



SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Weston Brinkley (Position #3 – University), Chair • **Sarah Rehder** (Position #4 – Hydrologist), Vice-chair
Julia Michalak (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **Elby Jones** (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist - ISA)
Stuart Niven (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA) • **Michael Walton** (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA)
Joshua Morris (Position #7 – NGO) • **Blake Voorhees** (Position #9 – Realtor)
Elena Arakaki (Position #10 – Get Engaged) • **Jessica Hernandez** (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

Meeting notes

June 9, 2021, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Via Webex call
(206) 207-1700
Meeting number: 146 864 0732
Meeting password: 1234

In-person meetings 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

Weston Brinkley – Chair
Sarah Rehder - Vice-Chair
Elena Arakaki
Jessica Hernandez
Julia Michalak
David Moehring
Josh Morris
Stuart Niven
Shari Selch
Blake Voorhees
Michael Walton
Jessica Jones

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE
Sandra Pinto – OSE
Lylianna Allala – OSE
Jose Vasquez – OSE
Lisa Chen – OSE
Ani Krishnan – OSE
Josh Meidav – SPU

Guests

Toby Thaler – CM Pedersen’s Office
Elijah Selch

Public

Steve Zemke
Jessica Dixon
Bill Yock

Absent- Excused

Elby 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: Weston called the meeting to order at 3:04 and took roll call.

Public comment:

Steve Zemke – Welcome Patti, to this effort to update the tree regulations and retaining our urban forest in the best state we can. Two comments/suggestions for the Statement of Legislative Intent letter of recommendation.

Stuart Niven – wanted to publicly thank Sandra Pinto for her service.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Weston provided a land acknowledgement, and included a reminder that the Commission’s land acknowledgement is still a work in progress, to be updated and improved. He reported that the Committee meetings have yet to be scheduled and there will be more to report on committees next month.

Weston allowed some time for Sandra Pinto to give a last report/goodbyes to the Commission as she retires and this is her last meeting.

Patti Bakker, as new Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator, provided the update that Jessica Hernandez’s appointment to Position #11 Environmental Justice was approved by City Council on June 1st. Also, on June 2nd, the annual meeting of the Urban Forestry Commission and the Urban Forestry Interdepartmental Team occurred and was focused on continuing training on Inclusive Engagement Principals, with training led by SPU’s Community Connections Team.

Approval of May 5 and May 12 meeting notes

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

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

Green New Deal Briefing

OSE staff Lylianna Allala, Jose Vasquez, Ani Krishnan and Lisa Chen provided a presentation on the work OSE is doing around the Green New Deal (GND), including the Equity and Environment Initiative. Lylianna provided a briefing on the GND work last year; GND work was then delayed in 2020 due to the pandemic, but is moving forward again now. The presentation included:

- Equity and Environment Initiative
- Structures and policies set up to implement work, including the starting up of the GND Oversight Board.
- Climate actions relevant to the work of the UF Commission
- Data – status updates on how the city is doing toward 2030 goals outlined, which show that annual progress toward goals needs to increase between 17% and 30% in the different categories of emissions in order to attain the goals. We need more data, particularly in order to serve environmental justice communities.
- Other groups involved in coordinating this work; community groups as well as City departments
- The City team’s scope of work

Comments and questions from Commissioners included:

- Appreciate the progress that’s been made, especially leading with race and being a model that way. Data tracking for carbon footprint; we need that in order to effectively coordinate and implement urban forestry work.
- Climate is a global issue. Even if Seattle is carbon neutral tomorrow, there will be impacts to mitigate.

- Welcome the opportunity to work together with the GND team. There may be policies we can mutually recommend to improve conditions for parts of the city that are disproportionately impacted.
- Access to green spaces is important, but who manages green spaces and trees varies across the city. Is there opportunity as we work together to address the access needs of neighborhoods, and trees as mitigation infrastructure to have a citywide vision of our urban forest? How do we plan for the city we want across the different departments?
- Options for staying up to date on and engaging with the GND team
- Concern that focus on equity issues means that we ignore loss of canopy that's happening in areas with dense canopy now. In addition to looking to add it where it doesn't exist now, recommend looking to protect what we already have.

SPU restoration work

Josh Meidav provided a presentation on SPU's restoration work, in the context of the landscapes they manage and the coordination they engage in with other city departments. The habitat management work includes review of capital projects as well as programmatic and operations. Josh provided an overview of the Landscape Asset Management Planning (LAMP), which is a new effort with a deliverable of a first draft by the end of this year. The process includes inventory on 442 acres, 151 sites and evaluates SPU sites and public experience elements in the context of equity.

Josh discussed examples of site-specific restoration work:

- Forest restoration in West Seattle at SW Carroll Street
- Mitigation work along Maple Creek
- Mitigation and restoration combo on Upper Maple Creek
- Mitigation on Longfellow Creek at Genesee Pond
- Joint/coordination projects like Kingfisher and Salmon Bay Natural Area

Comments and questions from Commissioners included:

- Regarding the joint projects: has it been hard to make that coordination work, given different department ownership of lands? There are good agreements in place and relationships with staff groups that help, but there are funding and staffing challenges. Meeting in the field and playing to each other's strengths helps with getting the work done.

Commission Debriefs on Presentations

Green New Deal:

Comments:

- Regarding gentrification issues, and the ability to create affordable housing: there are perceived conflicts between saving green spaces and creating affordable housing, how is that perceived in different communities, and are there concrete strategies for avoiding and mitigating those impacts.
- Elena – are other nearby cities doing similar climate efforts that we can learn from?

Sarah will draft a letter thanking Lylianna's team for the presentation and their work. Other items the Commission would like to include in addition to these three things:

- Integrating forestry into the GND team's work and metrics for tracking carbon.
- There is interest in connecting with and building a relationship with the GND Oversight Board.
- The presentation outlined the current data and the need to dramatically increase efforts. Possibly combine the Commission's tree canopy goals with their 2030 goals?

Question: Both groups know we need to do something to advance our environmental goals. Who makes the decisions on these strategic goals? Weston pointed out that goals are lined out in UFMP and we drive toward those.

SPU restoration:

It was good to have his transparent expression of his goals. Should put forward a letter to Mayor, Council and SPU leadership to support funding for this work and care for the assets. Stormwater infrastructure was not included in this discussion, but is tied/connected. In implementing the LAMP, how to ensure the work is funded adequately? Weston and Sarah work on a letter to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Urban Forestry Consolidation Statement of Legislative Intent letter

Weston provided a brief overview of the structure of the recommendations included in his draft letter shared with the Commission. Due to lack of time at the end of the meeting, Commissioners agreed to review the letter between today and the next meeting and will revisit it at the next meeting.

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 –The Commission should consider recommending creation of a new department as the Office of Environment, Climate and Sustainability. Regarding the Urban Forestry Statement of Legislative Intent: consolidation could potentially save funds, increase efficiency.

Jessica Dixon – on behalf of her organization, The Last 6,000, Ms. Dixon expressed support for the Urban Forestry Statement of Legislative Intent and consolidating urban forestry (and maybe planning). A letter was sent from the organization, along with a memo from SDCI regarding a development in Magnolia; these materials are included with public input below.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 PM.

Meeting Chat:

from Pinto Urrutia, Sandra to everyone: 2:56 PM

Hello everyone

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 3:12 PM

Thank you Sandra for all your work and advocacy!

from Julia Michalak to everyone: 3:12 PM

Thank you so much Sandra!!

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:12 PM

Bye Sandra, we'll miss you!!1

from Blake Voorhees to everyone: 3:12 PM

Thank you so much, Sandra!!

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:13 PM

Welcome, Patti! Glad to have you here. :)

from David Moehring to everyone: 3:14 PM

Welcome, Commissioner Hernandez

from David Moehring to everyone: 3:15 PM

Welcome, Patti Baker!

from David Moehring to everyone: 3:57 PM

Thank you for working together regarding policies that we might recommend to reduce the urban heat island effect in specific neighborhood with only 11 to 22 percent tree canopy as set forth in the "Trees for Seattle"

website. Link:

<https://seattlecitygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a7072ffa326c4ef39a0f031961ebac&e6>

Trees for Seattle | Street Trees

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:01 PM

Commissions, when relevant, can forward to each other letters and positions they take, to assist in working together and keeping each other updated.

from Meidav, Josh to everyone: 4:01 PM

Cayce James at OPCD is developing a web available map that shows public access points to greenspaces throughout city. Cayce.James@seattle.gov

from Allala, Lylianna to everyone: 4:02 PM

Appreciate your time commissioners! Thank you for the dialogue.

from Chen, Lisa to everyone: 4:03 PM

thank you!

from Sarah Rehder to everyone: 4:03 PM

Thank you!!

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:03 PM

Thank you all!

from Julia Michalak to everyone: 4:03 PM

Thank you!

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:28 PM

Thank you for your presentation!

from Blake Voorhees to everyone: 4:29 PM

Thank you!

from David Moehring to everyone: 4:34 PM

Thank you, Josh!

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:34 PM

Thank you again!

from Sarah Rehder to everyone: 4:34 PM

Thank you!

from Julia Michalak to everyone: 4:36 PM

Thank you!

from Meidav, Josh to everyone: 4:36 PM

Much appreciated. Thank you to all of your work!

from Elena Arakaki to everyone: 4:43 PM

I'd be happy to be a second set of eyes on that letter if you'd like, Sarah

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:45 PM

Good idea to advance efforts to increase canopy earlier than 2037. That includes need for more protection of existing trees which are already providing canopy.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:48 PM

Canopy increase on Beacon Hill is important because it is over SeaTAC flight plan and SeaTac plans to increase airline flight.

from Thaler, Toby to everyone: 4:48 PM

You can also use the Comp Plan policies

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:49 PM

Comp Plan update to take place by 2025 so it could update timeline to reach 30% canopy goal.

from David Moehring to everyone: 4:52 PM

Thank you Mr. Zemke and Mr. Thaler. Perhaps there is a City Agency responsible to implement these goals and established policies that the Commission may reach out to.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:53 PM

Office of PSzzzzrehensive Plan

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:54 PM

Office of Planning and Development is responsible for updating Seattle Comprehensive Plan

from Thaler, Toby to everyone: 5:02 PM

Thank you!

from Thaler, Toby to everyone: 5:03 PM

Department takes Council Ordinance. UFC could recommend. Politics...

Public input: (see next page and posted notes)

From: Nancy Simsons <info@email.actionnetwork.org>

Sent: Friday, June 4, 2021, 4:57 PM

To: Pinto Urrutia, Sandra

Subject: Please Update Seattle's Tree Ordinance

CAUTION: External Email

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Sandra Pinto de Bader,

It's time to end the delay by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) on presenting the Seattle City Council with an updated draft Tree and Urban Forest Protection Ordinance. Over the last 12 years, the City Council has repeatedly asked SDCI for an updated workable and effective ordinance draft to consider and it is obvious SDCI is not responding as requested. In its recent Resolution 31902, the Council gave specific issues for SDCI to address.

If SDCI cannot respond in a timely manner, please remove tree and urban forestry protection from their Department. As the City Auditor proposed in 2009, transfer tree and urban forestry oversight and authority to the Office of Sustainability and the Environment. SDCI has a conflict of interest in tree oversight – their priority mission has been to help developers build, not protect trees. Years of inaction on effective oversight and protection of trees by SDCI

demands that a separate entity like OSE take over the city's responsibility to protect and enhance our urban forest.

Seattle's trees and urban forest are vital to keeping our city healthy and livable. Trees and the urban forest comprise a vital green infrastructure. Trees reduce air pollution, storm water runoff and climate impacts like heat island effects, while providing essential habitat for birds and other wildlife. They are important for the physical and mental health of our residents.

Seattle's rapid growth and an outdated tree ordinance are reducing these beneficial effects as trees are removed and not replaced. It is urgent to act now to stop this continued loss of trees, particularly large mature trees and tree groves. It is important to promote environmental equity as trees are replaced.

Please update Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance as recommended in the latest draft by the Seattle Urban Forestry Commission.

Here are the key provisions that need to be in the updated tree ordinance:

1. Expand the existing Tree Removal and Replacement Permit Program, including 2-week public notice and posting on-site, as used by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) – to cover all Significant Trees (6" and larger diameter at breast height (DBH)) on private property in all land use zones, both during development and outside development.
2. Require the replacement of all Significant Trees removed with trees that in 25 years will reach equivalent canopy volume – either on site or pay a replacement fee into a City Tree Replacement and Preservation Fund. Allow the Fund to also accept fines, donations, grants and set up easements.
3. Retain current protections for Exceptional Trees and reduce the upper threshold for Exceptional Trees to 24" DBH, protect tree groves and prohibit Significant Trees being removed on undeveloped lots.
4. Allow removal of no more than 2 Significant non-Exceptional Trees in 3 years per lot outside development
5. Establish one citywide database for applying for Tree Removal and Replacement Permits and to track changes in the tree canopy.
6. Post online all permit requests and permit approvals for public viewing.
7. Expand SDOT's existing tree service provider's registration and certification to register all

Tree Service Providers (arborists) working on trees in Seattle.

8. Provide adequate funding in the budget to implement and enforce the updated ordinance.

Nancy Simsons

njsimsons@gmail.com

1709 North 82nd St.

Seattle, Washington 98103

From: Jessica Dixon-Horton <bardjess@msn.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 2:58 PM

To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra <Sandra.Pinto_de_Bader@seattle.gov>

Subject: Public Comment/June 9, 2021

To the Members and Staff of the UFC:

I am writing to support the Legislative Intent submitted by Council Member Pedersen to explore the consolidation of Urban Forestry Functions into one new department. As a member of the Last 6,000 steering committee, a campaign to identify the remaining majestic trees in our city, we have come across a large site in Magnolia where SDCI/planning department has worked tirelessly to find ways to allow development of two luxury homes over 6,500 sf each with an adjoining underground 13 garage, extensive terraces and a lap pool on an environmentally critical area (ECA) and steep slope above Smith Cove on the south side of Magnolia bluff. Over 25 mature trees are at risk.

We are submitting a memo written by the SDCI Planning Department to the applicant at the start of the project in 2017. We think this points out the weakness of having SDCI in charge of our urban forest. Their job is to help people build their projects not protect our urban forest and ECA's.

Thank you,

Jessica Dixon

The Last 6,000

Jessica Dixon

Seattle, WA - (206) 478-2443
