



SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Weston Brinkley (Position #3 – University), Chair
Julia Michalak (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist), Vice-chair
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)
David Moehring (Position # 8 – Development) • **Blake Voorhees** (Position # 9 – Realtor)
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

November 3, 2021, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Via Webex call
(206) 207-1700
Meeting number: 2494 463 1351
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

Weston Brinkley - Chair
Julia Michalak - Vice Chair
David Moehring
Josh Morris
Stuart Niven
Michael Walton
Jessica Jones
Shari Selch

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Toby Thaler

Public

Steve Zemke

Absent- Excused

Blake Voorhees
Elby Jones
Jessica Hernandez

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 and offered a land acknowledgement.

Public comment:

Steve Zemke reiterated his concern about the process for the tree protections update, referencing sections of the UFC's authorizing ordinance calling for the UFC to be involved in legislation prior to it proceeding to Council. He recommends the UFC request they get the opportunity to weigh in the proposals potentially going forward.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Chanda Emery provided the Coordinator report updates for Patti in her absence:

- The Green New Deal Oversight Board is now up and running and holding meetings. The Green New Deal Advisor in OSE has shared information on how to engage with the Board. There is an engagement request intake form that is submitted and reviewed by staff who then work with the requesting programs to discuss the engagement and timeline, and if appropriate, forward the recommendation to the Board for scheduling. The Commission expressed interest in continuing to engage with the GND team when they presented to you in July; Patti can work with you on this process if/when desired; please let her know.
- Recruitments
 - For the Get Engaged position – Weston and Patti participated in the interview for the candidate that YMCA put forward for this position. As reported earlier, there were much fewer candidates applying in this round and some Boards and Commissions with Get Engaged positions may not end up with a candidate. We're pleased we did get one, and someone with pertinent experience and interest. Patti will provide more update as the appointment process moves forward.
 - Positions 4 and 6 – the recruitment for these positions is out. Commissioners received information on the recruitment with the request to help get the word out to their networks. Applications are due by November 16th.
- Process fixes – Apologies again for the technical difficulties experienced in the October meetings. We believe they have been solved – looks like the meeting passwords were the problem and have fixed why that was happening. Another thing that will help in the future is that the city has gone to a new phone system, so calls to the phone number for Patti's position will come directly through her computer, so that if we do have another case like that, folks can more directly call her as it's happening and potentially fix things more quickly.

Weston provided the update that the community engagement committee work has been continuing and will be discussed at next week's meeting. He also noted that at next week's meeting, we'll be calling for nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair for next year's terms; nominees will then have a chance to offer any comments on their nomination at the first December meeting, with elections taking place at the second December meeting.

Approval of October 6 and 13 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the October 6 meeting notes as written was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the October 13 meeting notes as written and amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Work Plan

Weston and David reviewed the survey process conducted to start to prioritize work plan items, and walked through a report prepared by Patti on the survey results and how they can be incorporated into the work plan template. Six Commissioners have completed the survey so far; the survey is still open and Commissioners who haven't yet completed it can still do so.

Weston walked through the current work plan, in which Patti has highlighted the topics and tasks that rose up as priorities in the survey and carried over into the new draft template. He also share the PowerPoint presentation showing the survey results.

Patti drafted a new work plan template in Excel, which was a direction Commissioners expressed interest in at the last meeting, since an Excel document has sorting and other useful functionalities. Commissioners reviewed this draft briefly.

Budget

Weston set up the discussion on what the Mayor’s budget includes related to urban forestry. Josh noted the difficulty in this task, as it’s not always obvious what items or programs are related to urban forestry. Weston noted that one impact of this is the lack of accountability in this work being spread across the city in many departments. It’s a confusing budget this year, due to now two years of pandemic-influenced budgeting; there isn’t a baseline to compare to as there is most years, and the Park District is going into another “bridge year”.

Regarding budget items:

- There is much funding related to environment and urban forestry and race and social justice; \$6.5 million reserved for GND activities and \$300,000 for greening and increasing canopy in industrial areas.
- There is a cut in SDOT’s major maintenance and replacement program for urban forestry; a reduction down to 10% of normal.
- Proposed amendments submitted by Council so far
 - CM Pedersen – creation of chief arborist in the city; recommends the City work with the UFC around the details of adding this position. SLI response due in April and would be funded in the budget. Toby Thaler from CM Pedersen’s office weighed in with some additional information and an update on the status of the SLI submitted for this item. The duties of this position is connected to the new tree protections ordinance potentially moving forward.
 - CM Pedersen – SDCI 006A-001; proviso for SDCI related to the tree regulations updates.

Weston and Josh will prepare a letter to discuss and potentially act on next week.

Urban Forestry Consolidation SLI Letter

Weston walked through the draft letter, including highlighted areas modified since the last time the Commission discussed it, such as areas calling out the enabling legislation in detail and the role of the Commission in preparing legislation and policies.

Commissioners worked on editing the letter. They also discussed how follow-up on the letter would work, which triggered discussion on how the Commission can ensure their recommendations are acted on or responded to. Weston has asked Patti to get legal review of the enabling legislation, and concurrence on whether there are consequences for occasions when the UFC is not included in efforts to update legislation and policies. Any answers gleaned from that can help with the questions on this letter.

A motion was made to adopt the letter as amended. Upon calling for the vote, Commissioner Selch expressed opposition to sending the letter in its current version. Subsequent discussion yielded agreement that there could be more clarity on expectations the Commission has for its recommendations included in the letter. Upon another vote, the letter was pulled back so that additional modifications can be made on it this week.

SDCI letter

The Commission reviewed and discussed the letter drafted to express appreciation for SDCI's presentation in October on work to update tree protections. Weston made one addition to add to the recommendations in the letter.

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

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 commented that the city departments report to OSE on a quarterly basis the trees removed and planted; SDCI should be one of those agencies also reporting their numbers. Also noted TreePac and NW Progressive Institute have put into the field a second poll on sentiments around tree protections; results from that will be available soon and can be presented to the Commission if desired, and additional recommendations on State Bill 1099.

Michael Oxman pointed out that at the budget hearing, CM Pedersen proposed funding for two new SDCI arborists; he hopes that the Commission will chime in on that.

Toby Thaler offered a correction to Michael Oxman's comment: it was CM Strauss who made that funding proposal.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 PM.

Meeting Chat:

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:03 PM

Is the meeting being recorded? I don't see anything on my screen showing that it is?

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:03 PM

I think I usually do.

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:55 PM

I like the idea of moving the workplan to excel!

from David Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 3:59 PM

Regarding survey... is there any Commissioners who would still like to take the priority poll? If so, Patti can keep it open before running the report. If not, perhaps we could vet the priorities next meeting?

from Weston to everyone: 4:04 PM

<https://pedersen.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SLI-to-create-Chief-Arborist-2021.10.pdf>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:09 PM

Brice Harrell in TreePAC questionnaire said he would consider creating an Environment and Climate Dept with an Urbann Forestry Division

from David Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 4:11 PM

I like the Chief Arborist description: "This position's duties would be expected to include reviewing and providing input on permit applications that involve the removal of exceptional trees, as long as this review does not cause any delays in the permitting process."

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:14 PM

Chief arborist position should not be limited to just exceptional trees. Urban forestry needs a diversity of trees species and ages.

from David Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 4:20 PM

I'd concur with that... particularly on sites that have a large percentage of tree canopy. The Chief Arborist should also be able to review proposed site plan alternatives to meet SMC 23.24 - the 'maximum retention of existing trees' relative to lot subdivisions.

from Thaler, Toby to everyone: 4:23 PM

The SDCl and OSE comments in response to the 'Chief Arborist' SLI MO-001-A-001 is short and is for the most part reflected in the revision, now MO-001-A-002. Weston has that updated version. Here are the comments:

- This recommendation should be considered as part of any policymaking in response to Resolution 31902.
- Suggest a change in wording to clarify that MO is the lead, and UFC and UF interdepartmental teams are to be consulted.
- Extend due date to at least June 30. The April 8 deadline isn't enough time to complete this work, given a new administration and the need to consider this in light of Res 310902 policymaking.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:30 PM

Need to ask those drafting update to Tree Protection Ordinance to involve ufc in reviewing draft before released to public and for environmental review

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:32 PM

Yes ask for response, otherwise it cab

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:32 PM

can be ignored

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:47 PM

Once finalized document is public and can be shared with any newly elected officials.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:54 PM

ask for quarterly reports be made on tree tracking like other depts do to oae

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:55 PM

OSE

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:57 PM

\$270,000 for an SDCl permit arborist and an SDCl arborist for enforcement wasn't available at the time the Mayor presented the 2022 budget.No budget is proposed for cost of the Tree Czar.

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