City of Seattle
Urban Forestry Commission

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
Alicia Kellogg (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) • **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
July 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: 2490 190 8522
Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners
Laura Keil – Co-Chair
Alicia Kellogg
Falisha Kurji
Hao Liang
David Baker
Lia Hall

Staff
Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests
Toby Thaler

Absent- Excused
Becca Neumann – Co-Chair
Josh Morris – Co-Chair
Stuart Niven
Jessica Hernandez
Jessica Jones

Public
Steve Zemke
Tina Cohen

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. Laura noted that new Commissioner Alicia Kellogg is joining her first meeting, so during roll call invited Commissioners to introduce themselves to Alicia.

Public comment:
Steve Zemke expressed that the UFC has done a good job in coming up with draft recommendations on the Director's Rules. He suggested a couple of additions to them: 1) regarding the in-lieu payments, they should be based on the architectural calculations of tree value, so the UFC should include that at a minimum that the determination of cost start at $17.87/sq. in. for trees 12" and over, so that the larger the tree, the more it costs, rather than being one cost for trees 12-24"; 2) the rule on Tier 2 trees, he strongly agrees that they need to include the definition of exceptional trees, especially that they include tree groves since those could be skipped if they are not included in the rule even if they are in the ordinance.

Tina Cohen shared three points/questions: 1) has anyone talked with the Heritage tree committee about what their role will be moving forward?, 2) how will the UFC get the City Council to follow their recommendations?, 3) there was an Investigate West article on the tree ordinance she wanted to share with the Commissioners.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Patti noted that the new urban forestry position has now been posted. The official title is the Senior Urban Forestry Strategic Advisor, and the position will serve a cross-departmental leadership role, building internal and external collaborations to meet Seattle's canopy cover and forest health goals. This position will provide the capacity to develop the Canopy Equity and Resilience Plan and investment strategy to focus planting, maintenance, education and resilience efforts on communities with the least canopy. The announcement is open through August 8.

Seattle Public Utilities urban forestry work – Jana Dilley
Jana noted that there are four main categories of SPU's urban forestry work: management of SPU owned lands, volunteer stewardship and engagement, green stormwater infrastructure, and capital projects planting.

Land management
SPU owns land both within and outside of City of Seattle limits, including the Cedar and Tolt watersheds. Within the urban forestry context, they focus primarily on the lands within Seattle. Watersheds, being wildlands and not urban land, are managed differently and not considered to be urban forestry.

SPU owns and manages over 150 landscapes and natural areas, mostly in Seattle city limits, and continues to acquire properties for urban stream and floodplain restoration. Their Urban Watersheds team maintains and restores habitat, including trees, on these properties to protect water quality and salmon habitat. The team focuses their resources in equity priority areas and seeks to partner with community to meet goals.

One area where the team has been working is along the north fork of Thornton Creek. Jana shared before and after photos and details on this work as an example of this kind of work they do.

Volunteer Stewardship
The section of Trees for Seattle that lives within SPU includes the Seattle Tree Stewards volunteer program. This program engages the community to care for publicly owned landscapes that support tree canopy. SPU currently engages volunteers through Seattle Tree Stewards at Meadowbrook Pond and Longfellow Creek, with a goal to expand to more sites in the future. Volunteers support SPU crews and contractors with tasks such as ivy and blackberry removal.

Trees for Seattle is an over-arching campaign across all City of Seattle departments and does not exist solely in one department. SPU houses and provides oversight to the section of Trees for Seattle which runs the Trees for Neighborhoods planting program, the Seattle Tree Stewards volunteer program, and some communication channels such as the Trees for Seattle website and newsletter. These programs were presented to the UFC separately a few months ago.

Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI)
GSI are systems designed to use soil and plants to capture stormwater and infiltrate it into the ground instead of it running off and being captured by grey infrastructure like pipes or running off into our lakes, creeks and rivers, and Puget Sound. Infiltrating stormwater into the ground reduces flooding and pollution. GSI includes rain gardens, stormwater ponds, floodable open space, and more – including trees. Building GSI also often creates plantable space for trees where it did not exist before by doing things like removing impervious pavement.

Jana noted that one new vehicle SPU is developing to build GSI is the RainCity program, which will build voluntary green stormwater infrastructure on private property though a community public-private partnership model. This model will allow SPU to build green infrastructure in a way that is responsive to community needs and leverages outside funding. RainCity has the potential to both plant more trees and increase available planting space for trees on private property. They are very close to starting a $15 million, 5-year pilot program which if successful they hope to expand in the future.

Green Schoolyards
Schools are one place where SPU hopes to build projects through the Rain City model. SPU, along with OSE and Parks, works with Seattle Public Schools and EarthGen in a green schoolyards learning and technical assistance cohort led by the Children & Nature Network. They are hoping to transform Seattle school yards in a wholistic way which increases tree canopy and GSI while also integrating community and school needs such as veggie beds, playground equipment, and outdoor classrooms.

Currently the Trees for Neighborhoods program in SPU works closely with Seattle Public Schools to supply trees and provide watering assistance to a few select schools. In 2022, trees were planted at 15 schools, and watering assistance is being provided to three of those.

Capital Projects Planting
Jana noted that this includes trees planted as part of construction projects, so that projects are in compliance with tree replacement requirements. They work in partnership with SDOT when planting street trees, and the planting levels vary based on project needs.

Questions from Commissioners included:
- With the RainCity program being a pilot, what community engagement strategies are you planning to try out during that period?
- Are there direct city GSI projects installed, outside of the public-private partnership programs mentioned?
- How are the plants that are planted established?
- Will the RainCity program help residents care for trees already planted in private lands?
- When will the RainCity program be up and running?
- Will the RainCity projects comply with the Executive Order requirements for replacement?
- The city sees trees as infrastructure; is there thought of considering trees as more of a public utility since there are so many ecosystem and public health services they also provide?
- Are you concerned about increased runoff as Seattle becomes more dense?

Presentation Debrief
Lia would like to be alerted when the RainCity partnership becomes active or know where to find more information on it. Falisha volunteered to draft a follow-up letter.

Tree protection ordinance Director's Rules
Commissioners reviewed the draft recommendations on the Director's Rules as developed by Becca, based on last week's discussion. Commissioners further discussed their feedback on the Rules, and edited the letter to clarify and further expand the feedback.

Action: A motion to approve the Director's Rules recommendations letter as amended was made, seconded and approved.

City budget recommendations

Patti reviewed the budget recommendations process so far, with Josh providing a set of draft recommendations for the UFC to further develop, and the UFC discussing and working on those at last week's meeting. Commissioners discussed, edited and added to the recommendations they worked on last week, as well as the final recommendation on monitoring and evaluation of the new tree protection ordinance that was not covered last week.

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

Adoption of June meeting notes

Action: A motion to approve the June 7, 2023 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded and approved.
Action: A motion to approve the June 21, 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:

Steve Zemke noted that Councilmember Strauss did not end up including tree protection in the Industrial and Maritime legislation they passed recently, as he'd said they would. He also noted that Commissioners can provide comment on their own for both the Director's Rules and the budget; that can help urge the changes if Commissioners also weigh in on their own. Items can be emphasized in this way, such as that it doesn't make sense for taxpayers to pay the additional amount needed to plant trees because in lieu fees are not high enough.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 PM.

Meeting chat:
from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:06 PM
Welcome Alicia! Your riparian experience is so valuable. Thank you for joining!
from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:13 PM
https://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=31323334-50bba2bf-31321b84-4544474f5631-
5a01929f9a539fc7&q=1&e=d98033b2-a6bf-41a2-8023-
041f218e993b&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.invw.org%2F2023%2F07%2F19%2Fhow-developers-helped-shape-
seattles-controversial-tree-protection-ordinance%2F
from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:14 PM
https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/seattle/jobs/newprint/4118909
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:16 PM
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:33 PM
Is the mayor Harrell Excutive order in effect to plant 3 trees for each healthy tree removed on public property?
from Chris Gaul to everyone: 3:38 PM
Hao, great question.
from Dilley, Jana (she / her) to everyone: 3:38 PM
https://www.seattle.gov/utilities/your-services/sewer-and-drainage/green-stormwater-infrastructure
from Chris Gaul to everyone: 3:43 PM

Are you concerned about increased runoff as Seattle becomes more dense?
from Lia Hall to everyone: 3:45 PM
Lots to digest. Thank you, Jana.
from Chris Gaul to everyone: 3:45 PM
Thank you!
from Dilley, Jana (she / her) to everyone: 3:47 PM
https://700milliongallons.org/
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:52 PM
Need to rewrite sentence on tree groves - They are in ordinance and need to be included with what they are and what happens when a tree is removed from grove.
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:53 PM
top of x
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:53 PM
second page
from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:54 PM
Yes, they form a huge amount of our canopy in this city!! Thank you Lia.
from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:54 PM
They are long-lived trees that provide habitat and food for wildlife, and are resilient to pollution.
from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:54 PM
Not as long lived as cedars:)
from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:56 PM
SDOT spent $200k to save a horse chestnut in West Seattle., due to its community value.
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:57 PM
Urge add minimally $17.87 be starting point for tree replacement in lieu fee at 12 inches DBH and increae as diametr of tree increases. $2833means city is helping to payo replace 12-24 inch trees at Parks Dept cost of $4000 per tree
from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:57 PM
https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/in-west-seattle-crusade-saves-old-tree-from-citys-chain-saw/
from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:57 PM
I was given the $200k estimate by Nolan Rundquist. The cost was in re-design for an intersection to allow the tree to remain.
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:58 PM
Need to also consider tree value for habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife as a reason to plant. them.
from Tina Cohen to everyone: 3:59 PM
Who determines the tree identification? I see frequent mis-identification by so called arborists, especially Tree of Heaven.
from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:03 PM
That is such a good point Alicia about pseudoacacia. But they fill a need in that they are so tough and drough tolerant, they can grow where native trees would not be able to survive.
from Alicia Kellogg to everyone: 4:05 PM
That's a great point Sandy, especially when we need to consider how climate change will affect how we value heartier species that are not native but may be more climate resilient.
from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:07 PM
second to last paragraph. These native species thrive in our environment and serve to buffer the impacts of climate change and to public health.
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:15 PM
Still urge they consider starting at 12"DBH a fee of 1
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:15 PM
$17.87 per square inch to increase as tree size increases.
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:18 PM
Otherwise only less than 1 tree will be replanted for all tree less than 24" DBH. City will have to pay 1/3 of cost for planting tree! removed by developers
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:32 PM

Can tree reporting system include number of trres replanted that die to get idea od
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:32 PM
f sucess or maintaince and watering requirement?
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:37 PM
Need report on survivability rate of planted trees
from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:38 PM
That would be good
from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:39 PM
Survivability rate of newly planted / in lieu trees
from David Baker - UFC 8 (privately):   4:53 PM
thanks for your help today!
from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:57 PM
South Park residents have expressed concern about this
from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:58 PM
Thank you.

Public input (additional comments received):