
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2014
Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Commission Members present: Mark Bello, Bryan Burch, Kris Day, David Diaz, Brian French, Ex-officio Lola Gailey, Barbara Hollenbeck, and Chair Meryl Redisch

Commission Members absent: Ricardo Moreno, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Stephen Peacock, and Joe Poracsky

City Staff present: Chief Deputy City Attorney Harry Auerbach and Deputy City Attorney Tony Garcia; City Forester Jenn Cairo, and recorder Anne Kroma, Parks & Recreation (PP&R)

Guests present: Jennifer Karps, Bureau of Environmental Services (BES)

Call to Order and Public Comments: Chair Meryl Redisch called the December 2014 Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting to order at 9:10 am. She noted the late start due to the Commission's attendance at an appreciation breakfast hosted by City Forester Jenn Cairo with Parks Director Mike Abbate in attendance. When asked if there were any public comments, Jennifer Karp was recognized and wished everyone happy holidays.

Review of November UFC minutes: Chair Meryl Redisch requested a quick review of the November draft minutes which included the corrections requested by Secretary Catherine Mushel, who is absent from the meeting to be with family out of state.

Bryan Burch asked the purpose of the new tree code in order to clarify a comment within the draft minutes. City Forester Jenn Cairo stated that Title 11 will streamline the permit process, protect urban canopy, and improve enforcement. A byproduct of the new code should be improved customer service for the permitting process. Extending the urban canopy is not a direct goal, but the current code only protects private trees in limited specific situations, such as Environmental Zones.

Barbara Hollenbeck moved to accept the minutes, with the edits suggested. Kris Day seconded the motion and the November minutes were approved unanimously.

The Urban Forestry Report - City Forester Jenn Cairo

Jenn Cairo reported that the crew at Urban Forestry is still working on cleanup from the wind storm that visited the Metro area the previous Thursday and Friday. That makes three significant wind events so far this season, with the crew spending the majority of the past two months in emergency mode. Despite the almost non-stop work, due in part to three arborist vacancies, safety has been a priority and no one has been injured.

Urban Forestry (UF) has been able to use some of the money budgeted but not used for currently vacant positions to hire five temporary workers to help with Title 11 implementation. Jenn recognized Angie DiSalvo, Danielle Bohannon, Casey Jogerst, Mike Hayakawa, Mieke Keenan, Lauren Wirtis as the core members of the Implementation Team. Priorities at present include the new Tree Techs (DSC Tech II – Trees) at BDS Permit Center (Bureau of Development Services) getting ready for January 2nd. Updates to the TRACS program are being finalized so that permits can be issued and reports will be generated to allocate review and inspection work. Staff have been putting in a lot of extra hours and deferring other regular work.

Jenn reported that new tree code training continues and another general public training session was held the previous night at an east Portland neighborhood meeting. Some residents expressed concern about the new code allowing removal of trees within ten feet of a building to be replaced at tree for tree. Tree code training has been specialized for different groups, including developers and frequent users. A total of over a hundred people attended the two trainings geared toward arborists and other industry professionals. Jenn reported it was Commissioner Fritz's direction to hire a consultant to do general outreach. That consultant will interact mainly with UFC members on the Oversight Committee.

David Diaz asked if detailed information, like the number of tree removals granted due to their ten foot structural proximity, will be able to be collected. Jenn Cairo said such things will be monitored where possible, and described neighbors as our 'eyes on the ground' who it is hoped will continue to report suspected tree violations, but it will be the Tree Techs issuing the permits that will educate the tree owner as to the regulations regarding their situation. Permit applications will require a photo, but will not have staff follow-up on site. The procedures are very detailed, so Angie DiSalvo has done a flow chart to use in staff training.

Jenn Cairo announced that Mike Hayakawa, BDS Supervising Planner, will be retiring from the City at the end of this month. Mike has agreed to stay on for a couple of months until the Title 11 kinks are worked out. His roles will transition to Jenn and Casey when he retires for good. Mieke Keenan's position is funded through June 2015 and temporary staff will be kept on as long as possible. The hiring process for three permanent and one temporary tree inspector positions is almost complete and they should be starting by the end of January.

Bryan Burch asked Jenn Cairo if there was a way to recognize or reward people that report suspicious tree activity. A lot of people find it very uncomfortable to 'snitch' on their neighbors and may not be confident in their knowledge of the tree regulations. It would be nice to encourage neighborhood involvement, since we may be reliant on it for compliance.

Kris Day asked that the full schedule of Tree Code trainings be distributed to the UFC. She found out at the last minute about an arborist training from another arborist. Barbara Hollenbeck suggested that Appeals Board members may need the new tree code training related to land use and development. Jenn Cairo reminded everyone that the trainings will be listed on the City's website, but agreed that it is not always the easiest way to find out.

The UFC Chair Report – Meryl Redisch

Chair Meryl Redisch reported on attending the second BAC (Budget Advisory Committee) meeting with Commissioner Amanda Fritz and Parks Director Mike Abbaté. The Parks budget, even in a good year, has lots of moving parts and many long negotiations.

Meryl conveyed word of the Parks Board recommendation to Commissioner Amanda Fritz to expand the No Smoking Policy to the rest of Parks property. Commissioner Fritz announced a decision to bring the policy recommendation before City Council sometime in January.

The Forest Park package in the Parks budget includes some work detailed in the Greater Forest Park Conservation Initiative campaign. The campaign will direct the field work of rebuilding bridges and trails while re-connecting with stakeholders. The BAC voted to make this a priority in the new budget and will bring a presentation regarding the initiative to the UFC in the future.

Meryl also reported on attending the Parks Design Committee and hearing about Beech Park and Gateway Park & Urban Plaza. She remarked that it might be the first time a UFC member is also sitting on a Parks Board standing committee. She will be able to help see that existing trees in new parks are protected and lend encouragement in deciding what other trees should be planted. Meryl inquired whether there was one other UFC member who would wish to commit to a two hour monthly meeting and join this committee.

Meryl reported that the Parks Board, her other Parks bureau related committee membership, has been focused on the Forest Park restoration campaign.

Meryl asked for details regarding the request to have an Urban Forestry Calendar of events. She asked in what format, with what information, and how it should be disseminated. It was requested that it include committee timelines for quarterly reports. Mark Bello requested that it include budget cycle dates and be broad enough in its preview of upcoming events to help in planning. David Diaz asked for commission deadline information with time for preparation. This information would end up populating the annual report. Kris Day pointed out that committee deadlines, such as the Heritage Tree Committee's general timelines for their yearlong process, could also be included. Meryl asked how the information could be easily shown and Mark Bello suggested putting it on the back of the monthly meeting agenda. Meryl will work with administrative staff to find a format that will work to keep everyone updated on their committee and commission work and tree related events.

Bryan Burch, representing the Education and Outreach committee, reported that they had divided their work into four seasons. They have been tracking planning and deadline dates on a google drive and printing those documents for the monthly meetings.

Mark Bello reported that attending the Street Tree Summit in November energized him. He felt that having the people of the neighborhood continue the inventory work by designing a Neighborhood Tree Plan is an example of harnessing the parts to result in a larger effort. He also felt that getting all those separate things integrated into a comprehensive calendar would be helpful. He suggested having commission members report once a quarter on tree related volunteer work and other ways to capture the connections with like-minded people.

Bryan Burch hoped that emphasizing the touchy-feely and ‘cool’ aspects of trees might entice more people to attend UFC meetings and from that become involved. He hoped that the tentative Education and Outreach UF Supervisor would also broaden the reach.

Jenn Cairo reminded the commission that some of the current UFC members started as Neighborhood Tree Stewards or on Neighborhood Tree Teams. Becoming involved at the neighborhood level or with Friends of Trees plantings can give UFC members another chance to be cheerleaders in the collective work. Meryl encouraged supporting FOT and other well positioned community based tree programs.

City Forester Jenn Cairo relayed that Urban Forestry staff continue to design their outreach and education work around the inventories and complement the work of the volunteer tree teams. Angie DiSalvo has developed a menu of work for the team to complete. Danielle Voisin, Elizabeth Specht, and Natasha Lipai will help neighborhoods continue their stewardship efforts in their communities. Neighborhood Tree Teams may now also apply for small grants to fund specific projects. Those could be things like a specialized inventory to find tree of heaven, reach out to owners of those trees to educate them, and perhaps convince them to remove this invasive. It was suggested that maybe arborists could be encouraged to offer discounts to remove these kinds of nuisance species. Planting with Friends of Trees can be a rewarding experience and this is promoted with the Neighborhood Tree Stewards (NTS) and other UF Education and Outreach programs.

Chair Meryl Redisch wondered if money from the Tree Preservation Fund could be used to provide small grants. She also inquired about the totals in both tree accounts and distribution requirements and limits. Jenn Cairo explained the Urban Forestry Trust Fund can be used for whatever the City Forester decides it is needed for that pertains to management of the urban forest. The Tree Planting and Preservation Fund can only use the money (mostly permit mitigation payments, including those capped at \$1200) for direct planting costs and land or easement purchase of properties that have special urban forest value. There is approximately \$1.2 million total in both funds. Learning Landscapes has been the only recipient of trust funds recently, for plantings tree and student education at schools. The Urban Forestry annual budget currently pays for tree plantings on Parks properties, but the funds can and will be used to cover this kind of expense when needed as well as other tree planting.

Jenn Cairo described how she has been able to spend some of the funds not being used for the eight current vacancies to augment staff using only the Urban Forestry annual budget. These temporary staffing needs could be paid for out of the trust funds, but that has not been necessary and the funds have been able to accumulate for use on future needs. Permanent staffing can't be paid for through trust money.

David Diaz related that he felt diversity goals could be helped by widely appealing to people to join the NTS. The Policy Committee is looking at easements in relation to Heritage Trees, and the subject will be included in an upcoming agenda.

Kris Day asked for more clarification on the money going into the trust fund. Jenn Cairo recounted that fee revenue, violation payments, voluntary donations and mitigation from development and non-development permits go into the trust funds, as is spelled out specifically in code. Meryl mentioned making note of that to Commissioner Fritz so that she would understand why the commission advocated a higher mitigation fee cap. Jenn Cairo reflected that reviewing those fees and the \$1200 cap would be a good role for the Oversight Committee.

Chair Meryl Redisch returned to the agenda with the item of UFC succession planning. The Commission is currently short on officers, with the extended Vice Chair vacancy still needing to be filled. Meryl's term as Chair is almost at an end, although she would be amenable to serving another year's term. Other members will be at the end of their terms at the end of February. Meryl will work with City Nature admin Anne Kroma to complete By-laws Appendix D, the Nominations Committee's process and procedures.

Barbara Hollenbeck was recognized to discuss her work in updating Appendix B, the processes for the Appeals Board. Title 11 spells out that the Appeals Board (with its quasi-judicial status) may write 'Rules of Procedure' that then would be approved by the full commission. These rules will be posted on the website in time for Title 11's debut on January 2nd. Barbara narrated how she will interview people directly involved with appeals to document the full appeal process. She is working with the most recent version of the appeals checklist and noted that the decision document is not the only one of the forms that will require an update to show the changes from Title 20's legislation.

Barbara reviewed the final version of the Rules of Procedure for the commission and explained the changes suggested by Harry Auerbach, Tony Garcia, Jenn Cairo, Meryl Redisch and other Appeals Board members. The rules (which recognize the new code requirement of five UFC members on the Appeals Board) define a committee quorum and voting members, state the new appeal timeline, and assign documentation of appeals hearings decisions to the Committee Chair.

There was lively discussion about alternates, tie votes, and majorities. The current board members are Chair Stephen Peacock (absent today due to illness), Barbara Hollenbeck, and Bryan Burch. Alternates have been finding it difficult to be prepared, when not sure whether to make a site visit. There will be further discussion on the changes to the appeal process under Title 11, but Chair Meryl Redisch called for a vote on the matter at hand. David Diaz

moved to accept the Rules of Procedure, as edited. Bryan Burch seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. The document will be posted on the website in place of the current By-laws. Meryl, as UFC Chair, appointed Barbara Hollenbeck as Appeals Board Chair beginning in March 2015.

Old/New Business

Policy Committee Chair Kris Day described the membership of the Tree Code Oversight Committee. Besides Kris and Mark Bello, there are two members from DRAC (Development Review and Advisory Committee) and three members at large. Kris asked how members are to best represent when serving on outside committees; as UFC members or as themselves. She will use her full background to represent the commission and agreed to bring back to the UFC for discussion any controversial subjects.

Bryan Burch took the opportunity to announce the theme that will govern this year's Arbor celebration. In continuing the stewardship focus, the 2015 theme will be 'Trees are for Everyone.'

Chair Meryl Redisch adjourned the business meeting at 10:42 am.