
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2017
City Hall, Lovejoy Room

Commission Members present:	Chair Mark Bello, Vice Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Damon Schrosk, Vivek Shandas, Thuy Tu, Gregg Everhart, Daniel Newberry, Brian French
Commission Members Absent:	Meryl Redisch
Urban Forestry staff present:	Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Brian Landoe, Asst. Program Specialist; Gina Dake, Botanic Specialist I
City staff present:	Tony Garcia, City Attorney's Office; Martha Prinz and Martha Pape, City Auditor's Office; and other city staff
Guests present:	Doug Klotz, Bruce Nelson, Dennis Harper

Public Comments

- Dennis Harper provided a comment regarding tree removal and replanting at ST. Mary's in Northwest Portland.
 - Several street trees have been removed due to Dutch elm disease. Due to the narrowness of the planting strip (30 inches), a replacement tree is not permitted.
 - Mr. Harper expressed his concern about tree loss in this neighborhood and planting strip requirement.
 - Jenn thanked Mr. Harper for his comment and will follow up on this particular situation.
- Doug Klotz commented on more housing in the areas of town with the best transit access, mainly downtown. In these areas, larger setbacks reduce buildable space. As such, he opposes mandatory setbacks downtown.

Urban Forestry Report – Jenn Cairo, City Forester

- Jenn briefed the Commission on a tree removal request from the managers of Veterans Memorial Coliseum. Urban Forestry did not permit removal of several oak trees on the property. It is expected that this issue will reach the Appeals Board pointing the near future.
- Natalie Luttrell, one of the original tree techs hired with the implementation of Title 11, has accepted a new position with the Bureau of Development Services.
- Urban Forestry's Dutch elm disease program has identified 41 DED-infected trees this season. The policy change which returned responsibility for removal to the adjacent property owner has gone smoothly, and those infected trees are being removed.
 - Normandale Park is a new area this year with DED-positive findings.
 - Inoculations have begun in that park.
- The Citywide Tree Planting Strategy project is concluding data collection and plans to have a report out in March. The project has incorporated extensive community outreach:

- A community advisory committee,
- Five culturally specific focus groups,
- A citywide resident survey,
- Three stakeholder workshops geared towards city bureaus who work with trees.
- The Tree permit fee schedule which was approved by City Council in June contained an error. The correction has been submitted to City Council and will be effective November 1st.
- The Park Tree Inventory Summit is scheduled for November 4th.
 - Over 200 individual volunteers, many who volunteered on multiple days, took part in the inventory this season;
 - Mark commented that UFC members tabled at the last street tree inventory last year and it was very successful.

UF Equity Update – Jenn Cairo & Gina Dake (completing presentation from September UFC)

- Goal 2: End disparities in City government hiring and promotions
 - The Green Ceiling: Despite growing diversity in the US, racial composition of environmental organizations has not increased above 16%.
 - Urban Forestry is working to expand the diversity of its workforce through partnerships.
 - Tualatin Riverkeepers program pays 10 participants \$12/hour to receive urban forestry specific job training, and thereafter helps to place them in an 80-100 hour paid internship. The program has both received training support from Urban Forestry and Urban Forestry has hired a program graduate for a paid internship.
 - Urban Forestry also participates in PP&R’s Youth Conservation Crew. This program provides summer employment for teens, ages 14-18. Since 2009, UF has had a YCC tree crew that performs tree establishment care and pruning.
 - UF Staff (Jenn)
 - In 2011, 6% of UF staff identified as people of color. Now 20% self-identify as people of color.
 - UF is better able to serve diverse communities when our staff are part of those communities.
 - UFC recruitment efforts to have the commission better reflect the community are underway.
- Goal 3: Strengthen outreach and public engagement for communities of color and refugee and immigrant communities
 - Learning Landscapes: a hands-on learning program, engaging students in planting activities at their schools.
 - Portland Arbor Day was moved to East Portland to promote greater attendance and participation
 - Neighborhood Tree Stewards
 - Nik Desai leads this 10-year old program which teaches residents how to care for their neighborhood trees.
 - Fall enrollment: half of participants are from neighborhoods east of 82nd Avenue.
 - Urban Forestry Workshops
 - Opportunity to directly engage with residents around trees in their neighborhoods.
 - Topics include tree selection, care, pruning, and identification.
 - Focused on offering workshops in outer SE to ease the travel burden.
 - APANO/Jade Greening Project

- Collaboration with APANO started two years ago and focused on understanding what that community needs, and what the barriers are to having trees in their neighborhood.
 - UF contributes to this partnerships by providing a module supporting the equitable distribution of trees.
 - Jade Greening, organized by Oregon Solutions: UF contributes to understanding concerns around transportation, air quality, and tree canopy.
- Goal 4: Increase access to cultural and linguistically responsive services for communities of color and refugee and immigrant communities
 - The City has not served these communities well historically.
 - Title VI, the civil rights component of city regulations, provides a guide for addressing these inequities.
 - Focus is on raising the cultural competency of UF staff and programs.
 - UF is adding a phone number other than 823-TREE for options in other languages.
 - The Office of Equity and Human Rights has complimented UF's work on this issue as exemplary.
- Goal 5: Provide equitable access to city services for all residents
 - UF's Neighborhood Tree Stewards program and Neighborhood Tree Team Workshops are making equity a priority in 2017.
 - Includes more locations in East Portland, with additional support through scholarships, childcare, and transit vouchers.
 - The Citywide Tree Planting Strategy is focusing on bringing the benefits of the urban forest to underserved areas.

Policy Committee Report – Roberta Jortner

- Roberta provided an update on the planning for the November 14th work session to consider the UFC's proposal to form a Street Tree Task Force:
 - A tentative agenda for the November 14th work session is being developed.
 - Item one of the proposal -a small group of UFC policy committee members and community members will begin the session with a statement on the importance and purpose of the proposal.
 - Item number two of the proposal (providing adequate space for street trees in the ROW) will be addressed through a review of PBOT's ROW Management Tool Kit update process.
 - Jenn will send PBOT's RFP for the project consultant to the UFC.
- The Commissioners office would like to see materials on what the 11-14-2017 ROW work session will look like by October 5th.
- Barbara recommended a contingency plan if council says no to the Task Force proposal, such as proposing the issue be reconsidered at a later date.
- Central City 2035
 - Due to the deadline to submit comments on this plan, the policy committee decided that Thuy and others would submit comments as individuals.
 - However, the comment deadline has been extended and there is now time for the UFC to approve the statement and submit it to City Council for consideration.
 - Mark made a motion for the Commission to send a letter saying that the UFC endorses the comments made and submitted by Thuy.
 - Barbara seconded the motion.
 - UFC approved unanimously.
- Code Reconciliation Project

- Barry Manning will be briefing the Commission on this project at the October UFC meeting.
- The UFC has already drafted and approved a preliminary statement on the project.
- Roberta recommended that we submit the approved statement to the Director of BPS, Susan Anderson.
 - Catherine moved to send the approved statement to the director of BPS.
 - Damon seconded the motion.
 - UFC approved unanimously.

Title 11 Audit Briefing – Martha Prinz, Senior Management Auditor

- Martha Prinz, lead auditor, and Elizabeth Pape provided a briefing on the primary findings of the City’s audit of the Title 11 implementation
- Audit found that tree protection did increase in some areas, though insufficient staffing levels have left certain aspects of the code unenforced.
- Outdated permitting software slowed implementation
- Conflict between Title 11 and other city goals, such as housing policies, weakens tree protections
- More trees preserved in demolition from 2015 (year one) and 2016 (year two) of Title 11
- Increased percentage of trees planted were large trees from 2015 to 2016
- In non-development situations, three times as many large trees were removed as were planted
- Noted that issues of equity and affordability highlight need for city to prioritize its goals, particularly around housing.
 - The auditors first mentioned concerns around both inability of the current code to protect trees in development, and the increased cost of development due to Title 11.
 - A second equity concern is tree code enforcement is driven by complaints, which are more common in more affluent areas of the city.
 - A third equity concern is that responsibility for trees rests with adjacent property owner, which can be a financial burden with disproportionate results according to income.
- UF staff workload is an impediment to implementation of Title 11.
- TRACS is NOT building a tree asset data base, but rather is building a permit database:
 - An asset data base, which would comprehensively support UF’s management plan, needs to be able to track trees individually as assets.
- Full report and briefing available on the UFC web page:
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/655709>

Commissioners made various comments on the audit.

- Catherine commented the audit does not fully recognize the cultural value of trees in creating a sense of place, nor their function fostering mental and physical health.
 - The auditors reported their awareness of the issues.
- Damon asked if the auditors looked at any data regarding how Title 11 impacts housing affordability.
 - The auditors reported BDS did not have any data to provide, so this feedback from the development community is largely anecdotal.
 - They clarified that purpose of the audit is to gather and consider stakeholder feedback
- Mark asked how this information could be useful to the UFC in the future
 - Jenn noted that the auditor’s job is to look at how city bureaus are performing their functions
 - The audit will be a helpful tool for the UFC when communicating to City Council what changes need to be made to Title 11.
- The audit validated a number of concerns that Urban Forestry has been voicing for some time.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30am.