



URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2016
City Hall, Lovejoy Room

Commission Members present: Chair Mark Bello, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Meryl Redisch, Damon Schrosk, Vivek Shandas, Gregg Everhart

Absent: Barbara Hollenbeck, Brian French

City Staff present: City Forester Jenn Cairo, City Attorney Tony Garcia, Outreach and Science Supervisor Angie Disalvo, Assistant Program Specialist Brian Landoe, Botanic Specialist Nik Desai, Botanic Specialist II Jeff Ramsey

Guests present: Pooja Bhatt, Commissioner's Office; Jennifer Karps, BES; Gustavo Rojas and Whitney Dorer, Friends of Trees; Bruce Nelson; Jeff Caudill, (BES), Katherine Hartinger, BES, Katie Dunham (PPR), Kakumyo Lowe-Charde, Dharma Rain Center; and other members of the public

Call to Order and Public Comments: UFC Chair Mark Bello

Mark called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM. One member of the public provided public comment.

Public Comment by Kakumyo Lowe-Charde

Mr. Lowe-Charde discussed a situation at 8500 N Siskiyou, a 14-acre site which his organization (Dharma Rain Center) is developing. In coordination with Friends of Trees, they planted 36 native streets trees in January 2016. However, they were unable to secure the necessary 2.5" caliper stock. In April 2016, a Tree Inspector informed him that the planted trees did not meet the 2.5" caliper requirement and would need to be replaced. The original 36 trees were replanted elsewhere on the property, and appropriate-sized trees were planted in their place. Mr. Lowe-Charde felt that there should be more latitude in how the caliper and species requirements are enforced with regard to the broader context of the specific site and its needs.

Jenn said she was unaware of this case, would look into it and respond to Mr. Lowe-Charde. She commented that while UF plants native trees whenever possible, trees in the right of way face challenging growth conditions. The 2.5" caliper requirement is also a code requirement based on a national standard set by organizations like ISA. Mark Bello noted that this type of issue will be added to the Commission's annual retreat agenda.

New Business: UFC Chair Mark Bello

Mark stated that applications have been received for the vacant Commission seats.

UFC Project List

Mark called the Commission's attention to the UFC Project list he put together (included in packet). Includes requirements set out by Title 11, as well as issues determined to be a priority by the Commission. Asked for Commissioners to recommend changes, add new projects, etc. as they see fit.

Gregg asked for Heritage tree delisting process to be added to the project list. Heritage tree nominations no later than March 31st.

Meryl added that Commissioner appointments should be included as year-round since recruitment is ongoing. Jenn noted this typically occurs in Feb/March when seat turnover happens.

The Street Tree Inventory Summit will take place on November 5, 2016. The Commission will have a table and will discuss at next UFC meeting who can staff the table.

Catherine informed the Commission that Angie will have a draft outreach plan in November/December. This may be something for UFC to review and discuss at the Annual Retreat.

Jenn asked if this project list is intended for internal or public use. Mark clarified internal, but some information should be on the UFC website. Jenn recommended using existing public events calendar this purpose, and to include committee meeting dates as well for the public. Damon recommended adding dates so the public can provide comment when necessary.

Catherine added that Naito Award nominations come in too late. Would preferably be the first Wednesday in December.

Annual Report

The UFC annual report is due in January. Jenn noted that in the past Catherine and Meryl have coordinated drafting the report, and UF staff helps with editing and formatting. Each committee chair provides bullet points on the accomplishments made by their committees, as well as volunteer hours. A letter from the Chair is also included. Jenn added that the report is intended to be a summary of what the UFC has accomplished in the past year.

Pooja Bhatt Introduction, Senior Policy Advisor

Commissioner Fritz was interested in doing a large Title 11 Amendment package this year. Following discussions with other bureaus, she landed on a handful of amendments that will be incorporated into RICAP 8. Commissioner Fritz appreciated the letter UFC drafted in the spring prioritizing ten amendments to Title 11. Six out of those ten will be addressed in RICAP, which goes to City Council in February. Commissioner Fritz hopes to address the remaining amendments next year.

Filling the vacancies on the Commission is also a priority to Commissioner Fritz. She is interested in increasing outreach to underserved communities in order to increase the diversity of the UFC.

Meryl asked whether Commissioner Fritz has a strategy for when the Stopgap tree measure sunsets after two years. Pooja responded that Commissioner Fritz viewed the larger code amendment package as an opportunity to determine whether stopgaps were sufficient or if more improvements need to be made.

Gregg asked if this will affect next year's budget. Pooja answered that some UF Trust Funds could be used. Mark added that UFC should be more involved in the budget process. Jenn noted that staff is responsible for budget practice, but UFC can play valuable role in providing advice and support for priorities. Mark recommended that we have a session in the fall on the budget.

Damon asked if Commissioner Fritz supports the four amendment changes that were not included in RICAP 8. Jenn noted that many of the changes have not been fully reviewed by UF staff, and Pooja followed up that Commissioner Fritz will require a public input process on those first as well.

Forestry Report: City Forester Jenn Cairo

Jenn provided an update on the UF Trust Fund report and the PSU IGA ordinance, which will go to council on September 28th, 2016.

Jenn reported that an event was held on August 26th called "Trees in Development Situations" as part of BES Lunch & Learn series. Fifty five people attended, with at least twenty private citizens from the development community. Jenn will send a link of that presentation to the UFC. The plan is to offer this presentation at least twice a year, and Urban Forestry will be looking into other groups to present to. A survey of attendees was conducted and the feedback was very positive.

Budget

The October UFC meeting will include a discussion on the Commission's thoughts and priorities on what should be funded. In current budget environment, additions are unlikely, and cuts are a potentiality.

Staffing

Jenn provided the following staffing updates:

- Joe Welliver has moved to ITAP coordinator (limited term), and will be reporting to Angie.
- Natasha Lipai will fill the vacant Tree Tech position left by Joe. The position is limited term since Joe will return to that position after the ITAP appointment.
- Arborist IV recruitment still in progress. Likely another month before a decision is made.
- Nik Desai introduced Mason Wordell, new Americorps staff.

- Jeff Ramsey has been appointed to Botanist Specialist II position and will be overseeing compliance planning and the assessment of the street tree inventory.

UFC Interviews

Brian Landoe provided update on interview process for filling UFC vacancies. Five applications have been received and first interviews are scheduled for September 29th.

Chair Report: UFC Chair Mark Bello

Mark noted that the retreat will be in December/January. Interested in Commissioner's ideas on facilitations and the agenda for the retreat.

Break

Mark confirmed that we have a quorum of Commissioners.

August Minutes Review and Approval: UFC Chair Mark Bello

Commissioners provided changes to the August meeting minutes. Minutes as amended were approved.

Research Needs Discussion: Commissioner Catherine Mushel

Catherine introduced Rudy Roquemore, Friends of Trees Contract Administration and Planting Assistant, who has been attending UFC Education and Outreach meetings.

Catherine reminded commissioners of an exercise conducted at a previous meeting to encourage members to be cognizant of the various layers that need to be considered in the Commission's work—earth, root zone space; air, canopy space and oxygen; sun, photosynthesis, shade; water, transpiration and stormwater.

At the most recent Education and Outreach Committee, Angie provided three areas the UFC could provide support: Celebration, Partnership Development, and Messaging.

On the issue of Partnerships, Catherine discussed the impact that underlying lot lines could potentially have on the urban canopy. Underlying lot lines allow for some properties to be subdivided, which can lead to development on lots under 5,000 square feet, allowing trees to be removed. This is ultimately a zoning question, which is managed by the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability. UFC would need to coordinate and develop a partnership with BPS to address this issue.

Related to Celebration, the plan is to orient the science and outreach efforts with Arbor Month as the end point.

Tree Story project

Catherine and Nik provided a brief updated on the Tree Story project. Nik noted that stories are being received.

Mark commented that he believes we need a graphic poster that provides the benefits of trees which takes into account the multiples layers that Catherine referenced. He referenced Oregon Humane Society as a non-profit that has implemented successful public outreach campaigns.

Meryl added that she read a spread in Portland Monthly on what Portland should look like. She noted that absence of natural resources or trees within that vision.

Mark added that BPS is doing a study of their design review process, which will be discussed later in the meeting. He has arranged for Lora Lillard from BPS to present today. UFC needs to establish stronger relationship with BPS to ensure the needs of the urban forest are represented.

On a positive note, Jenn noted that the bureaus are balancing different needs, and the focus changes according to the population you're speaking to, but still, city planners are working to balance different claims. Portland is fortunate in that we value trees more than many places, but there is still progress to be made. Part of that includes stronger outreach and marketing. Need to determine what we want to say and to whom we are directing it.

Vivek said there are myths that need to be dispelled between planning and forestry. A poster listing 11 of them could make help to dispel them. There is a misconception that we have to choose between the built environment and trees. They can coexist.

Catherine closed the E&O committee report by raising the issue of hiring a marketing firm to do the research, build the brand we are creating, and crafting our message in an effective visual way.

RICAP 8: Jeff Caudill, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Jeff opened discussion on RICAP 8, which is intended to implement minor policy changes to city code. He also introduced Katherine Hartinger, who is the project manager. The items that impact Title 11 are as follows. Details of each item are provided in the RICAP 8 memo included in the UFC packet and posted to the UFC webpage.

- Heritage Tree Penalties on Private Property (34)
- Ground Disturbance (37) and Protection of Tree Root Zones
- Protection of Tree Root Zones (38)
- Minimum Pruning Threshold (36)
- Root Protection Zone, Fencing (4)
- Tree Plan Requirements (39)
- Timelines (35)
- Enforcement (41)
- Non-conforming Upgrades (21)
- Tree Preservation and Protection near Development Impact Area (45)
- Definitions of Removal (47)

Comment period extends through October 14th. BPS expect to publish next draft on November 14th and then go to Planning and Sustainability Commission on December 13th. The preference is for UFC to hold its own hearing prior to December 13th in order for UFC's comments to be included in the PSC hearing. The final RICAP draft will be presented to City Council in February.

A discussion ensued on Jeff's RICAP update:

- Meryl brought up the Amenity Bonus (17) item as having an impact on trees.
 - Jeff clarified that this was not included in his original RICAP 8 memo, but that he would send an updated version.
- Damon's Questions
 - #37 Ground Disturbance
 - Damon expressed concern about 15' exemption rule, adding that a tree that is 20' from the structure will likely have a root zone that is within the project zone. Small projects can cause just as much damage as large projects
 - #39 Tree Plan Requirements
 - Damon also asked whether trees that are within 10 feet of the building should also need to be identified in the tree preservation plan. They are just as vulnerable as dead, dying, and nuisance trees for removal.
 - Jenn clarified that trees within 10' feet of building included in tree preservation plan are not permitted to be removed. This is captured in the permitting, but can be difficult to enforce.
 - Damon concluded by adding BDS should place just as much emphasis on trees as infrastructure as much as the built infrastructure as well.
- Gregg's Question
 - #37 Ground Disturbance
 - Gregg asked what would be the definition of a small amount of ground disturbance?
 - Jeff: We attempted to come up with a definition, but were unable. Instead, the RICAP includes specific activities that are exempt: additions or alterations within 15' of existing structure, repair and replacement of fences and decks, and landscaping.

Jenn introduced Katie Dunham, planner in Parks & Recreation. She will be leading RICAP on behalf of Urban Forestry.

Mark confirmed that the Policy Committee will hold an in depth conversation on RICAP and report back to the Commission.

A question was raised whether the UFC hearing on RICAP should come before or after the Planning and Sustainability Commission. Jenn and UF staff will check the code and report back. The UFC should also consider what their preference is as well.

Katherine Hartinger also noted that Title 33, Item 15, will include a change to commissioner term limits, allowing a one year extension if there is a vacancy.

Design Overlay Zone Assessment Project: UFC Chair Mark Bellow

Mark presented this project to the Commission, since Lora Lillard was unable to attend as planned. This project, led by BPS, reviews the city's design review processes. Mark learned that neither Parks nor Urban Forestry have been involved in this project. Mark stated his concern that trees are not a priority in this process, and that it perpetuates a false choice between trees and development. Jenn said she would look into this project with parks Parks and BPS staff.

Meeting adjourned at 10:33 AM.