
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

August 20, 2015

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Commission Members present: Mark Bello, Kris Day, Catherine Mushel, Brian French, Barbara Hollenbeck, Chair Meryl Redisch, Damon Schrosk, and Vivek Shandas

Commission Members absent: Ricardo Moreno, David Diaz, Gregg Everhart

City Staff present: City Forester Jenn Cairo, Deputy City Attorney Tony Garcia, and Elizabeth Specht

Guests present: Jennifer Karps, Bureau of Environmental Services (BES); Shadia Duery World Forestry Center

Call to Order and Public Comments: Chair Meryl Redisch called the August 2015 Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting to order at 8:00 am.

Shadia Duery introduced herself and explained her position at the World Forestry Center. She is the Manager of International Fellows at the World Forestry Center, as she described it a UN of forestry research. Her background is a Master of Science in Forestry and a Master of Science in Environmental Sciences. She hails from Bolivia.

Review of May UFC minutes:

Chair Meryl Redisch requested a short review of the final July draft minutes. Jenn Cairo asked the 2nd page be corrected to reflect both BDS and UF will make a Title 11 presentation to City Council. She also asked that the sentence in the 5th paragraph, 2nd sentence change to project instead of implement. Barbara Hollenbeck moved to accept the minutes with the suggested edits. Chair Meryl Redisch seconded the motion. The motion and the July minutes, with the two edits, were approved unanimously.

The Urban Forestry Report - City Forester Jenn Cairo

- Elizabeth Specht former AmeriCorps member will temporarily serve as UFC clerk
 - A permanent position will be created
 - Please send all UFC items to Elizabeth Specht
Elizabeth.specht@portlandoregon.gov

- Update on Title 11
 - Staffing shift completed from Mieke Keenan to Danielle Bohannon
 - Mieke is shifting her focus to ITAP (IT Advancement Program; a new information technology system for BDS and its inter-agency partners to move to a web-based paperless permitting/case management.)
 - Will help UF integrate TRACS, GIS, and other databases into a more mobile data management system
 - Danielle Bohannon is UF's ITAP liaison
 - Kris Day asked if there was a position counterpart in BDS to Danielle's position – asking for balance.
 - No. There are a few key people: Stephanie Beckman in Land Use; Mike Hayakawa is still on board. Danielle has been working with BDS staff for a few months already. We're moving out of the phase of 'expert staff' and now moving into the phase of routine processes with Title 11.
 - Catherine Mushel asked about different answers from individual staff housed at BDS
 - It is best to go up the food chain, verify with supervisors
 - Interim Administrative Rule (IAR) is in its final review stages
 - We are continuing to search out processes with BDS and with Title 11 as we move forward

- Positions update
 - 2 new Botanic Specialist I (s) start Friday August 28th
 - Nik Desai (current Inventory Coordinator) and Gina Dake (recent seasonal arborist with the Tree Inventory Project).
 - Thank you to David Diaz and Catherine Mushel for helping with the process.
 - Roles will be focused on education and outreach work; they will also be involved in metrics and analytical work with the urban canopy distribution as well as keeping up to date with urban forestry science.
 - Madison Weakley will move from Urban Forestry to BDS in September

- Elm moratorium
 - Reminder of the moratorium April 15th – October 15th elms are not to be pruned or cut during this time
 - DED will be a work plan item for one of the new Botanical Specialists' to assess the program's effectiveness and consider DED treatment alternatives.
 - Damon Schrock asked if extending the elm moratorium was considered because of earlier bud break and later leaf fall
 - We have not looked at that yet

- The Paradox walnut Heritage Tree paperwork is complete; we are waiting for it to be scheduled for the City Council to vote on as a consensus item which does not require a presentation
 - This is a good example of a grass roots effort to nominate and save a significant tree.
 - Catherine noted that the developer ended on the side of tree preservation at the conclusion of the Paradox walnut. Discussion was around how and why this worked this time – public pressure, reputation in Portland for the developer, financially viable for the developer.
 - Damon Schrock suggested writing a press release to the Daily Journal of Commerce when Heritage Tree is designated. This was well received.
 - Media strategy is on priority list, but not very high at this time for Urban Forestry. We need to get the press releases to additional outlets in addition to current outlets.
 - Meryl suggested this is an outreach task and asked Catherine to start thinking about possible media outlets.
 - Kris asked can the story be dispersed after drafting
 - Yes, once it becomes public, can then go to the Oregonian, etc.
 - As commissioners, the message should be agreed upon.
 - Parks PR is not all that constraining, most important to make sure message is accurate and bureaus do not contradict each other.

The UFC Chair Report – Meryl Redisch

- Quarterly calendar reminder: send all meeting dates and times to Elizabeth
- Annual Report: What should be in the report?
 - Front page – Paradox walnut
 - Arbor Day
 - Title 11
 - Highlight of new commissioners; Commission description as a whole.
 - BES and FOT Tree Planting
 - Concern of cross over by Kris Day suggests maintaining focus on commission dealings
 - Consider different format: commission annual report a good tool for audience
 - How many hours do commissioners serve?
 - **Action:** Please send hours served to Elizabeth on a quarterly basis: June, September, January, April,
- Chair Meryl Redisch passed out a parks list of new and developing parks and asked anyone who is interested and willing to sign up for an advisory committee.
- Forest Management Plan: Starting the first quarter of 2016, coming from Commissioner Fritz because of staff capacity.
 - Emily Roth will be the Parks lead on the Forest Management Plan.
 - Consider process, who should be involved in the planning.

Question: Is there an advisory committee or a vision for the Forest Management Plan?

Answer: Hopefully there will be external people, possibly business community, Parks Board. The language and goals of other city plans should be well integrated and maintained in the new Forest Management Plan.

- Parking lot for retreat: 2 or 3 top priorities for discussion and how long should the retreat be?
 - Evaluate goals from last year
 - Revisit last year's parking lot; items that were not addressed
 - Look at how the commission works together, processes
 - Consider where can we make the biggest difference in the next 12-18 months
 - Too late to be a part of the Comprehensive Plan
 - Not too late for the mixed-use zoning plan – what is our role in the process
 - Heritage Tree Program, how can we protect more significant trees
 - How can we balance big trees with big stories with whole forest protection in the ROW
 - E+O: messaging and media outreach
 - Retreat is an opportunity to think big but also to prioritize what can be accomplished and have the greatest effect on the urban forest
 - Succession planning and continued recruitment
 - Member introduction to the commission should be enhanced
 - There is an orientation available to new members with time considerations to people's schedules

Shadia Duery comment: Create a blog post of commission's activities, goals, and time commitments, will also help with recruitment. Meryl's response: we have a description that could be improved, it is important to get it up to the web for people to see.

- Connect with outdoor school to encourage arborists of the future
- Can we better use data and analysis to support commission work, specifically Powell Blvd. tree removal
- Committees are flexible, a new data group may be possible to help support the work
- OAC strategizing and evaluation
 - Timeline expectations of what can be done
- Whole forest talk, what the public expects of Urban Forestry.
 - Necessary to discuss how big tree stories (Sequoias) vs. the larger urban forest
- Timing of Retreat:
 - 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Thursday of December
 - Either 8-12pm w/ lunch or 9-3 pm w/ lunch
 - **Action:** Doodle poll to come
 - Location to be determined
 - Retreat is in lieu of December meeting. Breakfast prior to first meeting of the new year

Mark Bello Policy Committee Chair: Report

- Four items the committee is tracking
 - Comprehensive Plan

- Work sessions with Eric Engstrom, make sure there is not back slide on tree policy. Eric will let Mark know when the appropriate work sessions will happen in order to maintain tree policy presence. They are still a month or two away.
- Mixed zoning plan: taking the existing commercial zone and creating four new zones. Some of the exemptions of trees required will be carried over.
- Regulatory Improvement Code Amendment Package (RICAP) 8
 - Ladd's Addition work, again maintain presence as tree advocates throughout city, remind other bureaus there is a forestry commission and a policy committee especially land use and development activities
- Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC)
 - Large work program: only made it through two items of a dozen. Long list of issues delegated to the OAC that will be orphaned
 - August 12th memo: 1200\$ fee is now 1350\$
 - Action: forward memo to Meryl
 - Comment: OAC conversation got very heated, dissolved into irrelevant zones and was not productive.
 - There was not enough information to make a recommendation on the Sequoias
 - OAC too many curveballs, not able to get evaluation done on Title 11, not the IAR.
 - Return to Commissioner Fritz and determine what is accomplishable in the next 4 work sessions
 - In 2016 these issues might land on the UFC
 - Reason for the OAC - it is from Commissioner Fritz's office to see how Title 11 is implemented
 - What is working well, what is not
 - Resolve immediate problems: more than 12; only completed 2 items: \$1,200 fee
 - What data should we collect in order to make appropriate recommendations
 - Meryl asked if Mark could make recommendations for steps forward related to the 1200\$ fee to get on the record to City Council before the close of the OAC
 - Continue the work of the OAC
 - Recourse to \$1,200 is to appeal it
 - Need to collect data and build a case for fee change
 - Point made to Commissioner Fritz: Title 11 was not given a chance before changes were suggested to the code.

- Stated the UFC letter written did not make it to the OAC committee
- Fees in lieu of preservation
 - The policy committee would be a good group to analyze the fee in lieu

New Business

- Debrief of August 4th Public Hearing on Interim Administrative Rule
 - Question: Other tree related discussions?
 - Answer: Homeowners Association (HOA) John Gibbons stated common property is exempted from the tree code, and feels it should be included in the code.
 - What is the take away from this meeting, the majority of attendees supported the preservation of large trees?
 - Address systems of zoning (mixed-use) and individual level
 - Capitalize on resident's energy behind protecting trees
 - Involve BDS; Meryl will follow up with Mike Hayakawa, Patty Howard, and Commissioner Saltzman regarding the UFC letter to the OAC
 - Connect with Mayor Hales' environmental policy that trees are a key species of a green city
 - Need to engage with Commissioners Saltzman and Novick
 - Consider canopy density in relation to square footage of development per residential lot
 - There is a potentially equal number of charismatic trees in neighborhoods where people are not able to speak up
 - Do we have that data?
 - How about nominations that are not heritage trees
 - Use this as a tool to further build tree advocacy
 - It is more about being re-elected and not values
 - "What's in it for me?" question for council members, UFC may want to adjust messaging
 - City Landmarks Commission is an ally
- Powell Blvd letter
 - Concerning a number of trees being removed
 - Only pollution buffer and shade offered along Powell
 - Important considering the IAR
 - Content has been added for the City Engineer to determine trees for removal for safety purposes without Urban Forestry oversight, which is a big change from previous projects. This does not apply to Powell because it is a state road.
 - Myles Black is assigned to Powell Blvd project.

- Working with PBOT to do an alternative assessment before IAR.
- Permit will not be issued if there is doubt that there is a safety issue. Does not matter, ODOT can still proceed with removal
- Tree removal without an alternative considered is a concern for Urban Forestry and has been commented on to the IAR evaluation.
- ODOT proposed removing 24 trees; PBOT traffic engineer worked with ODOT to get the number down to 6 trees for removal.
- Action: Lola will verify with Wendy Caulley PBOT traffic engineer regarding the final number of trees scheduled for removal. Send information to Elizabeth
- SMA Conference in Denver
 - Look at what other cities have done for forestry management processes

Old Business

- Equity presentations are scheduled for the September meeting

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 am