
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2013
Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Commission Members present: Kris Day, Michael McCloskey, Secretary
Catherine Mushel, Stephen Peacock, Joe
Poracsky, Chair Meryl Redisch, Dianna Shervey

Commission Members absent: Ricardo Moreno

City Staff present: City Attorney Harry Auerbach; Jennifer Karpis,
Bureau of Environmental Services (BES); City
Nature Manager Deborah Lev, City Forester Jenn
Cairo, Tree Inspector Myles Black, Autumn
Montegna, Jeremy Gratbo, Anne Kroma, Parks &
Recreation

Guests present: Commissioner Amanda Fritz, Policy Advisor Patti
Howard, Parks Bureau Director Mike Abbaté; Bryan
Burch; Brian French; Ruth Williams.

Call to Order and Public Comments: Chair Meryl Redisch called the June 2013 Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting to order at 7:37 am.

Meryl introduced Mike Abbaté, Parks & Recreation Bureau Director, who announced that City of Portland Commissioner Amanda Fritz would also be joining the meeting. Mike thanked the UFC for their hard work and advocacy for trees and for the Parks Bureau. He characterized the most recent budget process as more transparent in understanding the actual cuts. He reported that some large changes (responsibility for public fountains has moved from Water to Parks) are really realignments that make business sense. This includes moving the street tree planting program to Parks, but this change is deferred to next year. There will still be some cuts and staff reductions, but budget cuts will be in the 2 to 3% realm. He noted that with Meryl as an Ex-officio member of the Parks Board and on the Parks Budget Advisory Committee, the UFC had representation and a way to stay up to date on budget information throughout the cycle.

Review and approval of May UFC Minutes: Chair Meryl Redisch determined the May minutes were incomplete and would be reviewed for approval with the June minutes in July.

The Urban Forestry Report - City Forester Jenn Cairo

Jenn Cairo reported on staff details:

- Angie DiSalvo will return from maternity leave next month and named her son Jasper.
- Street tree inventories will be kicking off soon with Catherine Mushel, Dianna Shervey, Kris Day, Jenn Cairo and John Warner serving as team leaders in their respective neighborhoods. UF staff Christina Schull (new Elm Monitor), Jeremy Grotho, Shannon Stoll, Jeff Ramsey, and Danielle Fuchs will be helping with that work.
- Jenn provided copies of an AmeriCorps intern application for a fall position that will also help with street tree inventories. The recruitment closes July 18th and will give someone an opportunity to apply their field of study while receiving a stipend and student loan deferment.
- There have been 12 completed street tree inventories out of 95 neighborhoods. This summer will add 8.
- Jenn Cairo reported working with Friends of Trees (FOT) in updating the UF (Urban Forestry) street tree lists. Some lists are very short without much species diversity but FOT keeps notes, reviews their lists yearly, and may provide additional varieties.

Jenn continued with budget information:

- She felt that UF did well, considering this is the fourth year of budget cuts
- There is now permanent funding for Autumn's position and a tree inspector position
- There is permanent Parks funding for Arbortech inoculants in the Park Blocks
- Mieke Keenan's position at BDS is funded for the next year.
- The tree nursery has been eliminated with desired species now readily available

Jenn mentioned developing a young street tree pruning program:

- There will be 4 events this fall in neighborhoods with existing inventories and active Neighborhood Tree Stewards (NTS)
- Property owners will be able to opt in for pruning and receive an invitation to learn
- Stephen Peacock added this pruning is more for form, less about clearance pruning
- Meryl Redisch pointed out this is a good program to look at equity involvement

Future updates at UFC meetings will include:

- Young street tree pruning program
- Transitioning out of growing nursery stock to procuring it commercially
- Next month will have a presentation by PBOT on sidewalk improvements and current and future mitigation requirements.

Committee and Partnership Reports

Education & Outreach (E&O) Committee – Catherine Mushel

E&O Committee Chair Catherine Mushel thanked Jennifer Karps and Kris Day for their hard work on the committee. Susie Peterson, of Friends of Trees will join, replacing Kris, who is now chairing the Policy Committee.

The E&O Committee is preparing a two year stewardship calendar and will reach out to schools and look to partner with existing groups like Portlanders for Outdoor School.

Policy Committee - Kris Day

Kris Day has just begun as Chair of the newly reconvened Policy Committee and will be seeking new members outside of the UFC.

The Committee will continue work to track the progress of canopy goals and urban forest work in the Comprehensive Plan Updates. They will discuss long term sustainable funding.

Kris thanked Catherine Mushel for her City Council testimony on Title 11 Implementation.

Heritage Tree Committee - Michael McCloskey

Chair Michael McCloskey reported the committee will view eight trees on a field tour.

Nomination and Recruitment Committee

Joe Poracsky reported that he will be retiring from Portland State University on July 1, 2013.

He has been working on a PowerPoint presentation to get the word out about the UFC and involve new people at the committee level. He showed the presentation, will have it forwarded to the full Commission and is asking for feedback and comments. The idea is to have a presentation ready by fall that any UFC member will be comfortable showing.

Catherine Mushel pointed out that a new handout has also been prepared.

Joe will revise and show his presentation in August.

Autumn is also working on a UFC presentation for neighborhood associations and it is hoped they will compliment each other.

Grey to Green - Jennifer Karps

Jennifer Karps reported:

- Planting season is ending and it is time for the beginning of outreach.
- This past year recorded 6700 street and yard trees planted under the BES programs.
- Next year will see a smaller staff and budget: 7 instead of 10 canvassers and expectations of about 5000 trees planted.
- Leah Wilson, an AmeriCorps intern has completed the Lents Park Tree Map.

Jennifer's job has been cut in the current budget. UFC Chair Meryl Redisch thanked Jennifer for being such a wonderful partner and doing such great work.

UFC Annual Report

Jenn Cairo reminded the UFC that this report is a requirement in code.

She suggested that a standard template be decided on, making reporting each year easier.

Catherine Mushel felt the work of the UFC is shown in light of how it fits with the work of the City. This past year was framed by David Odom's death and installation of the new mayor and the budget process.

Jenn Cairo stated that the Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP) is the guiding document for both the work of staff and UFC.

Angie DiSalvo has set up the Parks portion of the Annual Report as a template.

Michael McCloskey felt that it can be confusing when reporting of staff and UFC work is mingled and would like clearer delineations between the two parts of the annual report.

Kris Day will work with Catherine Mushel on a template for consistency.

Meryl felt keeping it short and sweet, and including a lot of pictures work well.

Next year's report will feature the Arbor Month Celebration.

Introduction of Commissioner Amanda Fritz

Parks & Recreation Director Mike Abbaté introduced Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who received both Parks and the Bureau of Development Services in her portfolio starting June 6th.

The members of the Urban Forestry Commission introduced themselves, gave their professional background, and committee assignments. City staff introduced themselves.

Amanda Fritz thanked the UFC for their hard work and advocacy for trees. She looks forward to working with everyone and will spread the word in recruiting new members.

It was pointed out that Harry Auerbach has provided legal expertise to the Commission for quite some time and was involved in writing the Code that governs current tree activity.

UFC Chair Meryl Redisch will be meeting with Amanda on a regular basis.

Old / New Business:

There was some discussion about the plan to refocus UFC work through the committee structure. It was suggested that monthly committee reports should indicate priorities and their progress. The committees are self-directed and it can be challenging to report back in a monthly meeting format. It was suggested that time for the Committee and Partnership Report section of each meeting be increased.

There is interest in having scheduled presentations at UFC meetings. Subjects include:

- Forest Park and mountain biking
- A formal presentation from Friends of Trees
- Having Ricardo give a presentation on Verde's work
- PBOT will be coming next month to discuss program permit requirements
- UFC Succession planning and funding opportunities

Urban Forestry Tree Inspectors' Tour

Jenn Cairo announced Part 2 to the tour of urban forestry regulatory highlights. Last September UFC members, UF staff and other City staff had a bus tour to look at some tree issues in the field and included a site that then came before the Appeals Committee. The upcoming September tour is being planned to feature other aspects of regulation.

City-Street landscapes, such the trees on Ainsworth, were suggested for the tour. Catherine Mushel suggested that if neighborhoods pay for maintenance themselves that this raises the issue of equity among neighborhoods. Jenn reminded everyone that UF does not have the funds that would be required to do proactive and regular maintenance on any of the City's trees; instead, hazards are addressed, and trees under maintenance agreements for such tasks as clearing street lights and stop signs, receive minimal pruning.

The regular business meeting adjourned at 9:36 am.

Appeals Committee session for continuation of 20.42 Appeal at 607 SE 17th Avenue

Appeals Committee Chair Stephen Peacock called the session to order at 9:38 am with members Dianna Shervey and Michael McCloskey in attendance. Also present were City Forester Jenn Cairo, Tree Inspector Myles Black and recorder Anne Kroma.

Chair Stephen Peacock explained the background and volunteer status of the UFC Appeals Committee and the format for the appeal to the Appellant, Kevin Healey.

Tree Inspector Myles Black recapped the issues covered last month with Gary Shepherd of Midtown Properties LLC and that new photographic evidence presented at the time of the appeal warranted a continuation in order to give the Appeals Committee a chance to revisit the site.

The Appellant originally requested removal of 3 Deodar cedars and 1 Norway maple. The maple removal does not require a permit. The removal of the Cedars was denied since they were not under the criteria of dead, diseased or dying. The owner alleged foundational damage that was not visible on site inspections by the City Forester, the UF Supervisor, Myles and another Tree Inspector until after dirt was excavated away from the foundation. New photos showed cracks inside the basement aligned with the root damage now showing outside. Based on this new information, Myles recommended removal of the south tree and some pruning of the remaining 2.

Kevin Healey continued testimony about the middle of the 3 trees and his belief that drainage problems in the parking lot can be attributed to those tree roots. Myles reported no soil cracking and there was discussion of the difference between significant infrastructure damage and an expectation of future damage without reasonable remediation happening. It was pointed out that repairs to the planter and parking lot will undoubtedly be less money than removal of a mature tree.

Michael McCloskey asked for clarification of the decision needed and the posting requirements that would result.

Chair Stephen Peacock stated that with new information the inspector is recommending removal of the south tree and retention of the other 2.

Dianna Shervey moved to accept the Inspector's removal approval of the south tree and deny the appeal for removal of the middle and north Deodar cedars. Michael McCloskey seconded the motion and it was approved. The Appellant was instructed to post the removal information on the tree to be removed at the time the permit is issued; the neighborhood was notified with the letter in May regarding this appeal of multiple trees and will have no further comment. The Appellant is asked to work with the Tree Inspector on the details of replanting.

Chair Stephen Peacock adjourned the session at 10:12 am