
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2017

City Hall, Lovejoy Room

Commission Members present:	Chair Mark Bello, Vice-Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Damon Schrosk, Vivek Shandas, Gregg Everhart, Daniel Newberry, Meryl Redisch, Brian French
Commission Members Absent:	Thuy Tu
Urban Forestry staff present:	Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Brian Landoe, Asst. Program; Larry Maginnis, Operations Supervisor; Jerome Johnson, Arborist IV; Nik Desai, Botanic Specialist I
City staff present:	Judy Prosper, City Attorney's Office; Pooja Bhatt, Senior Policy Advisor for Commissioner Fritz; Jennifer Karpis, BES Tree Program Coordinator
Guests present:	Bruce Nelson

New Business – Mark Bello, UFC Chair

- Mark encouraged Commissioners to take part in PP&R Urban Forestry's Park Tree Inventory.

Urban Forestry Report – Jenn Cairo, City Forester

- Jenn provided an update on Dutch elm disease removals. She reminded the Commission that removal of DED-infected trees is now the responsibility of the adjacent property owner.
- Due to the high heat this summer, Urban Forestry has seen an increase in tree emergencies.
 - Tree emergencies also impact permitting, since Tree Inspectors respond to emergencies in addition to issuing permits.
- Natalie Luttrell, one of UF's original Tree Techs with the implementation of Title11, is moving to a new position with the Bureau of Development Services.
- PP&R is adding a modular office building at Urban Forestry Headquarters in East Delta Park. The new building will provide much needed office space for Tree Inspectors and the group's supervisor.
- A new modern operations facility is also being developed. This facility will replace the barn which currently houses the Urban Forestry arborists crew, supervisor, and equipment.
- Jenn informed the Commission that there are growing safety concerns within city parks and community centers. Dealing with hazard materials in parks (needles, human feces, and others), including threats of violence against PP&R staff. Urban Forestry has not experienced this as directly as other divisions, though Parks Inventory staff have encountered hazardous materials in parks. A PP&R task force is being formed to develop a response.
- Larry Maginnis, Operations Supervisor, introduced Jerome Johnson as the Arborist IV. Jerome, who is being promoted from Arborist III, was hired after a nationwide recruitment. He will be serving as a crew lead.

- 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.

Committee Responsibilities – Mark Bello, Chair

- Most of the work accomplished by the Commission is done through the various committees.
 - Policy Committee
 - Education and Outreach Committee
 - Appeals Board
 - Executive Committee
- The Urban Forestry Commission is an 11-member volunteer body appointed by City Council. We have two fundamental responsibilities:
 - we engage with the public regarding trees as green infrastructure and the city’s living cultural heritage; and
 - we advise the city forester, the director of PP&R, and the city council
- This may be an appropriate time to reconsider the Commission’s committee structure in order to effectively pursue the mission of the Commission.
- Vivek noted that the UFC’s mission is vague, in that it does not explicitly capture the role that the Commission has in the development of city code and policy, particularly the Urban Forest Management Plan and Title 11.
- Following some discussion, Vivek clarified that he recommends that the mission statement be revised to be more clear and specific on what exactly the Commission advises on. This may be a more appropriate discussion during a work session.
 - Catherine noted that the Parks Board must have similar committees as the UFC. There may be opportunities to align the structures of the two groups.
 - Meryl responded that the Parks Board is looking at a three-year strategic plan in anticipation of developing a new vision document.
- Mark recommended that the Commission determine what the priorities of the UFC are, and consider whether the existing committee structure supports those priorities.
- Jenn also added that the Appeals Board has been consistently understaffed, making it difficult to maintain a quorum.
 - Daniel has volunteered to serve on a short-term basis in order to fully staff the board.
 - Two permanent members are urgently needed.
 - Catherine volunteered to serve on the Appeals Board.

Canopy Stories – Vivek Shandas and Dani Schulte

- Canopy Stories is a project to allow community members to comment and tell stories about the city’s trees.
 - The US Forest Service approached Vivek and Angie DiSalvo about taking the Canopy Stories project nationally.
 - US Forest Service provided funding for PSU to hire a student to pilot the project in Portland
- Dani Schulte, a Portland State University graduate student in the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning program, was hired to conduct a public outreach campaign in support of the project.
- A website was developed where community members can enter their tree stories. The project will run through December.
- Dani provided additional details on the nature of the public outreach, including going to farmer’s markets, street fairs, and Sunday Parkways. Several hundred stories have been presented to date.
- Catherine commented that projects may be more likely to succeed when they are approached using the structure provided by the tenets of marketing—including, a well-defined action that is

the end aim of the program; focus groups to discuss barriers and benefits to participation, to taking the desired action; a survey to rank the same; and then structuring the pilot around the survey results; and including metrics of success in order to correct the method of the pilot where needed.

Policy Committee Report – Meryl Redisch

- Meryl provided an update on the Policy Committee’s work on the Street Tree Task Force
 - Roberta Jortner is taking a leave from the Policy Committee in order to work directly on this effort.
 - The work session is scheduled for November 14th and planning is ongoing.
- Meryl broke out the process for developing the task force in three phases
 - Phase 1: presenting the idea of a Task Force to City Council, who approved proceeding with a work session.
 - Phase 2: Planning and holding the November work sessions.
 - Phase 3: Implementation of an inter-bureau task force.
- The Commission also reviewed a comment letter to be submitted to the Planning and Sustainability Commission regarding the Code Reconciliation Project.
 - Barry Manning plans to attend the September meeting to brief on this project.
 - Comments are due by August 28th, which necessitates the UFC approve the letter prior to the September UFC meeting.
 - City Council will hear public testimony on September 7th.
 - A significant change included in the Code Reconciliation Project is removing the Title 11 exemption for industrial zones, as well as to commercial zones.
- Mark made a motion to remove the mention of dropping industrial zone exemption, and instead discuss this at the upcoming public hearing. Gregg seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- The Planning and Sustainability Commission will hear comment, then the Urban Forestry Commission will do the same.
- Mark also made a motion to add a comment to the statement that the UFC may have additional comments following their own public hearing. The motion passed unanimously.
- Comments should also be sent to the BPS director in order for staff to incorporate them into the draft document.

Urban Forestry Equity and Inclusion Update – Jenn Cairo, City Forester and Nik Desai, Botanic Specialist I.

- Jenn presented an update on Urban Forestry’s equity and inclusion efforts.
- Urban Forestry is working to improve the equity of both the service that UF provides, as well as the benefits of the urban forest to its residents.
 - This means equal outcomes, rather than equal inputs and equal opportunities.
- Full details of the updates are available here:
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/651088>

The meeting adjourned at 10:30am.