

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

August 6, 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

Erik Rundell

Steve Zemke

Staff

Tracy Morgenstern (OSE)

Dave Bayard (SCL)

Brennon Staley (DPD)

Public

None

Absent- Excused

Gordon Bradley

Tom Early - vice-chair

Jeff Reibman

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

Approval of July 9 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the July 9 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

SCL vegetation management planning – David Bayard (SCL)

David Bayard, SCL Vegetation Management Supervisor, provided an overview of Seattle City Light's approach to tree maintenance and removal planning within the overarching goals of balancing safety, environmental benefits, and reliability. The presentation included information about how data is used to

apply an equity lens to vegetation management planning and efforts to develop a more objective protocol for responding to complaints which can be consistently applied.

Questions and discussion related to:

- How effective the two-for-one tree replacement policy is in mitigating canopy loss when a department is replacing existing trees with smaller species,
- The need to consider canopy loss due to pruning in addition to tree removal (SCL and partners are looking at ways to assess pruning related canopy loss),
- Concerns revealed by the map which plotted complaint-based removal indicating that residents may be requesting removals for alleged safety reasons that are really view related (Dave - the new protocols being developed for assessing complaints will address this),
- The need for updated canopy data to evaluate trends to inform planning and options for collecting data (different data collection methods were discussed).

DPD Tree Ordinance update – Brennon Staley (DPD)

Brennon provided an overview of the history of the tree removal ordinance from 2008 to the present. He noted that direction is needed from the Murray administration but the current goal is to have a new draft by late 2015.

Questions and discussion related to:

- How best the commission can express their interest and impart of sense of urgency for a permanent tree removal ordinance to elected beyond the recent letter on the subject,
- Commissioner interest in being involved in a sub-committee in developing the next ordinance version,
- The effectiveness of the interim rules, particularly around enforcement and complaint-based notification system,
- Interest in a permit system as an interim measure, which Brennon clarified requires the same legislative process as the permanent ordinance and budget to establish a permit system,
- How the current update to the Comprehensive Plan works to resolve issues between urban forest and other city priorities (Brennon clarified that the Comprehensive Plan is a broader planning document and implementing plans are a more appropriate place for considering the balance among priorities)
- Commissioners requested an early version of the Comprehensive Plan for their review and comment before the public comment draft is released (Brennon clarified that it will be released to everyone at once to maximize the time all interested parties have to respond)

ACTION: By December, two to three Commissioners will meet with Brennon to talk through the Commission's issues. At the September UFC meeting, the Chair will request volunteers to participate in this meeting.

Find it-Fix it app

The Chair informed members that the Find-it-Fix it app is now available from the Commission webpage.

UFC/UF IDT annual meeting

The Chair reminded members that the UFC/UF IDT meeting has been moved to October 8th and will include a team building activity such as a ropes course or tree planting and a discussion on tree funding.

New business and announcements

Discussion included:

- How to raise awareness of tree issues with the new Administration beyond the recent letter, a need to reach back out to elected officials in the fall was noted,
- The merits of a modification to the two-for-one tree planting executive order to require something like a four-for-one replacement requirement when smaller species trees are replacing larger species. The Chair offered to draft a letter requesting the modification,
- Creating a media strategy to raise the profile of the Commission's recommendations and the opportunity Arbor Day presents for media outreach, and
- The importance of positive messages such as the value of trees including large trees and conifers. Leif noted the positive impact Boston's project hanging large "price tags" reflecting the monetized value of trees as an opportunity for Seattle to consider.

ACTION: One of the next two meetings should include time to brainstorm media outreach opportunities/strategy.

ACTION: UFC attendees – request volunteers

October 11 – TBD City Tree Planting Event

October 18th – Seattle's Arbor Day

November 8th – Green Seattle Day

Adjourn