



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

Draft meeting notes

April 19, 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: 2493 206 6460

Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners

Becca Neumann – Co-Chair
Laura Keil – Co-Chair
Falisha Kurji
Stuart Niven
Hao Liang
Blake Voorhees
Jessica Jones

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Toby Thaler

Absent- Excused

Josh Morris – Co-Chair
Julia Michalak
David Baker
Jessica Hernandez
Lia Hall

Public

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: Becca called the meeting to order and offered a land acknowledgement.

Public comment:

Steve Zemke noted the schedule for Council moving the tree legislation forward. Proposed amendments were delayed by a week and have not been shared yet. He reminded Commissioners that they can attend the Land Use Committee meetings and comment as individuals. He noted that the State legislature's middle housing bill looks like it will pass, and the implications of that haven't been studied. This is a very significant issue that the UFC should look at and address.

Sharon Ricci made a request to the UFC to provide a letter of support for the potential purchase of two parcels of land adjacent to Dead Horse Canyon. The Friends of Dead Horse Canyon are working with King County on a deal for this purchase, and need two letters of support. The purchase would prevent development of those parcels and turn them into a park.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Patti noted that Washington DNR hosted a press event here in Seattle last week, at Roxhill Park, that was focused around the partnership between DNR and American Forests (which includes formation of a Tree Equity Collaborative and statewide tree equity mapping and analysis), and also included highlighting the One Seattle Tree strategy recently announced by Mayor Harrell through the Executive Order, and drawing attention to the work of local organizations along the Duwamish Greenbelt ahead of the Duwamish Alive event and Earth Week. They were also able to highlight the substantial amount of Inflation Reduction Act funding from the federal government that was recently announced, which is \$1.5B of federal funding available through the U.S. Forest Service's Urban & Community Forestry program.

The City of Seattle and Washington DNR have each put an increased emphasis on urban forestry in recent years, which is now coming to a head with One Seattle Tree Plan and an agreement between DNR and American Forests to create the first statewide tree equity collaborative in the country. With a huge influx of funding from state and federal partners coming down the pike, now is the time to showcase not only the work that's been done by DNR, Seattle, and our partners (particularly along the Duwamish Greenbelt), but the need to do more.

Patti also noted application periods and appointments regarding UFC positions:

- Get Engaged position – Laura Keil is the UFC's current Get Engaged member, and will be with the UFC through September this year. Terms for these positions are one-year terms, running from October 1 to September 30. These positions are managed through the Y's Social Impact Center and they recently opened recruitment for the next cohort, to start in October this year. The application period for the 2023-2024 year opened on April 10th and will be accepted through Friday, May 12th.
- Position 9 – The application period to fill Blake's position is now open and will be open through May 10th. This is Position 9, which is described as an economist, financial analyst, Washington State licensed real estate broker, or any other similar professional, with expertise preferred in land use planning, environmental planning, or either residential or commercial development.
- The process for moving the appointments forward for the two candidates for Positions 1 and 2 is still being worked on, and those confirmations are currently planned for the May 10th Land Use Committee meeting.

Healthy Forest / Healthy City: The Cambridge Urban Forest Master Plan – Eric Kramer

Eric Kramer noted that this project process and investment in it was a bit unusual, partly so that the information could be shared and accessible to other cities of all scales and sizes. He noted the value of data and analysis, and walked through the strategies there were developed in the process, particularly communication strategies.

The project started with the question of equity – the primary concern – and from the question of resilience. A third theme in the project was shared responsibility, as the forest isn't something that just the city is going to take care of.

The city of Cambridge was facing many of the issues that Seattle is facing: housing affordability, mobility enhancements, quality of life, climate change vulnerability, and these all fed into the study. The process involved analysis, goal-setting and planning, and resulted in design strategies, recommended management practices, recommended planting practices, policy changes and engagement strategies.

The project started partly because Cambridge's canopy was shrinking. In looking at canopy distribution, you see that the canopy isn't equitably distributed and that there is a relationship between heat islands and canopy cover. Redlining is responsible for low canopy in neighborhoods, so those areas are still living with a pattern of racism that goes back decades.

They learned that many of the narratives needed to be rewritten, including the narratives around city maintenance of its trees, the species distribution across the city, and health of street trees. This resulted in a set of conversations around urban design and how they should be building their city streets. Options for potential planting expansions included lane diets – reducing lanes and sizes to provide more room for trees. They piloted putting more trees in neighborhoods, saw more cooling and evaluated how to extrapolate that across the city and into the urban corridors.

They developed a "cool factor", which is similar to the green factor, but is focused on the environmental cooling and is a zoning protocol. The tool allows for assessing changes on a site, the zoning district, etc. and prioritizes saving large trees, planting new ones and encouraging trees in the front yards.

They developed a five-year action plan, setting out many items including the tree protection ordinance, planting trees, and doing the zoning. Out of these actions, they also developed a bare root nursery, so that they're able to plant more trees and for a longer period during the season.

Engaging the public was an important aspect of this work. They developed a task force, and held public meetings, but it was hard to get people there. They did a survey and received 1,600 respondents, but those were mostly from older whiter female respondents not representing the community. So they developed a communications toolkit using two consultants – one with communications and branding expertise, one a graphic communications consultant. Quality of life, environment and resiliency and issues of equity were the themes most resonating with people. Then they developed specific strategies to motivate people:

- Developed design guidelines and messaging toolkit
- Volunteer tree care guide and website
- Door tags and hangers on trees
- Social media posts to promote all of this
- Developed an app to identify special trees.
- Videos and sidewalk tags

Discussion and questions included:

- Did they study the cost of implementing these strategies in real time?
- Was there any opposition faced? There was opposition on the tree ordinance, which is hugely complicated. Residents said they would be burdened financially and they should instead be trusted. The question of valuing trees was very difficult.
- Trees versus housing needs – there is no way to overcome it. The ordinance tries to keep existing trees and ensure replanting. Saving existing trees is by far the highest value thing you can do. Density is needed, but trying to get opportunity to get trees in where they are needed.
- Who waters the trees? They have a program to have teenagers on bikes ride around and water trees.

- Regarding the soil study, what are the observations on the results? They did an analysis of health of trees planted 8-20 years ago to see if there is a corollary between soil health and tree health.
- How did the data consultant work together with planners, etc.?
- How did they establish partnership with builders associations? They didn't have a lot of push back from builders associations; they could "buy their way out" and it would be reasonable for them.
- Regarding the design guidelines for developing graphics and messaging to the community, how were those developed?

Presentation debrief

UFC feedback on the presentation included that Commissioners appreciated that they are integrating tree strategies with planning and design. The green factor is very cool, has Seattle considered anything like that?

Laura volunteered to draft a follow up letter.

UFC feedback on draft urban Forest Protection ordinance

Patti provided a recap on where the ordinance process is. The UFC's recommendation letter, adopted at the Special Meeting on April 7, was transmitted to Council on April 11th. All proposed amendments were due to Council by April 18, and Council is now working on amendments to include with the ordinance. The next Land Use Council meeting will be Friday, April 21, that will be another briefing and discussion on the ordinance. Then there will be another meeting on Monday April 24, that is slated as a briefing, discussion and the public hearing.

The original schedule had the LUC then considering the ordinance again at the April 26 regular meeting, and potentially voting on the ordinance, but there may be a change to that schedule, so that there will be another one or two meetings for Council to review and discuss the ordinance, and then have the vote in early May.

Commissioners were encouraged to pay attention to the Land Use Committee action around developing the amendments. The UFC may be able provide feedback on those amendments at the May 3 meeting.

Green Seattle Partnership briefing follow-up letter

Patti reviewed the follow-up letter drafted by Jessica H. Commissioners discussed and edited the letter.

Action: a motion to adopt the GSP briefing follow-up letter was made, seconded and approved.

Adoption of March 1 and 15 meeting notes

Action: A motion to approve the February 1, 2023 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded and approved.

Action: A motion to approve the February 15, 2023 meeting notes as written 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:

Tina Cohen expressed appreciation for the UFC's large amount of work done on the ordinance. They encouraged Commissioners to "rattle the cages" with Councilmembers to see the changes they would like see.

Steve Zemke also thanked the UFC for all of this work. When you look at the tree ordinance in relation to the construction work going on, it's very complicated. He referred to what Portland is doing in putting forward legislation to ensure 20% tree protection area in multifamily areas. Unless you set aside designated areas for trees, you're not going to see the necessary protection; really need to look at this changed environment of

what's going on with multifamily and consider the ramifications. Also need to keep speaking out against 1:1 replacement; even the Mayor in his EO called for 3:1. The UFC should be urging that the in-lieu fee start at 12" and increase with size.

Francisca noted that she has learned a lot sitting in on these meetings. Along with learning about the new housing zoning changes and the tree protection ordinance – it's brought her to a place of learning how to speak up at city meetings and in city efforts. She lives behind a hospital undergoing a master plan update; they are proposing doubling the building size and reducing setbacks. This doesn't allow for space for trees.

Tristan Fields responded to Francisca regarding the tree protections, noting the ISA standards are the standards that should be used; point to those in providing input.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 PM.

Meeting chat:

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 3:13 PM

Why do you not want letters from individuals?

from Sharon Ricci to everyone: 3:31 PM

Chris - King County seeking input from non-profits and community groups. We have reached out to the Buddhist Temple (next block) and West Hill Community Association (Skyway, Bryn Mar, Lakeridge residents).

from Sharon Ricci to everyone: 3:31 PM

And Friends of Dead Horse Canyon has sent a letter of support.

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:33 PM

Get Engaged application: <https://forms.office.com/r/xzvenWjTsm>, and contact for questions/info: ibender@seattlemca.org

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:34 PM

UFC Position 9 information and application:

<https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/membershipandroster>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:45 PM

How many people are working on urban Forestry. Is it a separate agency or in an existing city dept?

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 3:49 PM

Who waters the newly planted trees?

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 3:50 PM

OMG

from Sharon Ricci to everyone: 3:53 PM

How did you get "partnership" with the Builders Associations? They are the lobbyist group continually working against tree protection, labeling it as a barrier to affordable housing development.

from Jim Davis to everyone: 3:57 PM

What is the 5 percent field survey component?

from Tristan Fields to everyone: 3:58 PM

Can you put a link in the chat to RES? The Tree Inventory group.

from Tristan Fields to everyone: 4:01 PM

This was fantastic. Thank you.

from Eric Kramer to everyone: 4:01 PM

<https://res.us/>

from Francisca to everyone: 4:02 PM

Thank you Eric. Excellent work on behalf of Tree Canopy

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:03 PM

Thank you for the great presentation.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:04 PM

Very informative. Thanks Eric!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:12 PM

Green factor is used in multifamily zone but is not very effective in saving trees

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:12 PM

Good to know. Thanks Steve!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:15 PM

Urge remove guaranteed 85% development area in multifamily zones and evaluate impact of HB 1110 upzoning Seattle to allow 4 plexes and 6 -plexes

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:18 PM

Fri April 21 Special Land Use Comm meeting 2 PM

from Francisca to everyone: 4:18 PM

As a resident would you recommend writing to Council members?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:19 PM

Public Hearing Monday Special Land Use Comm meeting 10:30 AM

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 4:20 PM

<http://seattle.legistar.com/DepartmentDetail.aspx?ID=47139&GUID=B75D237F-6B0F-4103-ABA7-F901F647B887&R=7c3cf43d-647d-4676-b020-a537ba8bd195>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:20 PM

Can send e-mails to Council members. Can also call their offices. Land Use Committee has 5 members Strauss, Morales Mosqueda, Nelson and Pedersen

from Francisca to everyone: 4:21 PM

Is there a valid argument for Tree Protection given that The Emerald Ash borer possible invasion

from Tristan Fields to everyone: 4:23 PM

It makes sense as one contributor to protection.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:23 PM

Also Land Use Committee meeting Wed April 26th at 2 PM. All have public comment at beginning of meeting in person or call in. Go to Land Use Committee Agenda to see how to sign in to speak. Can sign up online 2 hours before meeting. Have 1 to 2 minutes at most. Usually 1 minute.

from Francisca to everyone: 4:24 PM

Thank you. Any input is good

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:39 PM

No comment. Thanks.

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:45 PM

Thanks, Steve.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:50 PM

Can also ask NW Hospital how can give input

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