



AMANDA FRITZ, COMMISSIONER

MIKE ABBATÉ, DIRECTOR

URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 19, 2015

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Commission Members present:

Kris Day, Gregg Everhart, Brian French, Barbara Hollenbeck, Ricardo Moreno, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Joe Poracsky, and Chair Meryl Redisch

Commission Members absent:

Mark Bello, David Diaz, Ex officio Lola Gailey, and Stephen Peacock

City Staff present:

City Forester Jenn Cairo, Senior City Planner Emily Roth, and Anne Kroma

Guests present:

Jennifer Karps, Bureau of Environmental Services (BES); Heather Wheeler, and Doug Klotz

Call to Order and Public Comments: Chair Meryl Redisch called the March 2015 Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting to order at 8:03 am.

Doug Klotz was recognized to express his concern about tree removals. He has been involved as a Neighborhood Tree Steward (NTS) and has seen the difficulties that can arise when trees that have been around for a long time are removed. A replacement tree would be reviewed in the context of today's traffic engineering, lighting regulations, and codes regarding restricted views at intersections. Doug Klotz asked that, rather than just adhere to the multiple codes, each bureau involved in the work review them case-by-case and always as an opportunity to plant trees.

Recognition of new and reappointed members – Meryl Redisch

New Urban Forestry Commissioner Gregg Everhart was introduced. Gregg provided a short summary of her background, including her work with Portland Parks & Recreation.

Review of February UFC minutes:

Chair Meryl Redisch requested a short review of the final draft of the February 19, 2015 minutes. Barbara Hollenbeck requested two minor changes and moved to approve them as edited. Secretary Catherine Mushel seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Sustainable Landscapes Program – Senior City Planner Emily Roth

During a PowerPoint presentation, Emily Roth explained that the core project team used guiding principles to craft an initiative that is not performance based. Using those principles of site design or modifications, ecology, operations and maintenance, and community resulted in a report that gives examples of how this works on many levels.

Emily continued by sharing the project goals and providing examples of each:

- Supporting and Enhancing Current Best Management Practices includes the use of native plant species that need no supplemental irrigation after initial establishment.
- Maintaining and Creating Diverse Park Landscapes takes the idea of converting steep grass hillsides and soggy lawns to sustainable landscapes such as tall grass meadows, pollinator gardens and habitat patches.
- The third goal deals with Internal Processes and Collaboration and uses multi-disciplinary technical teams, engages users and stakeholders, and measures and evaluates results.

The project is beginning to identify demonstration landscape conversion projects that would be installed within the next two years. Plans are to convert two landscapes every year for the next five years and monitor costs, success, and maintenance effort. Future steps include a system-wide inventory of all passive open spaces and an update of the internal design review process within the Strategic Plan Initiative.

Emily cited Westmoreland Park as a good example of a recently completed project that shows the sustainable landscape idea. There is now so much more access to nature with the boardwalk and other design measures. Catherine Mushel expressed her admiration for Emily's community outreach throughout this work.

Portland Parks & Recreation has been looking at landscape diversity in developed parks as a way to increase ecological function and value. Underutilized lawn areas and problem lawns are ideal locations for landscape conversions and the type would be determined through community outreach and probably through ecological success. Resident's foremost request is to be able to take a walk through nature. Now nature, in sustainable landscapes, could also provide more habitat for wildlife.

Barbara Hollenbeck was recognized to comment on forest aesthetics in different cultures. Elsewhere, people may be used to seeing a more natural look with snags left for habitat. Where safety is not an issue, snags in sustainable landscapes may be left intact for wildlife.

Emily continued by assuring the UFC that the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of each site will be determined individually. The public will be involved in conversion and access design such as boardwalks and overlooks. A pollinator garden has been suggested for Gabriel Park and habitat patches at Alberta and Beech Parks.

Brian French was recognized to state that he applauds the vision of looking at turf failure as an opportunity. Meryl Redisch wondered if arts money could be used for ecological

interpretative signage. Catherine Mushel felt that improving passive open space directly relates to PP&R's mission and that passive use could be better articulated in that mission.

Gregg Everhart was recognized to ask about maintenance alternatives. Installation of ground covers had previously been discouraged by some departments. Maintenance times for various ground covers vs. mowing times will be tracked and analyzed.

Kris Day felt that this is the kind of practical program that may help to counter the trend of canopy loss from infill and development.

A hard copy of the Sustainable Landscapes Program comment sheet is included in the packets and will be sent electronically. Comments are welcomed through May 1st and a final report can be expected by June.

Emily Roth will also be the project manager for the Urban Forestry Management Plan Update, due to start in October. She calculates that it will take six to twelve months to complete the update.

The Urban Forestry Report - City Forester Jenn Cairo

Jenn Cairo reported that the combination of saturated soil and high winds resulted in tree failures with entire intact root plates lifting. A falling American elm in the South Park Blocks trapped someone in a car. Fortunately, they were not badly hurt. A red maple Heritage Tree on SE Lambert Street that had been leaning, went completely over.

The City Forester reported that the current budget version recommends new rangers, a new tree tech, and a new Education and Outreach Supervisor. The information about public workshops and budget hearings will be sent to the Commission; attendance is encouraged.

City Forester Jenn Cairo invited everyone to attend this year's Arbor Day celebration on April 11th. The festivities begin at 8:30 that morning with the awards at 11:00. PSU students will be among the many groups manning tables to engage the community.

Jenn pointed out the Oregon Community Trees conference information in the packet. UFC members are invited to attend the symposium on June 4th at the World Forestry Center, with the registration and cost covered by Urban Forestry.

Jenn Cairo also updated the commission that the Mitigation Policy draft is being worked on by Patti Howard, Commissioner Amanda Fritz's policy advisor for the Parks Bureau.

The UFC Chair Report – Meryl Redisch

Chair Meryl Redisch reported that she is meeting with Commissioner Fritz to relay the commission's continued concerns regarding the \$1200 mitigation fee cap.

Meryl Redisch reported that as a Parks Board ex officio member she represents the Urban Forestry Commission and has seen the work the Parks Board is doing to better integrate with the Parks Bureau. If UFC members have issues they feel could benefit from being brought to the attention of the Parks Board, they are encouraged to let Meryl know of them.

Meryl is also sitting on a Parks planning advisory committee with school and community members. She suggested planting beeches at Beech Park to go along with the habitat patch that is shown in three of the development design options. Kris Day noted that beech is not adapted to droughty summers. Meryl will bring a list of new parks in April.

Meryl announced that a committee will be formed in October to work on the update for the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Jenn Cairo added that Title 11 requires the commission's active involvement in this activity.

Catherine Mushel pointed out that UFC members are volunteers, who depend on the assistance of City staff to be able to do the work they are tasked with. She will draft a letter supporting additional administrative staff in the department.

Elections of UFC Officers – Meryl Redisch

Chair Meryl Redisch called on Ricardo Moreno, Recruitment and Nominations Committee member, to offer a slate of officers for the upcoming year. He reported the committee accepted the following nominations: Chair, Meryl Redisch; Vice Chair, Barbara Hollenbeck; Secretary, Catherine Mushel. Barbara Hollenbeck stated that at this time she would not wish her service as vice chair to lead to a position as chair. Joe Poracsky moved to accept the slate and designate them as officers for the next year. The motion was seconded by Gregg Everhart and passed unanimously.

Naito Award Nominations Vote – Catherine Mushel

Education and Outreach Committee Chair Catherine Mushel reported on the background of honoring Bill Naito and the current nominations for the individual and group awards. Catherine gave the committee's final recommendations and their reasons for them.

Ricardo Moreno moved to award the 2015 Bill Naito group award to Leigh Rappaport and the Leadership Corps at Rosemary Anderson High School. Leigh has worked with at risk youth for thirty years and is the Natural Resource Pathway Initiative Director. The motion was seconded by Joe Poracsky and unanimously approved.

Barbara Hollenbeck moved to honor John Iott for his outstanding individual volunteer service. John works with the Green Thumb Community Orchard and since 2010 with the Portland Fruit Tree Project. The motion was seconded by Kris Day and passed unanimously.

Policy and Oversight Committee Reports – Kris Day

Committee Chair Kris Day explained that both the UFC's Policy Committee and the independent Oversight Committee have both been working on the issues surrounding the cap of \$1200 mitigation fee in lieu of planting. Both Parks Director Mike Abbaté and Commissioner Amanda Fritz are working on this policy change.

Kris reported that the Oversight Committee is making headway on the definition of 'structure' so that the ability to remove trees within ten feet identifies a permitted structure and not just something like a shed. The Bureau of Development Services (BDS) uses a definition for a structure that includes a 200 square foot foundation.

Kris Day continued by stating the Policy Committee is shifting away from the Comprehensive Plan Update, feeling that trees are now well addressed in that document. They are now concentrating on the Multi-Use Zoning Project which could result in canopy loss from the establishment and expansion of transportation corridors and transit centers.

The committee will begin focusing their work on the Urban Forestry Management Plan and invites anyone to join them at committee meetings on the second Thursday of the month from 12-2 at the EcoTrust Building, especially if anything on the agenda is relevant to you.

Heritage Tree Nominations – Brian French

New Heritage Tree Committee chair Brian French explained that the trees shown in today's PowerPoint presentation were viewed by the committee on the June 5, 2014 field tour and previous to his membership. The following trees were recommended for designation:

1. Gravenstein apple privately owned at 5003 SE 34th Ave
A tree seen from several blocks away and considered a community tree
2. American elm publicly owned tree at 2803 SE Main St
The only tree of a nominated grove that was qualified, it has impressive size
3. Common horsechestnut publicly owned at 8710 N Willamette Blvd
It is very visible and probably over a hundred years old
4. Apricot privately owned at 4823 NE 18th Ave
A very old and unusual front yard tree for this part of the state, still producing fruit
5. American elm publicly owned at 1904-1924 SE Umatilla St
This tree did have a large branch failure after nomination, but would become the second largest of its type in the Heritage Tree system.

Chair Brian French reported the next field tour will be on June 11th.

There was some discussion about Heritage status for street trees and the burden that maintenance might place on the owner. For one recent designation application, the community has rallied and offered money to the owner for the tree's maintenance.

Brian French moved to accept the recommendation of the committee and designate the five trees as Portland Heritage Trees. Barbara Hollenbeck seconded the motion and it was approved 6 – 1.

Brian reported on the status of the Paradox walnut and that the paperwork has not been completed. He will send the Heritage Tree process documents to Anne Kroma for distribution to the entire commission.

Chair Meryl Redisch adjourned the business meeting at 10:02 am.