as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Sooty Bark Disease follow-up letter

The draft letter for this was prepared by Commissioner Selch, and Josh provided edits and additional content for it. Commissioners discussed the content and structure of the letter, and made some edits to it. Patti responded to a question as to any updates on the sooty bark disease since the October presentation, by providing the update that messaging has been drafted regarding the effect to trees in the city, and city staff are working with appropriate local and state agencies to develop messaging regarding potential effects to the public. Those sets of messaging should be available soon; meetings are scheduled on them in the near future.

Action: A motion to adopt the letter regarding the Comprehensive Plan as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Additional discussion

With extra time remaining the meeting, Commissioners discussed other updates, including some upcoming potential legislation, and the process for the Commission to weigh in on legislation. The processes for work planning and annual report preparation, consideration and adoption were discussed, and will be coming up on future agendas.

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>

Public comment:

Steve Zemke – it would help to speed up the meetings if a Commissioner was assigned to review the meeting notes ahead of time. Also, the Commission can make comments ahead of time on the Comprehensive Plan; don't need to wait to be asked about it. Regarding HB1099, it is complex; other groups are also reviewing it also. TreePAC conducted a second poll, again showing the public very strongly behind the tree protection proposals; reviewing that would be helpful for the Commission's future planning.

Michael Oxman noted that Sara Nelson is the only new City Councilmember and provided some background on her. He discussed open space policies – the history of them and the new Mayor's thoughts on them. Several polls have been done regarding trees and the public's sentiments. There is a large community of folks/organizations focused on tree and climate change.

Heidi Siegelbaum shared some research she discovered recently, which pointed out that here as well as nationally, there is much press on tree planting but virtually nothing on tree retention. So she recommends the Commission promote attention on tree retention and urge that development incorporates increased tree retention. She included links in the chat for more on this.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 PM.

Meeting Chat:

from Weston to everyone: 3:11 PM

You're doing great!

from Julia Michalak She/Her to everyone: 3:14 PM

Welcome Laura!!

from Weston to everyone: 3:15 PM

Welcome!

from D. Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 3:18 PM

Thank you Patti

from Heidi Siegelbaum to everyone: 3:18 PM

Here is a useful set of docs related to CAOs from Commerce: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/growth-management-topics/critical-areas/>

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 3:46 PM

The new councilmember was on Councilmember Richard Conlin's staff, and should be very conversant on urban forestry policy.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:47 PM

Sara Nelson is the only new City Council member. She was elected citywide am.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:59 PM

In the Legislature this session is HB 1099 which would add climate resiliency as a goal in developing Comprehensive Plans.

from Weston to everyone: 4:15 PM

(feeling a little self conscious the reason we never got done before 5:00pm had something to do with the Chair...)

from D. Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 4:17 PM

Ha, chuckle to that comment

from Heidi Siegelbaum to everyone: 4:19 PM

<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/UrbanForestryCommission/FinalIssuedDocuments/BylawsProtocols/ADOPTEDUFCommissionUpdatedBylaws030321.pdf>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:19 PM

Commissioners can always get information and respond on their own to legislative and other issues

from Heidi Siegelbaum to everyone: 4:19 PM

There is nothing in your bylaws which would prevent you from commenting on state legislation, particularly since it's focused on urban forestry

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:20 PM

Depending on the details, HB 1099 could cause harm to urban forest.

from Mary Manous to everyone: 4:23 PM

Cascadia Climate Action works on community outreach on climate change in the area of urban forests. If there is a way we could be of any help or collaboration opportunity, please get in touch. mmanous@me.com 206/261-2155.

from Julia Michalak She/Her to everyone: 4:23 PM

Thank you Mary

from D. Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 4:25 PM

Agreed. Enjoyed the Cascadia Climate Action event in December 2021.

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:27 PM

I'm not an expert. It might be worth contacting City's Office of Intergovernment Relations. I'll look for link to the City's Leg agenda

from Heidi Siegelbaum to everyone: 4:28 PM

This might provide some insights:<https://mrsc.org/getmedia/1e641718-94a0-408b-b9d9-42b2e1d8180d/Knowing-The-Territory.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf>

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:28 PM

City's 2022 Legislative Agenda:

<https://seattle.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5349842&GUID=2488E207-D945-4921-8CAE-8B727D262C45&Options=ID|Text|&Search=legislative+agenda>

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:30 PM

If you want to talk politics, call me outside of an official meeting. 206 640-6982. Legislative lobbying is nothing if not "politics."

from Tina Cohen to everyone: 4:32 PM

In the future, could you post the letters etc on line or provide a link? I certainly couldn't see them on the screen.

from Heidi Siegelbaum to everyone: 4:34 PM

Published: 08 April 2021

Citation:

Pataki DE, Alberti M,
Cadenasso ML, Felson AJ,
McDonnell MJ, Pincetl S, Pouyat RV,
Setälä H and Whitlow TH (2021) The
Benefits and Limits of Urban Tree
Planting for Environmental
and Human Health.

Front. Ecol. Evol. 9:603757.

doi: 10.3389/fevo.2021.603757- this document concludes that tree planting is CC adaptation not mitigation- would love to see the UFC promote tree retention as a superordinate priority along with tree planting- the latter seems to be the city's worthwhile feel-good strategy but alone is insufficient

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 4:34 PM

Tina, the letters are posted online when available before the meeting; today's letters were posted. Links to them are provided in the Bulletin if you are signed up to receive those.

from Heidi Siegelbaum to everyone: 4:38 PM

Hi Mary--yes would love to talk with your interns! (206) 784-4265

from Julia Michalak She/Her to everyone: 4:40 PM

Heidi - thank you for sharing that paper.

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:41 PM

Thank you!

Public input: (see next page and posted notes):