
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

October 15, 2015

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Commission Members present: Chair Meryl Redisch, Gregg Everhart, Mark Bello, Kris Day, Catherine Mushel, Brian French, Damon Schrosk, and Vivek Shandas

Commission Members absent: Vice Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, and David Diaz

City Staff present: City Forester Jenn Cairo, City Attorney Harry Auerbach, Lola Gailey, PBOT, and Commission Clerk Elizabeth Specht

Guests present: Jennifer Karps, Bureau of Environmental Services (BES); Marc Czornij AmeriCorps member; Amy Chomowicz (BES); Brett Horner, Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R); Barry Manning and Bill Cunningham, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS); UF AmeriCorps members Matthew Downs and Patrick Key.

Call to Order and Public Comments: Chair Meryl Redisch called the October 2015 Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting to order at 8:01 am.

Chair Redisch reviewed the sign-in sheet and noted that no one signed up to give public comments. There was an adjustment in the agenda to accommodate Brett Horner's schedule, and he presented an update on the Employment Zoning Project.

Employment Zoning Project – Brett Horner, Planner PP&R

- Found there is a lack of land for industrial activities and employment.
- Looking at ways to safeguard what we have to project for the next 20 years to increase industrial capacity in the city.
- Need to maximize city boundaries to accommodate multiple uses, including new parks and natural areas.
- Natural areas will be included in industrial areas, for instance, we will be able to reforest areas of the Columbia Slough.
- The grey area of the map on the back of the hand out will be harder to establish a developed park, unless for the direct benefit of residents of the zone.
- Metro language currently states no parks in the grey zone unless for the direct benefit of the industrial zone community. Specifically no developed parks larger than 10 acres, Metro is allowing natural areas, trail heads, etc.
- Parks Board is drafting a letter using Audubon language addressing concerns regarding limitation on developed parks and increasing trees in the Employment Zones to Metro.
- Meryl asked about mitigation requirements when acquiring land.
 - Brett stated that has been removed from the proposal.
- Catherine asked about the impact on street trees.
 - The impact would be less on street trees, and more on the opportunity to acquire land in order to reforest.
 - Industrial zones are exempt from Title 11.
- BES is asking that improvements to environmental zones also be considered along with the employment zones.
- Gregg asked if all areas in North Portland were well served by parks.
 - Yes and no, there are residential areas in the slough that do not have access to parks. We are able to build a park up to 2 acres.
- Kris what will happen with the golf courses in the Employment zone?
 - Two golf courses could be potentially converted to industrial land, this would be a different process, not the one we are currently addressing. We share concerns with the Portland Audubon Society about the conversion.
- Harry Auerbach asked what would happen with PIR
 - Brett said that PIR was not part of the Employment Zone, all existing parks have been removed from the zone, and are therefore not affected.

Review of September UFC minutes

Chair Redisch asked UFC members to review the September draft minutes, asking if any commissioner wished to recommend an edit. A few minor edits were suggested to the minutes and Mark Bello moved to accept the minutes. Catherine Mushel seconded the motion. The motion and the September minutes were approved unanimously.

Meryl suggested quickening the meeting, and moving forward we will no longer have a break.

The Urban Forestry Report - City Forester Jenn Cairo

- Staffing update – Danielle Bohannon will be moving to BDS as of Friday the 16th.
 - Jeff Ramsey will be stepping into Danielle’s position.
 - Arborist I hire will be announced shortly.
 - We will move onto the Arborist IV position towards the end of the year.
 - Because they require a field assessment they are a more complicated position to fill.
 - Tree Inspector position will be posted next week.
 - Education and Science Supervisor position is progressing, and could potentially be announced in November.
- The Permanent Administrative Rule is due out this Friday, will be official Administrative Rule.
- Update on outreach on Title 11 to the general public. The process is well underway now, announcements have gone out to local newspapers, there will be an insert in utility bills, as well as an email campaign. We are also working on big box stores, where people will likely buy trees.
- There will be a customer service survey for people’s experience with permitting coming out shortly.
- Catherine noted there is no survey of public opinion on Title 11 to see what people who are not customers are thinking.
- Anne Presentin will review our forms for permitting and applications for clarity.
- Neighborhood Tree Stewards is resuming this coming Saturday the 17th!
 - Nik Desai will be coordinating the class. He will consider our goals for the program, and what can be done differently.
- Tree Inventory Summit is November 7th; it’s a great event that summarizes the current inventory season as well as previous seasons.
 - Presentations will be on the web for those who cannot attend.
- Jenn will not attend November’s meeting, Larry Maginnis will be acting Forester and will attend in her absence.

Policy Report on Title 11-Policy Committee Chair Mark Bello

- Decision to appeal the new administrative rule:
 - Do we wait?
 - Harry Auerbach: there is not a time limit for appeals; we have not had an appeal in 30 years. The two options, sooner looks better, and waiting gives time with the rule and data gathering for a strong rebuttal.
 - Can we appeal twice?
 - Theoretically you can.
 - Who we are as a commission – what is our voice?
 - Should we be the appellants to the administrative rule?
 - Work with the Audubon to collaborate on an appeal
 - Would have been appealed before the next commission meeting.

- Who are the entities who will appeal?
 - Depends on what the rule comes out on Friday for the final rule.
 - The administrative rule has receded in the background; there has not been much conversation around this rule.
 - Policy Committee meeting Thursday October 22, 1-3:00 pm at the Ecotrust Building, Pearl Room.
 - Discuss the rule and options for appealing.
 - As well as strengthening the code.
 - Harry Auerbach stated the commission needs to delegate to the policy committee the authority to make decisions on behalf of the commission, if they will take on appealing the new administrative rule.
 - Kris asked if there was an issue of 6 or more people meeting in one place.
 - Harry stated no, follow public meeting protocol, which is notification of the meeting 24 hours in advance. (Meeting time and location were on Urban Forestry's website Wednesday Oct. 21)
 - What is our consensus of our response to the new rule?
 - The rule is a description and limiting of the forester's discretion primarily with mitigation.
 - Look at does this support Title 11's function.
 - Numbers are significant in arguments for increasing canopy protection and mitigation.
 - We would not be seeing the changes to the rule for the benefit of the urban forest without the input of the UFC.
- Comprehensive Plan and large tree policy language support has been waffling.
 - Doug Klotz a pedestrian advocate has been connecting the need for trees and pedestrian safety well.
 - Important to monitor tree policy in commercial zones.
 - Background information on main street commercial districts important for the policy committee regarding history of tree data.
- Vivek asked what type of data is better for specific commissioners.
 - I-tree and more local data are both good, Commissioner Novick prefers site specific.
- Title 11 information:
 - David and Vivek have been working on locating the large dbh trees in the city by neighborhood and their potential vulnerability.
 - Valuing ecological benefits, how we will do it.
 - Commissioner Novick is very interested in this data
- Final meetings and outcomes for the Oversight Advisory Committee
 - A report to council in February – Stephanie Beckman responsible for editing.
 - Dozens of issues we did not get resolved.
 - 3 meetings left for November – December

State of the Elms 2015 – Elm Monitor, Natasha Lipai

- Portland has lost a little more than 1100 elms since the first outbreak in the late 70's
- Three ways elms can be infected with Dutch Elm Disease (DED)
 - Root graft.
 - Bark beetle.
 - Human activity – transporting infected wood, and pruning without cleaning tools.
- Ways we control spread of disease.
 - Elm removal: Urban Forestry will remove if the elm is in the public right of way (ROW), parks, and city property.
 - If an infected elm is on private property it is up to the property owner to remove the elm.
 - A tree is removed when visual symptoms are detected:
 - Flagging.
 - Bark streaking.
 - Lab cultivates the fungus from the streaking.
 - Some elms are condemned without lab testing.
 - If the elm is declining and it shares a root graft with other elms that have DED.
 - If the elm is dead, the lab cannot detect DED in dead tissue.
 - Inoculation:
 - Over 100 trees inoculated this year.
 - Inoculated 13 Heritage Trees this year, including Heritage Tree #1 on SW 10th Ave.
 - First year to inoculate ROW Heritage Tree elms.
 - Other inoculations were park elms.
 - Trees are on a 3 year rotation because that is how long the fungicide – Arbortec lasts.
 - Eastmoreland and Ladd's Addition most active groups to inoculate private trees in their neighborhoods.
 - Inventorying:
 - Emily Wilson started private property inventory.
 - Continued this year, 38 neighborhoods inventoried.
- Tally of DED removals: 55
 - Majority of condemned elms were confirmed by lab tests.
- Record of elm removals:
 - First outbreak in 1977.
 - 1999 spike was an outbreak of young saplings in a grove.
 - 2015 cases: southeast had the majority of elm removals.
 - Private property removals were at 38% and ROW elms were a little more than half of all removals.
 - Average dbh of removals was 38 dbh.
 - Pleasant Valley was new this year, 14 elms on one property were lost.

- This year's removals were slowed down by equipment failures and maintenance, site logistics such as line clearance.
- Conclusions:
 - Stake holder awareness is important.
 - Should the program continue?
 - How effective is our approach?
 - Adapting program to new pests and outbreaks.
 - ELB (Emerald Ash Borer) & ALB (Asian Longhorned Beetle.)
 - Updating approved street tree planting lists.
 - Climate change.
 - Continue to map elm data.
- Questions, and comments:
 - Is dead infected elm wood viable for the fungus?
 - No, it is more a habitat for the bark beetle that also transmits DED.
 - What is the cost?
 - The whole program costs about 250k dollars.
 - We need more data and time to discern specific expenses.
 - Disease is very active summer schedule with the Operations crew covering an increased workload:
 - The tail end of winter and spring storm and other emergencies.
 - Requests for assistance with park trees as summer programs commence.
 - Requests for maintaining leafing out trees for traffic safety.
 - Elm removals.
 - Each elm removal takes a crew of 4 arborists and large equipment inputs for 3 to 4 days.
 - Often people replant a removed elm with another elm.
 - We have a 1% loss rate per year, not taking into account the replacement elms.
 - Is the inoculation indefinite?
 - Unknown, however inoculation is a containment strategy.
 - The inoculation is similar to chemotherapy, it is not good for the tree, and it stresses the tree.
 - A fair amount of resources goes into the elm program, as well as opportunity costs where the crew's focus is on elms.
 - Infected wood **must** be properly disposed of.
 - Nik will work with the elm monitor next season; in the interim he will look at the program to see if there can be improvements.
 - We will also look to contract out some of the workload of the elm season.
 - Natasha will be assisting the Tree Technicians temporarily.

Mixed Use Zones Project - Barry Manning, and Bill Cunningham; BPS

- Project overview of the Mixed Use Zones
 - Tailored to the UFC as to how the Mixed Use Zones Project will effect trees.
 - Proposed draft set of codes.
 - We would love to get feedback by November 16th.
- Growth management and livable neighborhoods
 - Dividing into centers and corridors, for example Hollywood and Lents connected by corridors like Division and Sandy.
 - How do we integrate policies and work with current needs?
 - Most of the building in the corridors is commercial, which can accommodate housing.
 - Higher density is focused close in towards the city center, and lower density will be further out.
 - Sensitive to development, trying to relieve pressure on single dwelling neighborhoods.
 - Density accommodations are being made in the codes.
 - Equity is considered as to how the codes influence all neighborhoods.
- New framework for zones
 - Zones are being collapsed and restructured.
 - The parking issue is being addressed with new transportation requirements.
- Building incentives improve available tree planting spaces.
 - For example, providing open space on the property will be an incentive, as well as other green building opportunities such as eco roofs.
- Will you be addressing Title 11 code exemptions for tree planting in commercial zones?
 - Not at this time, we will be looking at Title 11 and Title 33 in the future.
 - We would like to put the proposal of zone restructuring in front of the planning commission.
 - New zones will be replaced with a comparable previous zone.
 - The new zones will be pattern based, such as landscaping and building coverage.
- UFC Comment: Consider the tree's lifespan and do not create 'tree coffins' with planting spaces, keep lines of communication open with the UFC.
- Landscaping is not required in inner neighborhoods.
- There are 4 bonuses available to builders: Eco Northwest is studying the potential of developers taking advantage of the bonuses offered.
 - Green Building
 - Affordable Housing
 - Affordable Commercial building
 - Public Plazas
- UFC Comment: Heat index and air quality are worse in the central city, where trees would offer the most benefit to mitigate.

- The Comprehensive Plan does have policy language for greening the major corridors.
 - Different parts of the city have different geographic characteristics and we need to work with each neighborhood's strengths and weaknesses.
- UFC Comment: Landscaping and trees are not interchangeable, trees are the gold standard for environmental services and can be integrated into the central city with new design methods.
- 44.1% of commercial zoning requires landscaping.
- 10' setbacks are being proposed for larger corridors such as SW Barbur Blvd to increase livability.
 - UFC Comment: The type of tree matters, it would be helpful to have alternative views of sidewalk options, for example larger tree wells and narrower sidewalks.
- Alternatives are being considered such as shared space between residential buildings and pedestrians.
- Scale step down from large buildings and 10' space between buildings, potentially vegetated walls could be used.
- Final comments: please let us know if the zone restructuring is good or bad; if the pattern areas make sense; and code amendments of 15-20% landscaping requirements are acceptable.
- UFC Comment: Can green corridors be integrated into the city plan?
 - Yes, we are looking at regional features of east Portland and would like to create canopy corridors from places like Rocky Butte to Mt. Tabor and other significant areas.
 - Active transportation greenways could also connect to these larger contiguous canopy areas.
- UFC Comment: Why isn't tree preservation part of commercial zone development? Bonuses are permissive to developers, why aren't there mitigation requirements for not planting trees.
 - We appreciate your perspective and encourage comments from the UFC.
 - We have had a consultant discuss with us tree planting alternatives seen in other cities.
- Design alternatives for trees and planting spaces, can the Education and Outreach Committee research these alternatives?
 - It would be helpful to have the research and examples from other cities who have been successful with design alternatives as a resource for future discussion.

Old/ New Business:

- Employment Zones, Meryl can collect comments regarding changes to the Employment Zones. November 15th is the deadline for comments.
- Bond measure list, opportunities to volunteer with parks projects. Happy to send around again.
- Retreat – December 10th 9 am – 2:00 pm at Catherine’s home.
 - Primary items voted on were: Balancing whole forest management, and making the biggest impact in the next 12-18months.
 - Vivek has a research project of collecting commentary from people about big tree stories.
- For mixed use development and commercial development, connect with the Design Review and Landmark commissioners, how do we have forestry input into the landscape design of new developments?
How do we have more conversations about trees with different groups, such as the Transportation Department?

Close of meeting 10:42 am