
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
August 15, 2013
Lovejoy Room, City Hall

- Commission Members present:** Kris Day, Michael McCloskey, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Chair Meryl Redisch, and Dianna Shervey
- Commission Members absent:** Ricardo Moreno, Stephen Peacock, and Joe Poracsky
- City Staff present:** City Attorney Harry Auerbach; Lola Gailey, Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT); Jenifer Karps, Bureau of Environmental Services (BES); City Nature Manager Deborah Lev, City Forester Jenn Cairo, Parks Planner Emily Roth, Tree Inspector Jim Field, and Anne Kroma, Parks & Recreation (PP&R)
- Guests present:** Michael Hayes; Mark Bello; David Bybee; Ruth Williams of Davey Tree Expert Company
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Call to Order and Public Comments: Chair Meryl Redisch called the August 2013 Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting to order at the new start time of 8:15 am. It was determined that there was not a quorum, so votes and/or decisions would be postponed.

Review and approval of July UFC Minutes: Chair Meryl Redisch asked for review of the July draft minutes. There was a minor change requested. Approval of the July minutes will wait until the next meeting, and be included with review of the August minutes.

The Urban Forestry Report - City Forester Jenn Cairo

Tree Code Updates: Commissioner Fritz and TRACS

- New Parks Commissioner Amanda Fritz has requested a briefing by the City Forester on the New Tree Code. There can be a steep learning curve when taking over an unfamiliar bureau, and we have complex issues and two sets of code.
- TRACS permit software development continues.
- An audit was done at the Urban Forestry offices to find maintenance efficiencies and more usable space. This is a peak time for seasonal workers and we are lucky to have many volunteers, but it can be difficult to find computers and workspace for everyone.

- The Community Tree Care program for pruning young street trees is beginning. Team leader training has been taking place for this fall's four street tree pruning events with Friends of Trees (FOT). Structural pruning for young street trees is a valuable investment and may be the only certified maintenance they receive. Many homeowners are not comfortable or knowledgeable about pruning young trees. If tree advocates are encouraged to volunteer, we could end up with as widespread a program for street tree pruning as we have for street tree planting. Kris Day clarified that partial funding is through FOT (with the possibly of some BES Canopy Program money) and partial through Urban Forestry. She also reiterated that currently only people certified under our training will be allowed to participate. It may be opened up to the general public with oversight sometime in the future, with careful consideration of the technical expertise required.

Tree permits:

- The UF Permit process has been scrutinized in an effort to find ways to streamline it. Jenn used private tree permits, known as TCO permits, as an example of how difficult it can be for a citizen to find out if a permit is needed. She provided a draft flowchart of the TCO permit process to show the complexity of having some private trees regulated and some that are not. It can sometimes take up to five phone calls to get the answer to whether a homeowner needs a permit to remove a certain tree on their property. Mieke Keenan and Danielle Fuchs are working on new protocols and staff will receive training on them. This type of permit should be easier after Title 11 goes into effect, but could still be confusing.

Parks bureau recruitments:

- First round interviews were done for the UF Permit Supervisor position. After second interviews, the position is expected to be filled within a couple of months.
- There is also a Botanical Specialist - Forestry position in the recruitment process.
- Hiring for an Arborist I and an Arborist II vacancy will go forward. These UF staff members respond to ROW (Right of Way), Park and other City trees. Additional vacancies may be able to be filled within the adopted budget.

Chair Meryl Redisch: Communication with City Council, esp. Commissioner Fritz

Chair Meryl Redisch reported on meeting with Commissioner Fritz a couple of weeks ago and will be meeting with her quarterly. Commissioner Fritz is very interested in the work of Urban Forestry and the Urban Forestry Commission and has expressed strong support for the new Tree Code.

Meryl felt that a regular appearance by the UFC before City Council would further the case for trees and new code implementation. Frequent opportunities to show program details, such as thousands of hours of volunteer work or partnerships with other local groups, will help keep focus on the urban canopy.

Funding Urban Forestry Programs: Parks Bond Measure Preparation

Chair Meryl Redisch continued by encouraging creative thinking in finding funding strategies. She suggested that if there is a Parks Bond Measure, it is hoped that tree maintenance could be a component. The next budget process will be starting soon and early

involvement by the UFC is welcomed. Meryl has asked that the UFC be scheduled between now and January to give a presentation to the Parks Board on Urban Forestry. An understanding of routine and emergency work can help keep UF budget requests high in the priorities that shape future funding.

Kris Day asked Meryl for explanation of her role on the Parks Board as an ex-officio member. Meryl stated she has been attending meetings and been allowed to vote. As a member of the BAC (Budget Advisory Committee) Meryl will be able to keep the UFC updated throughout the next budget process. She will miss a couple of Parks Board meetings and will ask the UFC Secretary or Policy Committee Chair to attend in her place.

Committee and Partnership Reports

Policy Committee - Kris Day

Policy Committee Chair Kris Day reported that the committee has not met yet but will start working on the upcoming budget message.

Kris was not able to attend the Watershed Expert Group meeting for the Comprehensive Plan, but was gratified to now see a distinction made between ecosystem services and functions. Trees will be considered as green infrastructure under asset management. A handout of the recently released Comprehensive Plan Growth Scenarios Report was included in the meeting packet.

The Policy Committee may become involved in the work of updating the UFMP (Urban Forestry Management Plan) scheduled for 2014 under Emily Roth's lead.

Nomination and Recruitment Committee

Catherine Mushel, reporting for vacationing Committee Chair Joe Poracsky, relayed that the recruitment PowerPoint presentation is almost ready to use as an outreach tool. She explained that fulfilling the UFMP's diversity requirement can result in quite a large time commitment. Meryl Redisch pointed out that different strategies may be needed to reach different underrepresented neighborhoods.

Catherine reminded the group there is a one-page document to explain the work of the UFC. There was also discussion of having a standard letter that could be sent to applicants explaining the appointment process and timeline. City Attorney Harry Auerbach suggested checking with the Commissioner's Policy Advisor, Patti Howard, to find out how involved Commissioner Fritz would like to be throughout the interview and decision process.

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

Committee Chair Catherine Mushel provided a handout reporting on the identified subcommittee divisions and the next annual theme for the Education & Outreach Committee. This year's theme was Heritage Trees and next year's will be Stewardship. Using that theme, committee work was divided up by subcommittee and by timeframe.

The E&O Committee will track events and involve others by use of an online Urban Forestry Stewardship Activities Calendar, similar to the Natural Area Stewardship Calendar already in use by Parks. The Committee will make use of member's talents for annual events. Bryan Burch will be expected to come up with another amazing Arbor celebration and new committee member Susie Peterson will work with him on the Dig It event. Classes are being considered that are based on tree issues and complaints received from the public. Autumn Montegna could offer a class in proper tree watering, since deep watering of ROW trees result in less surface roots to cause sidewalk buckling. Or for neighborhoods with lots of deciduous trees, teaching the benefits of onsite leaf composting could be helpful.

Due to the Labor Day holiday, the next meeting will be held a week early on August 28th and will be outdoors at Director Park. The group will finish assessing the Arbor Month activities and present a report to the full UFC by November.

Urban Tree Canopy Program - Jennifer Karps

Jennifer has reported that her job at BES has changed since the new budget was adopted. She noted that she will be able to attend these meetings through the end of the fiscal year. Jennifer clarified that there is a contract with FOT for \$32K for the pilot pruning project. Jennifer gave an update on the canvassing season, which is a little late and just now getting under way. The strategy is similar to the past, but with a smaller group of canvassers. The focus remains on planting low or no cost street trees in the eastern neighborhoods of Portland.

Heritage Tree Committee - Michael McCloskey

Chair Michael McCloskey reported that the Committee has plans to do another field tour. The tour on June 26th resulted in the recommendation of three nominated trees. There will be a presentation at the September UFC meeting on a chestnut, beech and sliver linden for designation. A nominated redwood tree is being considered for Tree of Merit status, since it is not readily viewable in a back yard.

Kris Day asked if there's a maximum number for Heritage Trees of any one species. Michael McCloskey explained that there is no rule about it. His statistics show the distribution of species by neighborhood. The Committee has had some debate about this, but trees are judged on a number of factors. We now have twenty five Oregon white oaks in the system.

Chair Michael McCloskey reported that committee member Stephen Peacock had occasion to measure a couple of Laurelhurst Park Heritage Trees and found the measurement very different from the documented DBH (diameter at breast height) at designation. The committee will grapple with this issue because the height was lower than previously attributed, not increased due to growth.

The Heritage Tree Committee has also discussed the subject of delisting Heritage Trees. Chair Michael McCloskey's view is that no formal process is needed for delisting a tree due to failure, but that City Council should be informed. Tree Inspector Lou Phemister has made a list of Heritage Trees that have failed and have been physically removed. An entirely

different discussion is an evaluation and decision to delist a tree because it is past its prime or no longer an outstanding specimen.

Old/New Business

Wrap up: Street Trees and Street Improvements - Chair Meryl Redisch

Chair Meryl Redisch returned to the discussion from last month and suggested PBOT may be seeking a waiver on the required mitigation. Civil Design Section Manager Lola Gailey is an ex-officio member of the UFC and explained that last month's PowerPoint presentation by Dan Leyden was to show how PBOT incorporates tree protection and tree planting in their bureau's capital improvement projects.

City Forester Jenn Cairo restated the proposed mitigation requirements of the Holgate project. The original plans called for twelve street tree removals. UF staff made a site visit with PBOT staff and determined that with methods including the use of alternative sidewalk pavers; all but three of the twelve trees could potentially be retained. The remaining three trees would require \$30K in mitigation.

Lola pointed out that PBOT plants trees on their projects, even if they haven't removed any on that project. Last year they removed 150 trees but planted more than 350 trees.

Jenn explained this is a new and unique situation because generally PBOT is removing only unhealthy or nuisance trees in the Right of Way, which do not require mitigation like the healthy Douglas firs under discussion with the Holgate project.

Lola pointed out that if the new tree code was in effect, it would require only tree for tree replacement of removals greater than twelve inches and not \$300 per inch. She also explained the long timelines and that while inflation and contingency amounts are built into budgets, those are often depleted with scope of work or other changes during construction. She stated that because previous City Foresters had not sought mitigation fees, it feels like a new policy.

The UFC agreed that PBOT should pay full mitigation for the trees that are lost. Catherine Mushel suggested any money spent on alternative sidewalks be subtracted from the mitigation total. Michael McCloskey suggested that if Title 11 is further delayed and this situation arises again, that PBOT and UF negotiate a solution for this problem.

Forest Park Management - Emily Roth

PP&R Planner Emily Roth provided a draft handout entitled Forest Park Project Evaluation Methodology. Forest Park is 5000 acres of forested area managed under the 1995 Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan (FPNRMP). The southern third of the park has the most recreational use, the central third less and the least amount in the northern third. This evergreen and deciduous forest has had a lot of work to remove ivy, holly and other invasives under the

Protect the Best program. Forest Park Conservancy also does restoration work and has partnered with the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation district to do outreach to the adjacent property owners about ivy removal on the private property surrounding Forest Park.

A Single Track Mountain Bike Committee was formed in 2010 to look at additional or enhanced opportunities for mountain biking in Forest Park. A proposal to put a single track next to Fire Lane 5 is now being studied at the director level.

The Project Evaluation Methodology (PEM) may find a name change to Project Objectives Screening Tool (POST). This initial screening tool will be used to evaluate all capital improvement and construction projects, but not restoration or education projects. Proposed projects are evaluated in terms of the Forest Park Management Plan, current ecological information, and a recent recreation survey done in the park. It's considered a regional park, so regional partners were involved.

Emily pointed out that the abundance of bigleaf maples help to suppress the fire risk but if there is one, access could be an issue. GIS mapping of all access points has been completed and Portland Fire and Portland Police have been provided with this new information.

The recreation survey determined that most users live within five to ten miles of Forest Park, have higher incomes and education, use their own transportation to get to the park, and there are few equestrians.

Parks has identified a new entrance and hopes to find funding to build the project.

Equity issues are addressed through the FPNRMP and not through PEM (or POST).

Commissioner Fritz has asked the UFC for a written opinion on this process. Everyone is requested to read the entire methodology (the handout) to make recommendations for a draft at the September meeting. The Policy Committee will complete the letter by early October.

The regular business meeting adjourned at 9:36 am.

Appeals Committee session for 20.40 Appeal at 2306 NE 51st Avenue

Appeals Committee Chair Stephen Peacock was not in attendance. UFC Chair Meryl Redisch filled in as Appeals Chair and called the session to order at 9:45 am with members Dianna Shervey and Michael McCloskey in attendance. Also present were City Forester Jenn Cairo, Tree Inspector Jim Field and recorder Anne Kroma.

Appellant Sandra Kamman applied for a street tree removal permit for one sweetgum and one deodar cedar.

The sweetgum has had past failures at the attachments and is approved for removal. A removal permit was issued for the sweetgum but not the cedar.

Tree Inspector Jim Field showed photos of the tree and explained that he denied the removal since the tree does not meet the required criterion of dead, diseased or dying. The deodar cedar is semi-mature with only minor dead wood. It is in a nine and half foot planting strip and there are no overhead wires. The sidewalk shows no damage.

There is no room to plant on NE Thompson St. It is recommended that the deodar cedar be limbed up to comply with City Code for sidewalk clearance.

Sandra Kamman read a letter, no copy provided for the record, outlining the appellant's long term goals for the ROW in adding fruit trees, creating a multi-layered habitat, and gaining solar access. The appellant stated that she did not know the rules when she planted the tree as a housewarming gift and assumed she could remove it anytime she wanted. She wondered why she should keep the tree if she will have to continue to do maintenance to keep it up to code. The size will continue to block sun exposure.

Ms. Kamman proceeded to share the online research she did regarding trees in other jurisdictions and her belief that adding more fruit trees and berries aligns with the Comprehensive Plan.

Questions from the Appeals Board included how long before maturity (another 25 years) and use as habitat (less for deodar cedars than other less thick evergreens). Dianna Shervey expressed concern for visibility at the intersection with NE Thompson. Even after limbing up the tree, there will still be 'quite a spread'.

Tree Inspector Jim Field stated that he would approve this tree if it were a new planting. The planting strip is a rare large one without overhead wires and ideal to accommodate a conifer. The planting plan provided also includes a Chinese birch, which would not be allowed. The sweetgum removal would allow for room for the madrone specified.

The recommendation to the appellant is to limb up to code for clearance and thin out the tree in the future. The Appeals Board appreciated thoughtful plans and complimented the appellant on a beautiful yard but could not find valid reasons to allow removal from the public domain. A pruning permit for mitigation for visibility is recommended.

Dianna Shervey moved to deny the appeal. The motion was seconded by Michael McCloskey and approved by the Appeals Board Committee.

The Appeals Committee adjourned at 10:55 am.