



City of Seattle
Urban Forestry Commission

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Becca Neumann (Position #4 – Hydrologist), Co-chair

Joshua Morris (Position #7 – NGO), 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 Moehring (Position #8 – Development) • **Blake Voorhees** (Position #9 – Realtor)

Laura Keil (Position #10 – Get Engaged) • **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

December 7, 2022, 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: 2485 755 9599

Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair

Becca Neumann – Co-Chair

Julia Michalak

Falisha Kurji

Stuart Niven

Hao Liang

David Moehring

Lia Hall

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Toby Thaler

Absent- Excused

Blake Voorhees

Laura Keil

Jessica Hernandez

Jessica Jones

Public

Steve Zemke

Sandy Shettler

Maria Batayola

Jessica Dixon

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

Public comment:

Steve Zemke noted the importance of the discussion today on the draft tree ordinance. He noted a couple of important pieces that if they are not included in the current updates to the draft ordinance, the UFC should urge to be included: a tree replacement requirement higher than 1:1 and establishment of a dedicated tree fund where there in-lieu payment funds will go. The fee needs to increase along with the size of the tree removed, and the city should allow donations and grant funds to go into that Fund. There is a lot of opportunity in the city for fundraising to supplement what the city provides for tree protection. Reducing the removal limit from the current allowed removals of three per year to a lower limit like two trees every three years, is something that should be pushed for. Another piece that should be included is to require a tree inventory be done of all trees 6" and larger, along with a landscape plan, before issuing any permits.

Sandy Shettler noted support of the UFC recommendation about community being able to appeal decisions and provided the example of neighbors who recently filed an appeal on the approval of a project in South Park which would remove most of the trees on several lots to be developed.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Patti noted that there will be a meeting coming up seeking input on development of the Lake City Floodplain Park. She provided some background on the acquisition of the property, the joint creek restoration efforts happening in the creek portion of the property, and now the efforts to incorporate community input into development of park plans for the rest of the property. She provided links to project and meeting information in the chat.

Josh noted that the city recently issued a detailed feedback summary regarding community input to the scoping process for the Comprehensive Plan update effort. The housing crisis appears a lot in the summary, as does trees. He encouraged Commissioners to review the summary.

2023 UFC leadership election

Patti provided a recap of the nomination process and the nominations received for Commissioners to serve as Co-Chairs. Of those nominated, three Commissioners expressed interest and availability in serving: Josh, Becca and Laura. Becca and Josh provided some comments on their experiences this year and their interest in continuing to serve in these leadership roles. Patti then instructed Commissioners on how to make their anonymous votes regarding this slate of nominated candidates. The slate of candidates was unanimously approved by the Commissioners present (seven affirmative votes, no negative votes.)

Adoption of November 2 and 30 meeting notes

Action: A motion to approve the November 2, 2022 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and approved.

Action: A motion to approve the November 30, 2022 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and approved.

2023 Work plan development

Patti shared with Commissioners the start of a draft work plan for 2023, and described the process for creating it, starting from the current version of the 2022 work plan and making some updates to refresh tasks and remove outdated ones. She reviewed the process of how the 2022 work plan was developed, in migrating to the new Excel template and conducting the prioritization process to develop the five task area worksheets. She reviewed the status of some of the main task areas, and noted some new tasks to include, such as the new urban forest-related Statement of Legislative Intent around city investments in urban forestry. Commissioners made suggestions for additions to the work plan and noted additional items they would like to add their names to work on. Patti reviewed the process for developing and adopting the annual work plan, and the process for updating it throughout the year.

2022 Annual Report development

Patti provided a recap of the annual report process, and reviewed the 2021 Annual Report as an example. The process to develop the annual report starts with drafting the language to be included in it. Patti shared the start of a set of draft language for the 2022 report. Commissioners provided input on items to be included in the list of accomplishments to highlight for 2022 as well as the list of focus areas for 2023. Patti will incorporate feedback provided today into a revised draft of the report language. Josh and Becca will form a subgroup to work with Patti on refining the draft language between now and the January 4 meeting, when the UFC will review the latest draft language again.

Urban forest protection ordinance update – Chanda Emery, SDCI

Chanda provided a recap of the progress on this ordinance update this year, including the issuing of the SEPA draft ordinance in February and successfully working through the appeal process. Throughout the year, SDCI has been conducting meetings of its internal team to work on revising the draft ordinance, with the input provided by the UFC and other stakeholders. Chanda noted that SDCI is close to having a revised ordinance that they can put forward to the Mayor's Office, and walked through what updates have been included in the ordinance so far. Revisions include extending the tree establishment period to five years, requiring adequate soil volume, protection of replacement trees, adjustments to the payment-in-lieu amounts, and establishment of a tree fund. They are also considering how to incorporate replacement for hazardous trees removed and working on improvements to the development process.

Questions from Commissioners included:

- Are any of the proposed revisions to the draft ordinance likely to change the SEPA determination and/or open up another appeal?
- What is the status of the UFC recommendation that SDCI provide quarterly reporting on trees removed and trees planted?
- Are there expected to be changes to the replacement ratio requirements for development, or to the removal limits outside of development?
- Will the updated Director's Rule mentioned be run by the UFC?
- Will community members still be able to file appeals under the new code?

Urban forest protection ordinance UFC next steps

Josh noted appreciation for the several items the UFC has been advocating for being included in the revised ordinance. He also noted several UFC recommendations that were not included: changing the limit of trees that can be removed outside of development, modifying proposed replacement ratios, requiring tree inventories. Josh will draft a letter responding to this ordinance update, to be considered at the next meeting. He also noted that the UFC should get started on some outreach to the Mayor's Office and City Council.

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:

Maria Batayola noted that the Beacon Hill Council has been advocating for a strong tree protection ordinance and noted that they appreciate describing the ordinance as the Urban Forest Protection Ordinance. She provided details on her neighborhood and noted the importance of protecting trees and increasing canopy there.

Steve Zemke noted that tomorrow there is a Land Use Committee meeting that will address the Tree Service Provider Registration ordinance. Also, there are three remaining public input sessions on the Comprehensive Plan; he urges Commissioners to attend those and provide input. He noted other comments he put in the chat and disappointment that some key recommendations are not included in the updated draft urban forest protection ordinance. The limit of removing three trees per year outside of development is too high; that needs to be lowered if we are to protect the existing trees we have now.

Lia Hall noted that she spoke with an Arborist at the Canopy Watch event. There is a lot of interest among Arborists in participating in these UFC meetings, but they aren't able to join these afternoon meetings that are during work hours. She also relayed concern she's heard from community members about developments that don't allow much space for planting and successful establishment of trees.

Jessica Dixon expressed being nervous about what the urban forest protection ordinance is going to look like. We need to be bolder and not continue "business as usual", so she urged the Commission to work on getting those items not yet included to be included in the ordinance.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Meeting Chat:

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 3:07 PM

No comment, thanks. Chris Gaul

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:07 PM

yes I want to comment! I'm calling in!

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:07 PM

My computer audio has a glitch

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:15 PM

<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/SeattlePlan/OneSeattlePlanEISScopingDetailedCommentSummary.pdf>

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:15 PM

Please join us on Wednesday, December 14, 2022 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. Register at lakecityfloodplainpark.com/register to receive a Zoom link for the workshop.

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:15 PM

lakecityfloodplainpark.com

from David he/his Moehring to everyone: 3:15 PM

Thank you Josh for the link!

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:20 PM

Yay! Another year of fantastic leadership!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:30 PM

It was passed in the city budget

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:36 PM

One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Community Engagement Meetings. are on Dec 8th, Dec 12th and Jan 10th. Here is link to more details and locations. <https://www.seattle.gov/opcd/meetings-and-events>

from Becca Neumann to everyone: 3:36 PM

I am interested in working with Hao on 1.3.1

from David he/his Moehring to everyone: 3:37 PM

David is willing to be on 1.2.3 and 1.2.4

from Becca Neumann to everyone: 3:39 PM
and 1.3.2

from Hao Liang to everyone: 3:40 PM

For 1.3.2, I had initial investigations and I'm hoping to share the findings with you in the coming weeks

from David he/his Moehring to everyone: 3:46 PM

David is also willing to be on 4.1.1, 4.1.3, 5.1.1

from Lia Hall to everyone: 3:47 PM

Hao has agreed to be the lead on 3.2.2

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:48 PM

Land Use Committee tomorrow at 9:30AM have the following item listed Proposed Amendments to Arborist Registration Posting Requirements Process
Briefing and Discussion

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:50 PM

There are no details listed on the land Use Committee as to what they are considering. Anyone know anything an

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:50 PM
bout this?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:51 PM
should be 2023?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:01 PM
Updating Urban Forest protection Ordinance

from David he/his Moehring to everyone: 4:02 PM
Josh did a super job on the Urban Forester position! Kudos!!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:15 PM
What about reducing 3 trees per year to one tree per year ? Three is a lot of trees.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:18 PM
What about requiring more than one tree be required to be replaced for a tree removed. This is a huge loss of ecosystem services and climate resilience being lost.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:21 PM
Other city departments are required to report tree loss and replacement on a quarterly basis

from Jim Davis to everyone: 4:24 PM
Are any of the points in the UFC letter going to be met? Appeal process maintained and permit to remove trees on private property?

from David he/his Moehring to everyone: 4:24 PM
Question on Dir Rule mentioned

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:24 PM
"Does proportional to" mean at maturity?

from BB to everyone: 4:28 PM
Agreeing with Steve Z's statement about 3 trees being a lot. Could the language be drafted so that if it's needed to take down three trees in one year, specially for solar, then an "exception" can be applied for green energy conversion, after submitting that the installation of panels will take on said property?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:31 PM
What about a tree inventory being done before building permits are issued instead of it just being on site plans. Is a way to trak what is happening?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:32 PM
Seems there are ignoring some significant issues like number of trees that can be removed per year and only one for one tree rplacemnt.

from David he/his Moehring to everyone: 4:33 PM
Yes, I echo Hao's and Steve's interest in the data that has been generated since March 2021. Perhaps get an assessment on the Spring 2023 calendar

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:34 PM
How does the public know a young tree is a replacement tree?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:34 PM
Another issue is to allow inspector's to enter private property if it appears a violation is occuring. Bainbridge Island has this provion in their law.

from Jessica Dixon to everyone: 4:35 PM
no permits/permitting for removal of trees over 12"

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:35 PM
Thanks.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:36 PM
Permits - just need to expnd SDOT permit syatem on line. to include SDCI trees.

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:37 PM
In the draft removing trees over 12" needs to have "self-reporting and registration"

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:37 PM
Steve, good idea.

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:38 PM

sorry, "self-reporting and registration" for trees between 6" and 12". Over 12" trees need permits

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:38 PM

Also sending concerns to city council which can amend whatever Mayor's office sends to Council.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:39 PM

A required Tree Inventory before projects start seems like low hanging fruit--would help developers avoid re-work expenses too.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:40 PM

Yes please ask for this! I have been asking for months. Would like to know what they've collected in 2021 and 2022. Thanks Hao!

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:40 PM

Is there a way for us to see what input SDCI received on the development side from their listening sessions?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:42 PM

Portland's in lieu is \$450/inch DBH for trees 20" DBH and larger They had about \$4 million a year ago in their Tree Replacement and Preservation Fund

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:43 PM

Listening session were responses from I believe 29 individual including 8 from Building community and 3 architects from homeowner input

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 4:45 PM

<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDCI/Codes/ChangesToCodes/TreeProtection/TreeProtectionOutreachReport.pdf>

from Maria Batayola to everyone: 4:50 PM

Thank you Steve for pointing out the shortcomings of the bill

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:50 PM

Agree with Steve! 3 trees is appropriate for rural areas, not tiny city lots

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:51 PM

Thank you, Steve.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:52 PM

That's a fantastic idea Lia!

from BB to everyone: 4:53 PM

Excellent suggestion for quarterly evening meetings Lia!

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 4:53 PM

Lia, Great point.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:54 PM

Spreading out the buildings ensures no trees will ever grow there. It's robbing future generations of shade and cooling.

Note 3/13/25: Submitted emails from members of the public with names and addresses redacted from meeting notes.