

URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



• Nick Fish, Commissioner • Mike Abbaté, Director

URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2012

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Commission Members present: Brian Krieg, Michael McCloskey, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Stephen Peacock, Chair Joe Poracsky, Dick Pugh, Meryl Redisch, Dianna Shervey, Kendra Smith and John Warner.

City Staff present: City Attorney Harry Auerbach, Jennifer Karpis, Bureau of Environmental Services (BES); City Planner Mieke Keenan of Bureau of Development Services (BDS); Acting City Forester Rob Crouch, Kathleen Murrin, Angie DiSalvo, and Anne Kroma, Parks & Recreation.

Guests present: Scot Fogarty, Kris Day, Emma Grey and Jesse Batty of Friends of Trees (FOT).

Call to Order and Public Comment: Chair Joe Poracsky called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m. with no public comment.

Review and approval of Minutes: Chair Joe Poracsky requested review and approval of the November 2011 UFC minutes. Brian Krieg moved to accept the minutes with grammatical corrections Michael McCloskey would provide. Dick Pugh seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

Adoption of UFC By-laws – Brian Krieg

The executive session in December was a detailed work session on the by-laws. The Appendices, to be added as completed, will provide additional operating rules. Meryl Redisch expressed thanks to Brian and the Policy Committee for their work and moved to accept the by-laws as drafted; Michael McCloskey seconded the motion. There was discussion about any adjustments needed when Title 11 is fully implemented. The motion was approved 10-0.

Any proposed by-law changes should be sent to Secretary Catherine Mushel for compilation. John and Michael are currently reviewing Appendix A and Meryl is working on a committee document to be used as a template.

Partnership Reports

Friends of Trees:

Executive Director Scott Fogarty and Friends of Trees staff requested the opportunity to discuss plans for a memorial to honor Friends of Trees staff member and Urban Forestry Commissioner, David Odom. David's passing in January has been a shock to those who worked with him and there has been agreement on the desire to find a proper way to memorialize him.

Discussion included planting a memorial grove of trees in the Columbia Children's Arboretum and possible renaming. This PP&R Natural Area was near David's home and he spent a lot of time volunteering there. The FOT group acknowledged the work that went into the Arboretum management plan and the need to get consensus for any change from the varied stakeholders. Friends of Trees will provide the needed funding for the proposal, which also seeks to waive or decrease a waiting period.

Michael McCloskey moved, with a second by Meryl Redisch, to include the following proposed resolution of condolence in the minutes:

'We greatly admired David Odom's knowledge, skills and passion for trees. Portland's Urban Forest Commission benefitted substantially from the time and effort he gave to our work, and we showed our appreciation by electing him as our vice chairman.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to those who have survived him. We are profoundly saddened by his loss. We all benefitted from the time we spent with him and that he shared with us.'

There were no modifications to the resolution.

The motion to send this resolution to the family was unanimously approved.

Kathleen Murrin, representing Parks & Recreation, stated that a permanent name change must go through the full process, allowing contact with all relevant partners. Arrangements for a memorial tree in a park will be made during this planting season.

The motion to have the UFC write a letter in support of the proposed memorial at the Columbia Children's Arboretum was made by Brian Krieg, seconded by Meryl Redisch, and approved unanimously. *Meryl, Catherine, and Joe will draft a letter.*

A memorial service is being planned for January 30th at the World Forestry Center.

A memorial fund has been established at FOT with the intention of the money going to continue David Odom's work at the Columbia Children's Arboretum.

Grey to Green – BES

Jennifer Karps reported on Grey to Green (G2G) and the current planting season:

- BES contractors are beginning to plant street trees in Parkrose, Parkrose Heights, Argay, Sumner, Russell and Wilkes neighborhoods.
- FOT will plant about 400 trees in these 6 neighborhoods in March, compared to 89 last year.
- BES will begin sending offer letters for free street trees to residents who have fully developed rights of way in South Portland and Hillsdale.
- BES contractors will plant about 100 trees in the NW Industrial area this month.
- G2G to plant about 50 street trees adjacent to 10-15 Portland Parks.
- Homeowners with new “G Strip” designation (>8’ wide, no overhead wires) will be offered free native trees (Douglas fir, Oregon white oak, big leaf maple, western red cedar, ponderosa pine) and 2 years establishment care.
- BES staff member Elsa Little is doing outreach to schools to continue plantings. She is also helping 2 neighborhoods write grant proposals.
- FOT is expecting a large turnout for the I-205 planting this MLK weekend.
- Jennifer will be one of the presenters at the UERC conference on February 24th.

Urban Forestry Report – Rob Crouch.

The Prune Like a Pro workshop will be taught by Larry Maginnis this weekend.

Wednesday storm callouts: approximately 30 from midnight to 7am; another 10 – 15 during regular hours. SW area saw the worst, especially on Cornell, Broadway, and Fairview.

Annual Report – Catherine Mushel.

Catherine provided hard copies of the draft of this year’s Annual Report and asked for comments by Monday. Including more photos was suggested. The next step is for Angie to compile the two halves, format them, and draft paperwork for City Council presentation.

Michael McCloskey moved to accept the UF Commission’s portion of the draft of the annual report as written. The motion was seconded by Meryl Redisch and approved 9-0.

Parks & Recreation Update – Kathleen Murrin for Deb Lev

- Kathleen Murrin, returning from retirement through February, reported that the City Forester recruitment will close on January 23rd.
- Nothing is new on the budget since the last forwarded email. The next opportunity for public comment will be when the Mayor’s Budget is released
- Tree Code Implementation will change how and when we do things. Mieke Keenan was hired (funded by both BES and PP&R) to coordinate the program. An ordinance could be sent to City Council to delay the implementation beyond February 1, 2013.

There was a suggestion that a UFC member be scheduled to attend every budget meeting.

The recommendations regarding public comment is to explain why particular Urban Forestry cuts are not as cost effective as they may appear, rather than just expressing the request to cut somebody else's program. Elimination of the elm monitor could mean elm losses of 50 - 60 trees a year instead of the current 4-5. At some point, the decision may need to be made to not inoculate the historic trees in the Park Blocks and just let the elms die off. Some feel that money should be spent, as they are an important image and truly represent the City.

State Measure 5 limits property taxes as an aggregate total, including any kind of library district or county levy. This determines what the City is able to ask for in funding proposals.

There was discussion about the merits and efficacy of the two different elm inoculation methods. The City uses a slower method with a motorized pump that requires a higher level of pesticide certification, but has shown better benefits. Sanitation pruning also helps.

Difficult decisions will need to be made about whether to modify processes in order to continue them or to let go of whole programs. Construction forecasts are not expected to improve before 2016. Some people think it's more cost effective to just plant new trees, instead of saving existing canopy. Everyone is encouraged to give testimony at the point the Tree Code Implementation funding is discussed at Council.

Capitalization of trees remains a future hope for secure funding for canopy maintenance.

Dianna Shervey spoke of being the first Elm Monitor for the City, and felt the efforts have been excellent in slowing losses. It may be devastating to lose 1 or 2 elms in a neighborhood, but unprotected Park Blocks could lose them all in a couple of years. The program may have support and be visible enough this year to survive the budget cuts.

It was suggested that a photo with the elms removed might make a very visible impact. It was also pointed out that, at the time they were planted, the 5 rows of trees were not in a shaded concrete canyon.

Strategy, Focus and Priorities should guide the work

Chair Joe Poracsky will designate a committee with himself, Catherine, Meryl, and John to draft talking points and request a meeting with Commissioner Fish's office.

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 am.