



Commissioner Present

Alicia Kellogg (Position 2 – Urban Ecologist) • **Lani Chang** (Position 3 - Natural Resource Agency or University) • **Drue Epping** (Position 5 – Arborist) • **Maeve Gillis** (Position 10 – Get Engaged) • **Melanie Ocasio** (Position 11 – Environmental Justice) • **Andrea Starbird** (Position 12 – Public Health) • **Lia Hall** (Position 13 – Community/Neighborhood)

Commissioners Absent

Aaron Clark (Position 1 – Wildlife Biologist), **David Baker** (Position 8 – Development)

Facilitators

Drue Epping (Position 5 - Chair) and UFC staff

Briefings

Brennon Staley, OPCD, presented on the Comp Plan Phase II Legislation

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

Minutes

January 14, 2026, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

- 1. The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m., the Chair conducted the roll call, and the agenda was reviewed.**
- 2. The Chair facilitated Public Comment and provided a guideline to the public for engaging in this period**

Steve Z made comments on the following:

- Encouraged Commission to add the following to work plan:
 - Urged UFC to ask OSE to give a presentation about the Climate Action Plan that is going under review and being discussed this year
 - Mentioned the additional guidelines added by Mayor Harrell last September
 - Noted that OSE gave a presentation on the Comp Plan last week to Planning Commission

- Noted in the letterhead that there are five (5) missing positions and would like to look at the process to see how recruitment will go
 - Highlighted that Position 9 is a unique one (Economist, appointed by UFC)
 - Would like this added to the agenda to discuss the process and get it started right away

3. Vote: Approve Meeting Notes from 11/12/2025

- Lia motions to approve, Alicia seconded.
- UFC unanimously approved notes.

4. UFC Subcommittee & City Staff Updates & Announcements

- Drue shared information about a community-oriented grant focusing on environmental justice – folks to share and look into it (Cliff Family Foundation – link in chat)
- Lia shared information about a group art show that features Indigenous artists and invite folks to attend/share
 - “Placeholder: Roots, Rupture, Regeneration” – January 28th to March 3rd
 - Location: the Columbia City Gallery
- Lauren introduced Hannah Pascual, OSE’s Boards and Commissions Advisor and Bridget Igoe, OSE’s Food Policy and Programs Strategic Advisor
 - Hannah will be supporting both the UFC and the SBT Community Advisor Board (CAB) for a one-year assignment.
 - Bridget serves as a staff liaison for the SBT Advisory Board and will be overseeing Hannah’s work for both commissions.
- Lauren also mentioned a new consultant will joining in the future to help with process, protocol, and governance support – currently expected to be present for the February meeting.

5. Co-Chair Nominations (moved up in agenda)

- Drue explained that the purpose of the nominations and process
 - Elect an additional 1-2 Co-Chairs to primarily help with subcommittee work
 - Can nominate self or others – looking to have elections at the next meeting to get someone on board
 - Invited people to get involved and to share responsibilities within the Co-Chair space
- Andrea self-nominated.
- Questions:

- Lia asked for clarity on time commitment and expectations on what Co-Chair's role is
 - Drue: It'll depend, can refer to the Work Plan to see what to expect. In general:
 - 1-2 meetings/month with City staff to ensure we are aligned with agenda, and being involved in emails
 - Workload will change depending on what is being worked on/drafted
- Andrea expressed interest but would like to look through the draft Work Plan more closely to understand the subcommittee commitments.
 - In response to Andrea, Drue mentioned that there is flexibility in the commitments to make this feasible for those who are interested. Highlighted that having additional Co-Chair participation will provide extra support as needed (e.g. navigating tight deadlines and availability)
- Question: Lia asked how to proceed with nomination process.
 - Lauren suggested a message should be sent via email to the OSE_UFC Liaison email (in chat) with Drue cc'd.
- Question: Lia asked when nominations need to be done by and when the vote will take place.
 - Drue: Current plan is to put it on the agenda for the next meeting, but it is flexible to be pushed out to a later date if further consideration is needed.

6. Briefing by Brennan Staley: Comp Plan Phase II

- Overview of what the new Comprehensive Plan is (One Seattle Plan), background, and features of each Phase.
- Phase 1: Neighborhood Residential Update
 - First set of different pieces of legislation that will implement the vision in the Comp Plan.
 - Approved last December, will go into effect on January 21st
- Phase 2: Centers and Corridors
 - Primary purpose: rezones intended to create more capacity
 - Timeline adjusted to start now due to administration transition.
 - To transmit to Council early 2026– potentially may get adopted in mid-2026.
- Phase 3: Regional & Urban Centers; Additional Neighborhood Centers
 - Start to discuss publicly after Phase II is adopted and potentially will go to Council in 2027 for review/amendment
- Questions/comments:

- Lia: What is the general timeline of each phase of the process or specifically Phase II? Also mentioned that it would be great to know if there is an opportunity for UFC to look at draft or provide feedback.
 - Brennan: No exact timeline. They explained general expectations of how long things will take and confirmed that there will be lots of opportunities for the UFC to provide input.
- Drue: Are there any changes to the tree/landscaping sections in the most recent draft? Also wanted to verify that existing standards will follow the changing zones.
 - Brennan: No changes. Clarified the changes are related more to development – not ones specific to trees/landscaping/tree protection code.
- Drue: Referenced the connection of floor area ratio to incentives for protecting trees being discussed in Phase I. Is there any anticipation of something similar coming up in Phase II?
 - Brennan: No.
- Lia: Any notable areas on benefits and community housing?
 - Brennan: Explained how current plan adheres and implements mandatory housing affordability requirements, which will result in more affordable housing resources. Mentioned bonuses for affordable housing in multifamily zones and an upcoming conversation about the multifamily tax exemption.
- Drue: Referenced the number of amendments Phase I went through – is that a typical number of amendments and will Phase II go through something similar?
 - Brennan: Acknowledged that Phase I is an outlier in term of amendments for a non-budget bill but would not be surprised if Phase II surpasses this since this will cover a large portion of the city. However, the type of amendments will likely be different (i.e. maps vs. text).
 - Drue: Noted that it might be a good opportunity to look at the aforementioned maps/areas and consider the canopy and planning being done in the city later on.

7. Vote: Welcome Letter (moved up in agenda)

- Drue explained what goals for this letter/discussion:
 - Get a subgroup to come together to create a welcome letter to build relationships/connections with these offices
 - Goal is to deliver letters to the new Councilmembers and Mayor's office
 - Would like feedback and input on what should be on the letter – vote on content for letter next month (or push out if further discussion is needed). Initial thoughts to include:
 - Who we are and what our main priorities are

- Importance of equity to tree canopy and maintaining it
 - Tree incentives (could include examples)
 - Provide other documentation or reference previous letters from the Comp Plan
 - Can have up to four (4) people in subgroup – Drue would like to lead
- Questions/comments
 - Andrea: Will this letter be specific or keeping it high-level?
 - Drue: High-level; things that would be helpful to new administration on setting their tree agenda/policy.
 - Andrea: Regarding the hand delivery aspect, will that be discussed more in the subcommittee or at next month's meeting?
 - Drue: It'll depend on when we are ready – need to have an approved letter before reaching out to City staff to reach out to those offices.
 - Lani: Noted that after the last letter to Council, there was not enough time to respond to a request for feedback. Considered whether it would be appropriate to include language inviting feedback or assistance.
 - Lia seconded this sentiment.
 - Drue's suggested "early collaborative partnership".
- Maeve, Andrea, and Lani expressed desire to join subgroup.

8. 2026 UFC Work Plan Review & Discussion

- Drue went over the draft Work Plan calendar
 - This draft is a result of previous conversations about the Work Plan regarding what kind of projects/briefings UFC wants, and where there is potential opportunity to get feedback.
 - Noted that the reflected timeline follows City planning and policies which will be quite tight on UFC's side. Recognized that there is a new administration that is still settling in.
 - Showed how it was broken into different categories, what they are, and what briefings/timelines are included. Currently updated for 2026.
 - Highlighted budget timeline and noted that there will be a different reporting/consolidation of Urban Forestry budgets for 2026.
 - Lauren expanded on this: The 2023 Executive Order tasked OSE with doing a bi-annual urban forestry budget reporting. 2026 will be the first year to provide this report; OSE can present to UFC about this.
 - Would like to include more learning and community engagement opportunities centered around trees, equity, and social justice in calendar (e.g. Seattle Forest Week)
- Drue opened the floor for feedback/additional input:
 - Alicia: Appreciates simplicity and clarity of this current plan compared to previous years – feels manageable and reasonable to achieve.
 - Andrea: Excited for the process and protocols piece of the plan. Is encouraged to participate more as a result.

- Lia: Will the consultant be helping with process specifically around the work plan or in general all meetings?
 - Lauren: Referred to items noted on the work plan that have come up. Highlighted the UFC Stewardship topics tab in document that the consultant can work on. Open to having a conversation about what this will look like.
- Lia: What is the process/criteria for selecting consultants and providing feedback? They expressed interest in creating a feedback loop with consultant work.
 - Lauren: Feedback is always welcomed on consultant work and open to exploring new avenues. Recommended reaching out to the OSE staff liaison email to set-up time to chat. Also delved into the general process for how a consultant is selected.
- Drue: Emphasized importance of setting up clear intentions in work to stay grounded in goals and workplan – be direct and concise.
 - Developing methods to support this goal (e.g. bullets at top of letter)
- Drue: Will the consultant be doing more subcommittee work and working with us with feedback, or more in full commission work/emails?
 - Lauren: Forsee it being a combo of both and provided an explanation of what the initial idea of this will look like.
- Drue encouraged everyone to engage and provide suggestions to meeting agendas
 - Lia recommended that commissioners could add guest speakers to the agenda if they see fit.

9. Visions and Values

- Lani, Drue, and Lia met earlier to work on final version of the Visions, Mission, and Values document.
 - Made both the vision and mission statements more concise
 - Added note clarifying that this is a living document that can be updated as needed.
- Feedback/adjustments:
 - Capitalize the T in “Tribal” throughout the document.
- Voted on and passed unanimously by UFC
 - Maeve motioned to approve, and Alicia seconded the motion.
- Questions/comments:
 - Lani: Can the mission and vision statements be available to the public?
 - Lauren: Yes, this can be posted on the public website.
 - Drue: Suggested that everyone review bylaws and refresh memory on protocols in preparation for the rest of the year.

10. Second Public Comment (if time allows)

Steve Z made several recommendations:

- Reiterate previous statement about looking into and providing input to the Climate Action Plan progress report
- Urged to review previous two (2) Tree Canopy Assessment reports
 - Noted there were discrepancies due to how tree loss was inaccurately recorded.

11. The meeting adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Meeting Chat:

Drue Epping Arborist #5, 01/14/2026, 3:11 PM

<https://cliffamilyfoundation.org/grants-program#open-call>

Melanie Ocasio, 01/14/2026, 3:22 PM

Hi Everyone. My mic isn't working on my laptop at the moment

Urgenson, Lauren 01/14/2026, 3:23 PM

OSE_UFC_Liaison <OSE_UFC_Liaison@seattle.gov>

Lia Hall #13, 01/14/2026, 3:43 PM

Phase 2 Draft summary from 2024

<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/SeattlePlan/OneSeattlePlanZoningUpdatePhase2Legislation.pdf>

Lia, 01/14/2026, 4:25 PM

Mission Vision Values —Good way to start year.

Drue Epping Arborist #5, 01/14/2026, 4:26 PM

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