
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2014

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Commission Members present: Kris Day, Michael McCloskey, Ricardo Moreno, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Stephen Peacock, Joe Poracsky, and Chair Meryl Redisch

Commission Members absent: Dianna Shervey

City Staff present: Parks Commissioner's Liaison Patti Howard; City Forester Jenn Cairo, City Nature Manager Deborah Lev, and recorder Anne Kroma, Parks & Recreation

Guests present: Bryan Burch; Michael Hayes.

Call to Order and Public Comments: Chair Meryl Redisch called the January 2014 Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting to order at 9:35 am. The published agenda scheduled public comments to start at 9:45 am and the Chair requested City Forester Jenn Cairo wait to begin her report until then. Jenn expressed her appreciation for the hard work done by the Urban Forestry Commission. She distributed a list of last year's achievements by these volunteers, wishing everyone a happy new year.

Chair Meryl Redisch also thanked the UFC for their efforts work and outlined her goals for the next year. They include ensuring representative recruitment for commission vacancies, advancing outreach efforts, especially during Arbor Month, offering suggestions on potential new funding sources, advancing and supporting compliance of tree goals in Master Plans, and moving forward on the Policy front as related to the Comprehensive Plan.

City Nature Manager Deborah Lev was recognized and expressed gratitude to the UFC for their help during the many Urban Forestry staff changes. Deborah, as well as City Forester Jenn Cairo, UF Operations Supervisor Larry Maginnis and UF Permitting Supervisor Casey Jogerst, are all new to their respective positions. Speaking on behalf of Parks Senior Management and the Bureau Director, Deborah thanked the UFC for their contributions to public awareness of trees through their advocacy and programs like Heritage Trees.

Policy Advisor Patti Howard was recognized to include acknowledgment from Commissioner Amanda Fritz for the work of the UFC and looked forward to continuing to increase her understanding of the urban forest and the UFC.

Bryan Burch, Neighborhood Tree Steward and Education & Outreach Committee member, was recognized to provide public comment at the scheduled time. He reported attending the Parks Bureau Public Pre-Budget Meeting and was gratified when Parks Bureau Director Mike Abbaté showed his commitment to trees by providing youth mentoring opportunities about the urban forest in the Grunt program.

Review of November and December UFC Minutes: Chair Meryl Redisch requested a quick review of the draft minutes, reminding the UFC that prior requested changes had been included in the revised November draft.

Ricardo Moreno moved that the November minutes be approved, as corrected. The motion was seconded by Secretary Catherine Mushel and approved unanimously.

Joe Poracsky and Michael McCloskey each requested a change to the wording in portions of the December 2013 draft minutes. Joe Poracsky moved to approve the minutes with those changes and it was seconded by Michael McCloskey. The revised December 2013 minutes were approved unanimously.

The Urban Forestry Report - City Forester Jenn Cairo

City Forester Jenn Cairo announced the very recent retirements of Ned Sodja and Dave Kahler. Both tree inspectors did not want an organized farewell, and their expertise and vast experience will be sorely missed. The City's recruitment process can be very lengthy so frequent users of UF programs have been asked to be patient while priorities are re-organized, cross-training is happening, and temporary workers may be hired. Jenn described how responsibilities are organized but requested anyone calling for a specific tree inspector use the main phone number of (503) 823-4489. That will ensure that all calls are routed appropriately during vacancies and coverage changes. The recruitments will be open postings and have up-to-date classification specifications. Jenn will be pursuing the use of temporary hires and will request the UFC's help in disseminating the open recruitments.

On December 19th a staff report on Title 11 implementation was provided to City Council, fulfilling a request made in May 2013 when City Council voted to delay funding for implementation of Title 11. UFC Chair Meryl Redisch and others testified in support of funding the implementation.

City Forester Jenn Cairo reported on the current Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) request for a program permit. Each fiscal year one is issued to BES and the current one includes targets for large, native and evergreen trees. Urban Forestry will begin receiving BES planting reports and will use them to monitor compliance. This information will eventually be available online to the public.

Compliance checks have been completed on a sampling of completed BDS (Bureau of Development Services) building permits. Correct planting of the trees will be verified, as well as confirmation of the number of trees called out on the site plan. Violations will be pursued and the new tree code will give more authority to the enforcement process. Both Stephen Peacock and Michael McCloskey spoke up in support of measures to increase enforcement, with Stephen suggesting compliance must include making sure trees are planted properly and will thrive, and Michael welcoming the new focus on enforcement, though not without regret that it had been lax in the past.

Jenn Cairo mentioned on-going facility concerns for Urban Forestry staff at both Mt Tabor and East Delta Park offices, which may be contributing to safety and health issues. The current budget cycle will allow for some repairs.

Jenn Cairo reported on staff attending a public meeting with adjacent neighbors to the Parks horticultural nursery at Tabor. The nursery was not funded this year and is being shut down. The goal is to use as much of the plant material as possible before returning the site to turf. There are no plans for further use of the site, and any upcoming ideas would need to comply with the Mt Tabor Master Plan and go through a public process.

Anne Kroma will forward an invitation to the UFC for a Brown Bag workshop on January 30th in the Portland Building. The session will be an overview of urban forestry work presented by Autumn Montegna.

Heritage Trees - Michael McCloskey

Committee Chair Michael McCloskey updated the Commission regarding the regarding the Heritage Tree designation of the European beech at 1357 SW Spring Garden Street. The Heritage Tree Committee gave lengthy consideration to a neighbor's concern but recommended designation.

Michael McCloskey moved that the Urban Forestry Commission endorse designating the European beech at 1357 SW Spring Garden Street as a Heritage Tree because of its size and form. Stephen Peacock seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Old/New Business

UFC Chair Meryl Redisch recognized Kris Day, Chair of the Policy Committee. Kris was soliciting feedback on the draft letter expressing the UFC's comments and concerns about the Comprehensive Plan. Although there is greater inclusion of trees and the urban forest in this update, it is still felt that trees should be considered in other areas discussing infrastructure.

Please have any remaining comments provided to Kris Day by Wednesday, January 22, 2014

There was a short discussion about the idea of using open space as industrial land. The UFC does not support this it is hoped that the City will use brownfields for that purpose.

The regular business meeting adjourned at 10:35 am.