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**URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes

November 21, 2013

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

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**Commission Members present:**

Kris Day, Michael McCloskey, Ricardo Moreno, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Stephen Peacock, Joe Poracsky, Chair Meryl Redisch, and Dianna Shervey

**City Staff present:**

City Attorney Harry Auerbach; Jenifer Karps, Bureau of Environmental Services (BES); Sallie Edmunds, Roberta Jortner, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS); City Nature Manager Deborah Lev, City Forester Jenn Cairo, Autumn Montegna, Danielle Bohannan (née Fuchs), Casey Jogerst, Elm Monitor Christina Schull, and recorder Anne Kroma, Parks & Recreation (PP&R)

**Guests present:**

Susie Peterson, Friends of Trees; Bryan Burch; Bronwhyn Dean; Patrick Donovan, Portland General Electric (PGE); Dave Elkin, Greenworks; Julia Gouge

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**Call to Order and Public Comments:** Chair Meryl Redisch called the November 2013 Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting to order at 8:17 am and expressed her thanks to staff for the work in organizing the October bus tour, which replaced the regular business meeting. She also thanked Catherine Mushel for all her work on the Annual Report.

Bryan Burch, Neighborhood Tree Steward and Education & Outreach Committee member, was recognized by the UFC Chair for general public comments. Bryan described his recent experience in obtaining a tree permit. He believed that having some knowledge of the tree permit process would help him. He found it frustrating that communication with BDS (Bureau of Development Services) only happened through voicemail messages. He fully supports the funding of Title 11 Tree Code implementation, so that tree-related questions can be much more easily answered. City Forester Jenn Cairo mentioned that original plans called for one SPOC (Single Point of Contact) position to be located at BDS. That has been updated to two SPOC positions, so that people calling to find out if they need a permit won't reach voice mail during regular business hours.

**Review and approval of September UFC Minutes:** Chair Meryl Redisch asked for review of the September 2013 draft minutes. Several minor changes were requested that Secretary Catherine Mushel and recorder Anne Kroma will verify before posting the final version.

Joe Poracsky moved to accept the September 2013 minutes with the stated corrections. The motion was seconded by Michael McCloskey and approved unanimously.

### **Public Meetings Rule - City Attorney Harry Auerbach**

City Attorney Harry Auerbach explained that because the Urban Forestry Commission is tasked with making decisions and recommendations, it is a public body. State law requires that when a quorum of the members of such a body meets, that meeting must be held in public. This means that anytime six or more UFC members are discussing anything under their purview, the meeting must be accessible to the public. This requires reasonable notification (by online posting) and holding the meeting where the public could attend it.

Harry continued in reporting that these rules regarding public meetings were written well before the advent of email, have not been updated, and the provisions regarding electronic communication refer to telephone conversations. Therefore, UFC members or committee members must be very careful about not using "reply all" in emails that discuss any matters within their jurisdiction. An email deliberating on the wording of a draft letter would require public access, in that any interested public would need to be able to read that email.

This kind of work may still be circulated electronically. To keep the forum public, all comments and replies should be compiled or channeled through one person. It was noted that Anne Kroma, as the UFC admin person, could be the designated circulator. This process would not be needed for individual recommendations or non-collaborative decisions. The requirement for reasonable public notice and meeting access provides transparency to citizens and the media.

Committee meetings will need to provide notification on public calendars and access to their location when voting, such as when the Heritage Tree Committee makes decisions on their Heritage Tree recommendations. Meeting notes must also be made available. This could be done by posting online or by sending them to the UFC contact (currently Anne Kroma). They could then be supplied in response to a public records request. If in doubt about any aspect of this, please call Harry Auerbach.

Policy Committee Chair Kris Day asked a question related to the public meeting rule for the Policy Committee, since they do make policy recommendations. It was clarified that if the committee's rules do not require a quorum of the committee members present to make a decision, then counting the number of UFC members in attendance would tell you if the meeting requires notification and public access.

### **Introduction of Casey Jogerst, UF Permit Supervisor**

City Forester Jenn Cairo introduced the newly hired Urban Forestry Permit Supervisor Casey Jogerst, who provided a summary of her background. Originally from Chicago, she has worked in urban forestry in Milwaukee and New York City. Casey expressed excitement in dealing with the challenges here and has found the infrastructure similar to New York. The commission welcomed her and looks forward to her help throughout the appeal process.

### **The Urban Forestry Report - City Forester Jenn Cairo**

City Forester Jenn Cairo announced that BDS and UF staff will be presenting a Report to Council regarding Title 11 Implementation. It is tentatively scheduled for December 18th and Anne Kroma will send UFC members a reminder with agenda details. At the time the last ordinance to delay implementation came before Council in May, an update Report to Council was requested by Commissioners Nick Fish and Dan Saltzman, both of whom have been previous Parks & Recreation Bureau Commissioners.

City Forester Jenn Cairo called attention to newly updated draft Street Tree brochures and accompanying materials in the meeting packet. The Approved (formerly “Recommended”) Street Tree Lists have been updated about every five years, but could be on a shorter cycle in future. The new lists used BES and Friends of Trees information as starting points, but current availability is not as much of a factor as in past lists. In addition to members of the commission the public, stakeholders consulted include other bureaus, utilities, and various people in the nursery industry.

Danielle will be sending out the remaining street tree lists and is asking for comments. Please send them to Danielle Bohannan at: [Danielle.Fuchs@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Danielle.Fuchs@portlandoregon.gov).

Perhaps the biggest change is that maples are no longer on the street tree lists, due to the abundance of them in our urban canopy. Maples (and other trees not listed) may still be allowed as street trees. They can be requested and the inspector may evaluate them in the specific circumstances of that right of way location.

Tree species for Parks and Natural Areas are determined by various site and situations and through a different process so there is not a specific list of trees used for those properties. The selection would also be guided by the Urban Forestry Management Plan, master plans, and any site plans.

Kris Day suggested more information in the Talking Points document on why maples are no longer pre-approved by being on the Street Tree Planting Lists. She also suggested a targeted outreach to landscape contractors and others within the local nursery industry.

Appreciation was expressed to PGE for their welcome support in covering printing costs.

## **Committee and Partnership Reports**

### **Policy Committee - Kris Day**

Policy Committee Chair Kris Day reported on speaking before City Council on November 6th to advocate for the implementation of Title 11, the New Tree Code. Kris will also be attending a Citywide Land Use Commission meeting focusing on watershed action plans and invites anyone interested to join her. UFC Chair Meryl Redisch encouraged UFC members to attend any public meetings that they are interested in and advocate for trees. The upcoming Comprehensive Plan meetings in January will be another opportunity.

### **Nomination and Recruitment Committee**

Committee Chair Joe Poracsky reported the group is looking at different venues to share the recruitment PowerPoint presentation. He would like anyone presenting it to feel comfortable in making it their own while using the consistent information that it provides.

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

E&O Committee Chair Catherine Mushel reported sharing some positive and negative feedback on the last Dig-It event with City Forester Jenn Cairo. She will report on the committee's Arbor celebration activities later in the meeting.

### **Heritage Tree Committee - Michael McCloskey**

Committee Chair Michael McCloskey reported that the Heritage Tree Committee fully discussed the neighbor's concerns about the European beech designation brought up at the last two meetings. The committee unanimously voted to proceed with the recommendation.

The Heritage Tree (HT) Committee also discussed the differences in tree height and DBH between those recorded at the time of designation and Stephen Peacock's recent smaller measurements of some trees. The committee will review the information to assess the differences.

The HT Committee also completed their discussion on removing designation from certain trees and felt that City Council should be informed of those that have died and request removal from the list through the ordinance process.

### **Urban Tree Canopy Program - Jennifer Karps**

Jennifer Karps reported that the Outreach Team for this BES program has finished up canvassing and is conducting street tree planting inspections and marking curbs and planting spaces as the planting season begins. Totals for November include visiting 923 properties and locating 1601 planting spaces.

In addition to the Friends of Trees volunteer- model plantings, BES is offering free street trees in the following neighborhoods: Centennial, Glenfair, Lents, Powellhurst-Gilbert, and for the first time, Pleasant Valley. The goal in targeting these neighborhoods is to get more trees planted in low-canopy areas, especially areas where street tree stocking levels are low.

### **DED Season Report - Elm Monitor Christina Schull**

Parks bureau Elm Monitor Christina Schull provided her report in a PowerPoint presentation showing this year's losses from Dutch Elm Disease. She reported that the Siberian Elm, although resistant to the involved fungus, may be a carrier. In reviewing past losses, the spike in 1999 showed the removal of a large number of infected saplings near Riverview.

UFC member and Certified Arborist Stephen Peacock added that removal can be a very expensive process, since quarantine measures involve having the wood chipped and burned. There are only three places in the Portland area to take the wood for appropriate disposal.

Heritage Tree elms will be included in the Parks inoculations scheduled for 2015.

### **Comprehensive Plan Update - Sallie Edmunds and Roberta Jortner, BPS**

Sallie Edmunds and Roberta Jortner, from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS), have been making regular visits to keep the UFC updated. The work started with Vision PDX and Portland Plan has been continued in the Comprehensive Plan. Predicted population growth in Portland is expected to result in a shortfall of industrial lands and jobs by 2035.

Roberta and Sallie were excited to demonstrate an online map application that allows one to overlay multiple maps and see volumes of background information. The map app was developed and is being maintained in-house.

Last year the Comprehensive Plan focused on twelve metrics and is now driven by five directives. The first is to provide healthy, connected neighborhoods by having parks and green spaces within walking distances, allowing citizens to enjoy the benefits of nature. The map app shows that growing development is focused along transportation corridors and neighborhood centers. This led to a question about how to maintain the space for trees and increase canopy with the predicted densities.

Portland is committed to protecting watershed health and is looking at Brown Field reclamation to help in terms of gaining usable industrial land.

Parks & Recreation has a strong interest in integrating nature into the City and this should be helped by the elevation of habitat corridors to a transportation item. These vegetation greenways may also contribute to storm water management. Neighborhood meetings resulted in requests for refinements to current green streets. The City will need to continue upgrading storm water infrastructure in the areas where growth will be encouraged.

The Comprehensive Plan also addresses transportation needs and seeks to be more equitable and reduce existing disparities in the systems in different parts of town. For example, southwest Portland may need greater flexibility in designing and implementing some transportation options due to fewer sidewalks and curbs or limited right of ways and to the desire to preserve the character of streets without improvements.

The Plan also seeks to make the City more resilient in dealing with emergencies and uncertainties. Such things as critical infrastructure and backup systems will be examined with equity in mind and also for ways to discourage growth in identified hazardous areas.

There was some discussion of the overlap of jurisdictions and efforts by the City and Metro and the limitations imposed by state and federal laws. It was also noted that in the BES and Parks chapters, trees are not capitalized assets but there was agreement to encourage that idea.

The Policy Committee under Chair Kris Day is continuing with their work on the Comprehensive Plan and invites any other UFC members to attend their committee meetings to help work on comments. The completed draft will be distributed in mid-2014.

The deadline for submitting Comprehensive Plan comments is December 31, 2013.

### **Arbor Day 2014 Recommendations - Catherine Mushel**

UFC Secretary and Education & Outreach Committee Chair Catherine Mushel continued the discussion started previously regarding the Arbor celebration. It was felt that having the main event on a Saturday and at the Farmers Market helped to reach a different and broader audience. The theme of Heritage Trees helped to link most of the various 2013 Arbor events.

Improvements for upcoming Arbor celebrations will include more work in outreach and invitations, RSVPs and making sure events are on City and partner calendars. Other suggestions included more listening events, in addition to talking and/or walking events. The Committee has looked at reducing costs by using scripts, delegating effectively, amplifying existing programs, having only one staff person assigned to Arbor Month, having volunteers lead events, and using Google docs.

Next year's working theme highlights Stewardship and the Committee is considering duration (day, week, or month) and funding (remembering that volunteers do use staff resources in organizing and leadership). This theme could be used to tie together tree events all year long and the complexity of the subject would be helped by a month of celebration.

### **Old/New Business**

Angie DiSalvo reported that the verbal complaint she received about the European beech was in response to a courtesy notification. The Ombudsmen's Office process requires the objection to be submitted in writing within two weeks of notification to be valid.

Discussion of removing Heritage Tree designations will be scheduled on the December agenda, as well as another vote on the European beech and a decision about when to bring the approved trees to City Council for recommendation as Heritage Trees.

The first Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting will be held tonight and it will be interesting to see how closely budget strategies align among the Parks Board, the UFC and the bureau itself.

City Forester Jenn Cairo expressed her gratitude for the hard work of the Education & Outreach Committee.

The regular business meeting adjourned at 10:48 am.