

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Leif Fixen, Chair • Tom Early, Vice-Chair

Gordon Bradley • Mariska Kecskes • Donna Kostka • Richard Martin • 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

September 9, 2015

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners

Tom Early – vice chair
Mariska Kecskes
Donna Kostka
Joanna Nelson de Flores
Richard Martin
Erik Rundell
Steve Zemke

Absent- Excused

Leif Fixen - chair
Gordon Bradley
Jeff Reibman

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Jon Jainga - Parks
Juliet Vong – HBB Consulting for Parks
Maureen Sheehan - DON

Public

Loren McElvain
Linda Murtfeldt
Lance Young

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

Tom called the meeting to order and read the UFC's mission and the agenda.

Chair report

None

GSP Strategic Plan Update draft – HBB Landscape Architecture include map of GSP managed sites

Jon Jainga and Juliet Vong provided an update of the GSP Plan update. They'll have a complete draft by the end of October. The engagement process is being expanded in order for the public to be able to provide input.

The goals for the 10-year update are:

- Reflect on where we are today
- Celebrate our accomplishments

- Identify how to reach the original goal by 2025
- Plan for the future beyond 2015.

The GSP 20 –year Strategic Plan’s Vision – Promote a livable city by re-establishing and maintaining healthy forested parklands throughout Seattle.

Elements influencing the work include:

- Invasive plants and declining tree canopy
- Increased urban density. Growth in Seattle adds stresses to the urban forest.
- Maintaining the program’s success, and
- Increasing public awareness

Have been hearing about the importance to create neighborhood level maps for residents to be able to see what’s happening on the ground in their neighborhoods.

A major value added to the tree-age score is regeneration. There is an annual inventory being done by a third party. Plant ecologists then determine where on the tree-age process a zone has. The update will also redefine urban forest assessments to include canopy cover, invasive species, regeneration, and threshold values.

Threshold values will include: understory richness, understory cover, eco-Value 3 (Tree-iage), Threat 1 (<5% invasive cover), invasive regeneration, regeneration richness, and regeneration density. At this point, 14 zones meet all thresholds.

Juliet asked for input from the Commission on the charts and graphs being produced for the plan update. They want to make sure the public understands.

“Is restoration working?”

Tree-iage comparison graph: The graph shows all acres in the program. All acres were assigned a tree-iage value. All green areas have improved and those in yellow and orange have not.

UFC comment – add acres in decline to the mix.

Neighborhood comparison graph:

UFC comment:

Total program acres – line needs to be dashed.

Separate the color bars from the black and white.

Separate the box explaining the graph’s axes (color represent hours, b&w represent acres).

Explain what the limitations of the graph are.

“What’s left” graph:

- Have total acres, slopes and wetlands, add the amount of acres that are either so that they are all represented.

“Projecting into the future” graph:

- Recognize long-term needs for field work

- Evaluate and define equity in restoration – it’s important to define what we mean by restoration
- Restoration beyond park boundary – there are a lot of GSP sites that are beyond park boundary that are not being addressed and pose a re-infestation threat.
- Addressing the effects of climate change on restoration.

Resources:

Staff is funded by General Fund

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – Real Estate Excise Tax and Metropolitan Parks District

Maintenance – not funded

Catch-up scenario – additional CIP funding needed.

- Show current scenario first and catch up scenario second.

Commission provided input on the different graphs.

UFC comment:

- Formulate a graph that shows that maintenance dollars are ‘cheaper’ than CIP dollars. It should be cheaper to maintain than to do more restoration.
- Would like to see map of everything on each phase.
- Sometimes there is confusion about what type of acres are part of the 2,500 acres in GSP (natural areas, picnic area, etc.). Relationship between the Parks classification system and the GSP goal.

Answer: of the 6,200 acres in Parks system 3,200 acres are natural areas, 2,500 acres are forested restoration that are part of GSP. There are a lot of acres that are natural areas and not included in the GSP goal. All GSP sites are part of Natural Areas.

Community section: feedback from the survey sent out was:

Communicate more:

- Improve brand recognition
- Increase feedback opportunities beyond shareholder’s meeting (annual survey)
- Allocate funding between Field Work and Community
- Improve outreach to race and social justice communities.

Engage more youth:

- Existing youth programs
 - o Youth Engaged in Service participation
 - o Environmental Learning Center programming
 - o Student Conservation Association (employment program)
 - o Forest Steward and Partner Organization youth events
 - o Urban Forestry Project
- Proposed youth engagement
 - o Add youth to GSP Committees and Executive Council
 - o Support and expand the Urban Forestry Project
 - o Increase access to programming for underserved youth

Forest Steward of 2025

- New volunteer opportunities – not all field work

- Demographics of volunteers to match the city-at-large
- Involvement and tracking of Phase IV work
- Recruiting new Forest Stewards and youth in leadership roles.

Major Institutions Master Planning – Maureen Sheehan (DON)

Maureen Sheehan – Program Manager for the Major Institutions and Schools Program.

There are 13 Major Institutions. All of them have a campus within which they can upzone. Major institutions master plans (MIMPs) serve to make any upzoning and expansions as well as adding a transportation plan.

There are three Major Institutions that are actively developing: Seattle University, Swedish, and University of Washington.

Citizen’s advisory committees (CAC) are put together by the City and the Major Institution (serves as design review process and to put together guidelines). The Urban Forestry Commission can influence how these MIMPs are shaped up. Once the plan is done, CACs become Standing Advisory Committees (SACs). CAC and SAC make recommendations to DPD and DPD ultimately decides. MIMPs are usually good for 10 years and usually get renewed every 15 years. When the Department of Neighborhoods gets the notification that the institution is having a new MIMP, then the UFC to get involved in the planning process.

Seattle University (SU): Their MIMP was approved in 2013. They are currently assembling a Standing Advisory Committee (SAC). Specific development plans are yet to be shared by SU but expected within three months.

Maureen will help facilitate the UFC being aware of all these processes. UFC should go directly to the institution to provide input and then the institution would submit to CAC.

UFC comment: would like to see a canopy impact assessment for any project they undertake.

Swedish – Their MIMP was approved in 2005. Their SAC is currently reviewing project within design guidelines. They are proposing two new buildings to replace the current North Tower and Block 95. The NW tower will be approximately 17 stories and will contain a variety of uses including: emergency department, dining facility, critical care units, surgical suites, and patient rooms. Support functions for the campus will be located on Block 95. Anticipate beginning construction in 2016 and occupying the buildings in 2019.

Opportunity: write comment letter or provide comment during one meeting.

UFC question: when is the right time to submit a letter?

University of Washington (UW). Their MIMP was approved in 2003. Their new MIMP process starting Fall 2015. All other institutions have a compliance piece in the MIMP but the UW is different. This will be a two-year public process. The City University Citizens Advisory Committee (CUCAC) includes 13 neighborhood organizations.

Seattle Public Schools – they departures when they are taking a school offline and giving it a new use. She can notify UFC of these processes.

Tom – letter for Swedish First Hill would be a good idea.

SCL briefing:

Staff is responding to an outage so they are not able to brief the Commission today. Re-scheduled to next meeting.

Draft Comprehensive Plan letter

The Commission reviewed the draft points to be contained in a letter of recommendation about the Comp Plan. Commissioners will send comments to Sandra and she will incorporate them into a new draft. Donna asked for the Commission to also include Cass Turnbull’s comments.

Public comment

Lance Young – SCL was invited to be here but had a downed tree. SCL has a letter of understanding that has been incorporated in the franchise agreement which is a model for preservation of trees. It seems that SCL is re-defining what a tree is. SCL is proposing to remove all but significant trees.

New business and announcements

Send reminder of Planning Commission event next Wednesday.

Adjourn

Public input

From: Heidi Siegelbaum [mailto:Heidi@calyxsite.com]

Sent: Thursday, September 03, 2015 10:25 AM

To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra

Subject: For Urban Forestry commission

http://www.isa-arbor.com/events/conference/proceedings/2014/2014_JCaseyClapp_Thesis%202.pdf

Hi Sandra

I trust your summer went well and that you are happy... please make the above document available to the UFC the next time you gather documents. Feel free to call if you have any questions and thank you!

Best,
Heidi

Heidi Siegelbaum

Calyx
