



SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Becca Neumann (Position #4 – Hydrologist), Co-chair
Joshua Morris (Position #7 – NGO), Co-Chair
Laura Keil (Position #10 – Get Engaged), Co-Chair
Julia Michalak (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **Falisha Kurji** (Position #3 – Natural Resource Agency)
Stuart Niven (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA) • **Hao Liang** (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA)
David Baker (Position # 8 – Development) • **Blake Voorhees** (Position # 9 – Realtor)
Jessica Hernandez (Position #11 – Environmental Justice) • **Jessica Jones** (Position # 12 – Public Health)
Lia Hall (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

February 1, 2023, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Via Webex call and in-person at the
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1872 (18th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

(206) 207-1700

Meeting number: 2495 442 8916

Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair
Becca Neumann – Co-Chair
Laura Keil
Stuart Niven
Hao Liang
David Baker
Blake Voorhees
Jessica Jones
Lia Hall

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Toby Thaler

Absent- Excused

Julia Michalak
Jessica Hernandez
Falisha Kurji

Public

Suzanne Grant
Tina Cohen
Steve Zemke

NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:
<https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocuments>

Call to order: Laura called the meeting to order and offered a land acknowledgement. She then welcomed new Commissioner David Baker and invited Commissioners to introduce themselves to David, and David to introduce himself to the Commission.

Public comment:

Suzanne Grant commented on David Moehring not being reappointed to Position 8, noting all of the time and effort David put into tree protection efforts and education of others, and that he is highly qualified to continue serving in the position.

Tina Cohen welcomed David Baker to the Commission. She noted that the failure to reappoint David Moehring to position 8 seemed uncalled for, as he was doing a conscientious job in the position.

Steve Zemke commented on 1) HB 1078 which he discussed at the last meeting. That bill has been scaled back to not include any mandate from the State. It's been sent to the Department of Natural Resources for rewrite/update; 2) his experience last week with a "tree service provider" doing work illegally, with no signage on their truck while cutting down a tree with no posted notice; and 3) we need to urge city council in the legislation that the tree service providers post their work online two weeks ahead of time, so that we can get a public record of tree loss and what work is being done.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Patti noted that the recruitment processes for Positions 1 and 2 is open as of today, and will be open through February 17. The application information is on the UFC website. Patti asked Commissioners to start sharing the word with folks; she will provide a blurb to share with networks. She also noted that there are some city program briefings lined up for the next two meetings, to continue catching up on getting those program briefings, since the last year or so has had so many other things going on. Ali Lakehart briefed the Commission in December on Trees for Seattle team work. The Green Seattle Partnership team will be here for the next meeting, and SDOT will provide a briefing at the March 1st meeting. There will also be space held in upcoming agendas to adapt as the needs of and process for the urban forest protection ordinance becomes more clear.

Josh noted that proposed amendments to the tree service provider registration ordinance will also require some UFC time to review and respond to.

Adoption of January 4 and 18 meeting notes

Action: A motion to approve the January 4, 2023 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and approved.

Action: A motion to approve the January 18, 2023 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and approved.

Taylor Creek project follow-up – review, discuss SPU response

Laura noted that the SPU staff team in charge of this project provided a response to the UFC recommendation letter on it, subsequent to the briefing SPU gave the UFC. SPU staff were in attendance and provided answers to Commissioner questions on the response. Question topics included:

- Were there any precedent studies of a similar scale or setting to the Taylor creek restoration project that you might have that can be used as inspiration for this project? A lot of large multi-material replenishment projects happen in less urban areas.
- The UFC would be happy to put another plug in for multi-agency stormwater planning and reach out to King County because that is a really important step towards planning for climate conditions in that area – does the SPU team have recommendations of who to contact for that?
- Is it correct that since the last time we were updated on the project that the alternative that would have removed the most number of trees is off the table now in response to community discussions and if so what are the plans for a road now?
- Is there a map of where a proposed new road would go?

- There are trees that are marked in the canyon – do those markings indicate trees that may be removed?
- Is there a tree assessment that can be referred to for trees that would be affected in this option?

Tree planting in industrial areas

- **Commissioner report on work plan task 1.3.2**

Hao provided a report on his research regarding this task around tree planting in industrial areas, noting that it is a brief introduction to the topic, with a focus on the greater Duwamish area, rather than discussion of specific opportunities for tree planting. He shared maps of the area, which is designated as the Manufacturing/Industrial Center in the city's urban village strategy, and for which there are three goals: increasing canopy cover, strengthening resiliency and improving well-being.

According to the 2016 canopy assessment report, the city's industrial areas were 4% under the canopy goal of 10% set for it in 2007, and the Greater Duwamish area has the lowest Green View Index (measuring the canopy cover in cities by mapping street-level perception of green) in the city. In looking at street trees in the right of way, as an area of opportunity, only 2.4% of the city's street trees in comparison to the 9% the Greater Duwamish contributes to the city's land area, and the diversity of these street trees is very low. The diversity of those trees is much lower than the city's average, and should be considered when planning for planting trees strategically. Hao shared a chart showing the distribution of percentage of street trees planted in the decades between 1990 and 2022, both citywide and in the Greater Duwamish area. Street tree planting in the Greater Duwamish area has kept pace with the citywide planting, but moving forward, the hope is to see more trees planted in this area. To gain the extra trees and speed up the process, the work needs to be done collaboratively, strategically and creatively.

Hao noted that the next steps for this work include:

- Identify and engage with key stakeholders, communities, interest groups, and agencies
- Follow ongoing projects from the city's Duwamish Valley Program
- Explore tree planting challenges and opportunities

Questions and comments from Commissioners included clarification of the boundary of areas included in the Greater Duwamish area in the maps and how this work and planning can/should be part of the city's process to update the Comprehensive Plan.

- **OSE industrial greening project updates**

Patti continued the discussion on industrial area greening in providing an update on the work that OSE has been doing in this area, as a follow-up to the briefing she and her colleague, Alberto Rodriguez, gave the UFC last fall. OSE's focus in this area is to work on greening industrial areas adjacent to the residential areas of South Park and Georgetown. She recapped the reasons for focusing on Duwamish Valley neighborhoods and on industrial areas.

The project started by working to identify opportunities to install high impact greening projects, working with industrial properties adjacent to those residential neighborhoods and working with community-based organizations for outreach and engagement, and then developing project designs and implementing construction and installation.

The priority for the project is planting trees, but the team is also identifying a variety of project types based on the needs of the neighborhood and property, being responsive to community needs and desires in the given areas.

The team's first step was to learn from and coordinate with internal and external partners to understand the breadth of work already happening. They then worked to confirm the areas of focus, which include industrial properties adjacent to residential neighborhoods, but also areas that might provide buffers for transportation corridors because that is a great impact to air quality. They then began conducting outreach with industrial property owners and managers to provide education on the need for greening in these areas and then identify folks who would be potentially willing to engage in projects to green their properties.

In the last briefing on this, Patti noted the project sites that were expected to see construction and installation in 2022, as well as some that were slated for 2023. She provided an update on those projects, noting that the Seattle Design Center at 6th Avenue and the Elmgrove and 11th Avenue projects were completed in 2022 and that the PaintSmith project was swapped out for a new project on the Beyond Clothing property, which was started in 2022 and will have the last planting completed in spring 2023. The Georgetown Trailer Park Mall project was pushed to 2023 and will join the list of other projects slated for 2023: Donburi Station, Seattle Design Center at 4th Avenue, Findlay and 8th Avenue street end, and PaintSmith.

Patti noted that future plans include continued funding in 2023 for this work, which will contribute to building out additional projects identified from the outreach and community work in Duwamish Valley, as well as initiating work with community groups and property outreach in other neighborhoods.

Letter regarding Position 8 reappointment

Josh recapped the discussion that the UFC started at the last meeting around the position 8 reappointment process. He noted the awkwardness of continuing this discussion while the new position 8 appointee, David Baker, is present and reiterated that this discussion is in no way a critique on or a question about David Baker's legitimacy to serve on the Commission; it's merely expressing the UFC's concern about the process the city took that lends credence to unsubstantiated claims and foregoing some standard UFC processes.

The letter drafted on this includes a request that the city provide the conclusions from any investigation into the claims that were made against David Moehring and a narrative on how they went about recruiting and selecting for position 8, and how that compares to how the UFC tries to make the process transparent, equitable and inclusive. The letter also includes thanking David Moehring for his service, noting some details and examples of his contributions to the UFC.

Commissioners discussed the issue and letter, and continued editing the letter.

Action: A motion to adopt the letter regarding the position 8 process as amended was made, seconded and approved.

2023 Work Plan – final draft review

Patti shared the current version of the draft 2023 work plan and recapped the process of developing it. If Commissioners agree that this version is the final version to proceed with for the year, Patti can post it to the website and it will be included when the 2022 Annual Report is transmitted to the Mayor and City Council.

Commissioners offered some additional edits to tasks in the work plan, and agreed that this is the version to proceed with for the year.

2022 Annual Report – review draft design

Patti provided a recap of the process to develop the Annual Report. Commissioners approved the language to be included in the report in January, and Patti incorporated that language into the report template and included appropriate graphics and formatting to develop a draft of the designed report.

Patti walked through the draft designed report; Commissioners offered one edit for it, but otherwise agreed with the draft. At the next meeting, the UFC will consider a letter to the Mayor and City Council for the transmittal of the 2022 Annual Report and 2023 Work Plan to them.

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:

Allen Taylor introduced himself as a certified Master Arborist and registered consulting Arborist with Conservation Tree Care. He noted his appreciation for the discussion on the Taylor Creek project, as he's been volunteering as an informal advisor on that project to the Friends of Dead Horse Canyon. He also noted that Cody at SPU has been doing a good job of rebuilding trust with the community. He has been increasingly active in advocating for the private sector regarding recent changes in the tree ordinance and notice posting requirements. He expressed the difficulty that working arborists have in attending meetings at 3:00 on Wednesday afternoons and would like to see alternatives for people being able to be involved.

Steve Zemke urged people to pay attention to bills being worked on in the state legislature. There are bills there that will present conflicts with trees, including housing bills dealing with multiplexes, including ones that will allow them all across the city. How do we make sure there is the housing the city needs without obliterating trees. He urges people to participate in the discussion on these bills; provide input on how to build and provide housing while also protecting and increasing canopy.

Michael Oxman thanked the Commissioners for spending time working on these issues. He noted two newsletters put out by city departments that contain conflicting information. Good communication is very important to enable volunteers and community members to participate and have the answers they need to give good advice to the city, so that needs to be improved.

Sandy Shettler thanked the Commission for preparing and adopting the letter regarding the Position 8 reappointment process. She provided a comment to Council recently on the Commission's role and how the position 8 process affected that and the ability to affect positive change for nature and trees. She hopes that everyone can keep looking for opportunities to strengthen and stand up for trees.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 PM.

Meeting chat:

from Cedar to everyone: 3:11 PM

My name is Cedar, here is my public comment. I live in South Park. I write a lot about the toxic industrials that are present in the area (Boeing, NPI, and a bunch of metal manufacturing that happens here, as well as the recycling plant that has been fined many times, as has Boeing. National Products Incorporated is a plastics extruder that is currently operating in a residential area in South Park and is the largest manufacturer of mounts.

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:14 PM

Thank you, Cedar, for your comment and for attending today.

from Cedar to everyone: 3:16 PM

Many trees have been torn down by NPI, and they illegally demolished many truly affordable homes as well, which is becoming endangered. I can provide the link to those interested in my writings.

from Cedar to everyone: 3:18 PM

Wildlife what?

from Laura Keil she/her to everyone: 3:18 PM

Wildlife biologist

from Nelson, Cody to everyone: 3:34 PM

John Brosnan at King County, jbroshnan@kingcounty.gov

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:34 PM

Regarding the time frame Cody referenced: wouldn't removing trees (albeit fewer than the discarded plan) work against the stated restoration goals?

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:35 PM

Thank you, Josh is essentially asking my question.

from Cedar to everyone: 3:35 PM

We have that problem in South Park, we need more trees for flood prevention (my personal favorite would be fruit /cedar trees).

from Cedar to everyone: 3:36 PM

AS well as South Seattle, to not just absorb all the toxins but to also break up flood waters.

from Cedar to everyone: 3:41 PM

Removing trees causes erosion, for removing sediments from water, mushrooms are an option, they are using them to try and clean the E Coli from the Chicago river.

from Cedar to everyone: 3:43 PM

<https://www.realmushrooms.com/mycoremediation-mushrooms-pollution/>

from Cedar to everyone: 3:45 PM

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mycoremediation>

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 3:46 PM

Will mitigation by planting trees include a 'net increase' in trees, or just the bare minimum of rehabilitating the disturbed area? The current statute is inadequate, since the replacement trees are relatively tiny.

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:47 PM

Thank you, Cody and Josh!

from Meidav, Josh to everyone: 3:48 PM

The goal would be a net increase through especially planting of a high number of conifers in the near creek area.

from Cedar to everyone: 3:49 PM

Trees along the Duwamish River will def help as well, so when we get another 'King Tide' or other flooding, that there is less damage done. Arbor Day Foundation seems to be a good organization.

from Nelson, Cody to everyone: 3:49 PM

Hi Michael, SPR has specified that for this special natural area, SPU must replace trees in a greater than 2:1 ratio, and we're looking at even greater than 4:1, space permitting.

from Cedar to everyone: 3:51 PM

Yep, right next to our residential area.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 3:51 PM

Please plant trees in the basin headwaters to mitigate localized disturbance downstream, as in this case in Deadhorse Canyon.

from Cedar to everyone: 3:52 PM

<https://southseattleemerald.com/2021/08/11/opinion-national-products-inc-pumps-environmental-hazards-into-south-park-daily/>

from Cedar to everyone: 3:52 PM

<https://southseattleemerald.com/2022/11/17/opinion-why-caring-for-trees-is-so-important-in-urban-environments/>

from Cedar to everyone: 3:55 PM

Problem with one of our parks (Duwammish Waterway) is that it is within kissing distance of a porta-potty facility and the extrusion facility for NPI on Elmgrove.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 3:56 PM

Tractor-trailer semitrucks like to make u-turns on city streets in industrial areas. The Freight Mobility Advisory Board did not highlight this fact in their reporting. The solution is for SDOT to get some resolve, and enforce traffic laws.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 3:56 PM

There is no room for trees, when 80' long vehicles make u-turns.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:00 PM

Great Report Hao with lots of details !

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:00 PM

Thanks Hao--it's so helpful to see the numbers. I knew it intuitively but these figures are shocking.

from Cedar to everyone: 4:01 PM

And carousel on public streets, which is the case on ORR ST. Before I made enough of a ruckus and wrote about National Products being an awful blight to the community, we had carousel hour from 3-4PM a few days a week. They would regularly block off half or more of the road on ORR for their deliveries, despite it being a public road.

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:02 PM

Thank you, Hao, that was a great report!

from Dinushi to everyone: 4:03 PM

Great presentation, Hao. It looks like a sensitive area.

from Cedar to everyone: 4:06 PM

We had a pretty good screening in my area until NPI tore down trees and demolished homes on the Triangle. Along the way, being in such a hurry to demolish that they happened to neglect removing the septic before demolishing, leading to a hazardous site for a few months.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:11 PM

Cedar, I saw that site and was appalled. Your neighborhood has put up with so much.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:24 PM

The city has hundreds of advisory groups. What other instances exist of similar deviation from this case? dissatisfaction. What similarities

from Cedar to everyone: 4:33 PM

I might ask that he be reinstated as well. He has been very devoted to trees, and caring for communities. If I'm lucky, perhaps I'll be as helpful to communities as he has been.

from Linda Mirelez-Huca to everyone: 4:34 PM

Thanks to everyone at the UFC for all of your work to make the city greener and more environmentally secure. Best wishes, until soon.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:38 PM

Personnel matters are usually dealt with in Executive session - maybe some commissioners need to meet with CM Strauss and Mayor's office for a discussion of what happened and the process for future Commission appointments.

from Blake Voorhees UFC 9 to everyone: 4:39 PM

You brought up position 9 right as I was typing an email to Patti and Josh offering that clear and simple solution to bring David back on board.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:40 PM

I agree if Position 9 opens up that David Moerhing is qualified for that position. and it is a Commission appointment.

from Suzanne Grant to everyone: 4:43 PM

Yes, please consider David Moehring for Position 9. It is only right and well to do so.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:47 PM

Takes decades to grow large trees. An 80 year old Douglas fir tree takes 80 years to reach canopy lost when it was cut down.

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:48 PM

That's so true!

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:54 PM

No, thanks.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:54 PM

The Feb 1st SDCI newsletter announces their Feb 11th presentation on tree regulations, but the SPU Trees For Seattle newsletter, issued the same day, does not have this notice. Are these two departments talking to each other? https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/stay-connected/public-meetings-and-events?trumbaEmbed=view%3Devent%26eventid%3D163960462&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:56 PM

SPU newsletter https://seattle.gov/trees/get-involved/events?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

from Dinushi to everyone: 5:00 PM

Thank you for all your efforts to make Seattle green. Dwamish Vally project looks challenging. Good luck!

from Lia Hall UFC13 (she/her) to everyone: 5:02 PM

@Allen Taylor and for those who are interested in participating—Josh Morris and I will be presenting in general about UFC and how to engage w/ Q & A at Rainier Beach Community Club 7pm on 2/8.

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 5:03 PM

I second that!

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 5:03 PM

My mistake.

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

From: Austin French <info@email.actionnetwork.org>

Sent: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 8:28 PM

To: Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>

Subject: Protect the Maple Leaf Mother Groves!

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Urban Forestry Commission c/o Patti Bakker,

One of the Maple Leaf Mother Groves, at 1211 NE 104th St, is at risk due to arborist report errors, poor site design, and lack of protection during construction. With thoughtful planning, the developer of this property can achieve maximum density while retaining these groves, a win-win for people and nature.

The Maple Leaf Mother Groves are 22 "super-groves" which span entire city blocks in the Maple Leaf neighborhood. The City defines "groves" as eight or more large (12 inch dbh or larger) trees whose canopies touch. In contrast, Mother Groves span most of the properties on their blocks, and function as intact native PNW ecosystems. Because trees in groves cool each other and share defense from disease through their root network, we can count on them to be the most resilient part of our entire urban forest! They are also reservoirs of biodiversity for iconic native species which rely on forests to survive, rather than single trees along streets or in front yards.

The two groves at 1211 NE 104th St form an important part of a Mother Grove. Their removal or damage could launch a cycle of decline leading to the loss of the entire block's grove. To preserve this amazing community resource, please ensure the following:

1. Require a new arborist report. The arborist report submitted by the developer lists only 13 trees, yet 20 trees grow on this site. The report also omits an entire grove of 13 western red cedars, which are shared with adjacent properties.
2. Request that the Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (DADU) be built on the generous amount of land available near the proposed new home, rather than where it is currently planned in the cedar grove. Both tree groves are conveniently located on the periphery and small panhandle of the site, leaving a large buildable expanse!
3. Protect the groves during construction with rigid fencing. Currently only vinyl netting is required, which provides little protection for trees and is often moved. Construction damage to roots could send these

verdant groves into a cycle of decline. If trees at the edge of the grove die, others within the grove often follow.

Climate change has brought Seattle hotter, dryer summers and stronger winter storms. The Maple Leaf Mother Groves provide the community with resilient reservoirs of cooling nature, benefitting both the community and our larger ecosystem. Please ensure they are protected and continue to thrive for the health and safety of future generations.

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