
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2017

City Hall, Lovejoy Room

Commission Members present:	Chair Mark Bello, Vice-Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Damon Schrosk, Vivek Shandas, Gregg Everhart, Thuy Tu, Daniel Newberry, Meryl Redisch
Commission Members Absent:	Brian French
Urban Forestry staff present:	Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Brian Landoe, Asst. Program; Larry Maginnis, Operations Supervisor; John Watkins, Arborist IV; Mason Wordell, CSA II
City staff present:	Tony Garcia, City Attorney's Office; Mike Abbate, Director PP&R; Pooja Bhatt, Senior Policy Advisor for Commissioner Fritz's; Jennifer Karps, BES Tree Program Coordinator
Guests present:	Doug Klotz, Mary Vogel, Ruth Ann Barrett

Scenic View Clearing – Emily Roth, PP&R Senior Planner

- Plans to restore views identified in the Scenic Resource Plan are being implemented.
 - PP&R is responsible for maintain the views on its property
 - Rocky Butte's panoramic view-- identified in 1990 as the most important view-- will be the first one addressed later this summer.
 - Public outreach to the neighborhood association is in progress.
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/647274>
- The Scenic Resource work will entail both removals and plantings.
 - Rather than removing hundreds of trees to ensure a wide-open 180 degree, view, 47 trees greater than 6" DBH will be removed, starting in September, to create "window views."
 - 135 native trees will be planted on the butte as mitigation.
- Additionally, PP&R is implementing plans to restore the ecological health of the park.
 - 50 large trees, 265 small trees, and 5,200 shrubs will be planted lower down on the butte.
- PP&R plans to maintain other scenic views once every other year.
 - Pittock Mansion and Council Crest have already been completed.
 - Mt. Tabor will be the next view cleared.
- **Catherine commented that Rocky Butte would benefit from signage that names the watersheds and habitat directly below the viewpoint that lead on the ground plane to the peaks in the distance.**

Public Comment

- Doug Klotz presented comments concerning street tree removal in development situations.

- Recommended a code change to requiring a public notification when street trees over a certain size are to be removed in a development situation.
- Doug had several other recommendations which will be emailed to Brian Landoe.
- Ruth Ann Barrett provided a comment concerning tree canopy in Old Town
 - Ms. Barrett expressed concern that Old Town is not prioritized enough in the Citywide Tree Planting Strategy currently under development.
- Mary Vogel provided a comment on the Transportation System Plan, Phase 3, which has removed SW 12th as a City Greenway.
 - SW 12th is 5-lanes wide and designating it as a City Greenway would facilitate the addition more street trees.
 - This is a major residential street in downtown.
 - The deadline for submitting comments on the TSP is tomorrow.

New Business: UFC Chair Mark Bello

- The UFC is planning to hold a work session in October. The current plan is to hold the session during the October meeting.
 - Holding the work session in October would better align with timeline for producing the annual report.
 - Catherine added that the equity training held in June was productive, and would like to request someone from the Office of Equity and Human Rights attend the work session to speak specifically to engaging the community on forestry issues.
 - Mark, Catherine, and Barbara as the Executive Committee will be working on the preparations for the work session.
- Mark added that he attended the “When Small is Big Conference” at the World Forestry Center, which included representatives from Guatemala, Taiwan, Slovakia, Scotland, and other countries. He noted the range of issues around forest management are unique to each country, but in each country globalization is threatening forests.

Forestry Update – City Forester Jenn Cairo

- Jenn noted that permit volume is at highest level ever, which puts a burden on the chronically understaffed permitting group.
- Capital Improvement Projects in particular are increasing UF’s workload.
- UF is looking at own staff sustainability to prioritize responsibilities given the high work load
- The Title 11 audit, conducted by the City Auditor’s Office, is wrapping up and we expected to see the final audit within the next month.
 - UFC will receive an update when it is complete
- Mason Wordell, Americorps intern for the past several months, has completed his term of service.
 - Mason coordinated more than 40 outreach and community training events.
 - He is shifting into a CSA (Community Service Aid) position for the Park Tree Inventory.
- Two need Tree Inspectors have also been added.
 - Casey Clapp and Alec Amacher have been hired in temporary positions.
 - A hiring for permanent positions will be held in the fall
- Jenn turned over her time to Larry Maginnis, Operations Supervisor
 - Larry reported that John Watkins has been hired into the Arborist IV position, which is the highest classification.
 - John is a 22-year veteran of Urban Forestry.
 - As an Arborist IV, John will serve as crew leader.
 - Larry added that the Arborist IV is one of the most credentialed in the country, including Certified Arborist, Certified Tree Worker, Aerial Specialist, Pesticide Applicator, and Aerial Rescue.

Summer Free for All – Mike Abbate, PP&R Director

- Mike thanked the UFC for their service to the city.
- Mike discussed the PP&R Summer Free for All events.
 - There are 77 movies and other free events in parks across the city this summer.
- PP&R will also be serving 110,000 free lunches this summer.

Policy Committee Update – Meryl Redisch, Policy Committee Chair

- Meryl reminded the Commission that the Street Tree Task Force work session is currently scheduled for November 14th
 - Meryl, Mark, Jim Labbe, and Roberta Jortner have been working to develop a draft framework for that work sessions.
 - BDS, BES, PBOT, and BPS will be among the bureaus present, including Commissioners and their staff.
- Meryl laid out the timeline:
 - Phase 1: Presenting the proposal to City Council
 - Phase 2: Work Session
 - Phase 3: Street Tree task force convenes
 - Phase 4: Implementation of the right-of-way proposal for maintenance of city trees
- Meryl has been reaching out to City Council staff to setup meetings.
- The Policy Committee will provide an update at each monthly meeting.
- Also working on the Central City 2035 plan which will go to Council on September 7th.

Public Hearing: Heritage Tree Removals (#319 and #291) – Gregg Everhart, Heritage Tree Committee Chair

- Gregg presented Heritage Tree #319 at 1924 SE Umatilla,
 - An American Elm, 85’ tall with a 120’ canopy spread,
 - Added as a Heritage Tree in 2015.
- The tree has sustained significant storm damage and is recommended for removal.
- Jay Wilson, who lives across the street from the tree. Jay submitted the original application for Heritage Tree Status
 - Jay expressed their appreciation for the tree and its importance to the community.
- Gregg made a motion to remove the tree; Catherine seconded; the UFC voted unanimously to approve the removal.
- Gregg presented Heritage Tree #291 in the San Lu Chinese Garden.
 - Council approved the listing in 2009 and it may be over 100 years old.
- Director of Horticulture at the Chinese Garden, Glin Varco, requested the removal due to Armillaria root rot and the decline of the tree over several years.
- Gregg made a motion to remove the tree; Meryl seconded; the UFC voted unanimously to approve the removal.

Discussion of Heritage Tree Selection Process – Gregg Everhart, Heritage Tree Committee Chair

- Gregg briefed the UFC on the Heritage Tree Selection Process.
 - The Committee is focusing on East Portland this year, which has very few Heritage Trees.
- Meryl recommended that this item be placed on the October work session agenda due to the limited amount of time available to discuss today.

- Barbara recommended that the UFC discuss if there is a way to direct love of trees to the canopy in general, rather just individual trees in someone's neighborhood. There is a constituency that values trees and we need to better leverage their dedication with more effective outreach, viewing tree lovers themselves as a resource.
- Gregg noted that one individual submitted 30 trees for consideration. This seems to be driven around concern for preserving the trees from future development.
 - Gregg added that there is also a Tree of Merit designation for trees that are not quite at the Heritage Tree level.
 - Catherine noted that land use issues drive a lot of the concern around preserving large trees, including future Heritage Trees.

Appeal, 530 NW 23rd Ave.

- Three street trees, all red maples, were requested for removal
- Kelly Koetsier, Tree Inspector, provided a presentation on the appeal case
- Property owner requested removal due to damage done to sidewalks, the pruning required due to the PGE electrical wires above, and upcoming repair to the building will require scaffolding along the sidewalk.
- The removal permit was denied for the following reasons
 - The tree's growth habit has not developed in a manner that would prevent continued healthy growth or is negatively impacting other trees (*11.40.040.B.2.b*)
 - Tree is healthy and not dead, dying, or dangerous (*11.40.040.A.4*)
 - Maintenance of the tree does not create an unreasonable burden for the property owner (*11.40.040.B.2.c*)
 - Removal and replanting will impact the neighborhood streetscape and any adopted historic or other design guidelines (*11.40.040.B.2.d*)
- The property owner presented reasons for removal, arguing that the damage to the sidewalk has been extensive over the years. To date, they have spent close to \$30,000 in total including a lawsuit due to a trip and fall.
 - Additionally, PGE trims in a way that is not aesthetically appealing
 - The trees also causes damage to cars parked below
- Kelly did not see any areas of the sidewalk showing lifting or heaving as a result of the tree roots.
- Jenn clarified that the 10-foot rule only applies to private trees. Street trees cannot be removed because they are within 10 feet of a building
- Jenn also added that the standard for determining undue sidewalk costs is more than three repairs at the same spot at the same tree over 10 years.
- The property owner did not provide any documentation prior to the appeal to demonstrate these costs.
- Barbara called for a motion: Damon motioned to uphold the City Forester's decision to deny the removal. Barbara seconded and the Appeal Committee voted unanimously to uphold the Forester's decision to deny the removal.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15am.