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**URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2018

City Hall, Lovejoy Room

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| <b>Commission Members present:</b>   | Chair Vivek Shandas, Vice Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Meryl Redisch, Damon Schrosk, Gregg Everhart, Brian French, Anjeanette Brown, Megan Van de Mark, Lorena Nascimento |
| <b>Commission Members Absent:</b>    | Thuy Tu, Daniel Newberry   |
| <b>Urban Forestry staff present:</b> | Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Brian Landoe, Asst. Program Specialist; Angie DiSalvo, Outreach and Science Supervisor  |
| <b>City staff present:</b>           | Tony Garcia, City Attorney's Office  |
| <b>Guests present:</b>               |  |

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**Forestry Report - Jenn Cairo, City Forester**

- Update on the FY19 budget process
  - Both of Urban Forestry's budget packages have been recommend by the City Budget Office
  - Several PP&R reduction packages were also recommended by the CBO, resulting in about \$2.7 million in general fund reduction.
    - Includes a \$50,000 reduction to Protect the Best, which provides invasive weed management in natural areas like Forest Park and Powell Butte.
- Update on the current fiscal year budget
  - PP&R is under earning revenue which is leading to an expected negative year-end position. Staff are looking to defer expenses wherever possible, including holding vacancies open until July.
- Street Tree Task Force Update
  - OMF has confirmed they will not be able to staff the STTF as originally planned.
  - PP&R has requested \$100,000 in the Spring BMP to fund the consultant which now includes meeting facilitation.
    - City Council will need to approve this request
    - Without this funding, the task force will not move forward.
- Urban Forest Inventory and Analysis Project
  - This project is partly funded by the US Forest Service and will provide Urban Forestry with the most comprehensive canopy coverage data, including private property. The majority of Portland's trees are on private property.
  - Jenn introduced Jody Perry, who will be working on this project as a Botanic Specialist. Jody worked previously with the US Forest Service for about ten years on a similar inventory project with a focus on open public lands.
  - This project uses well established protocols which will allow us to compare data with other cities across the country.

- Nik Desai will be leading the project.
- Gregg: Will the inventory be using LIDAR data? This may be an opportunity to determine how many trees are within 10 feet of a structure.
  - Jenn: Gregg is referring to the Title 11 requirement which allows trees on private property to be removed if they are within 10 feet of a structure. The analysis will use random plots across the city, so the data cannot be used in that way. Permit
    - Angie: The data we collect will be updated every ten years in perpetuity, so we will be able to track changes moving forward.
- Jody: Each plot is 48' in diameter and the data collected within that plot is extensive – property type, species, height, canopy coverage, structures on-site, etc. The amount of information which can be collected is impressive. In addition, there will be four microplots on each plot, which will capture saplings and other data. Once the plots are established, they remain constant in perpetuity in order to track change in the forest over time.
- Jenn: We will bring the UFIA project back to the UFC at a future date to discuss further.
- Vivek: There is a lot of data online about the UFIA data collection process.

### **Naito Awards**

- Catherine: This award was established in the 1970s to recognize people who have made an impact on the urban forest which can be emulated by others.
- This year, the UFC received 11 nominations.
- In reviewing the nominees, the committee had to balance the merits of individual's long-term service, versus those who have made more recent contributions.
- Further, what story are we trying to tell about the urban forest?
- For the individual award, the committee is recommending Carol Lee. Carol has volunteered with Friends of tree to plan in her neighborhood, and has completed APANOs Climate Health Housing Institute Leadership Program
- For the group award, the committee is recommending the St. Johns Tree Team. This team has participated in planting and pruning workshops, supported Heritage Tree program, and planted 10 trees at the Chimney Park Off Leash Dog Area after a year of careful planning.
- Damon motioned to approve the committee's recommendations. Gregg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Citywide Tree Planting Strategy – Angie DiSalvo**

- Angie presented the draft of the Citywide Tree Planting Strategy, which is available on the UFC website: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/76406>
- There is an open comment period on the report till April 6<sup>th</sup>
- UF has a citywide goal of 33% canopy coverage by 2035.
- Our current canopy coverage is uneven. The east side has coverage of 21%, which is equivalent to Los Angeles, a denser city than Portland. We also have inequity between neighborhoods, and that inequity is closely tied to income.
- The focus of this project was to engage underserved communities living in low canopy areas of Portland, in order to determine barriers and opportunities to tree planting.
- The project included three primary community engagement efforts
  - Five culturally specific focus groups were conducted in July and August 2017 with African, Bhutanese, Latino, Slavic, and Vietnamese communities.
  - Portland State University administered a public survey from May through July 2017. The survey assessed perceptions and level of interest in trees, understanding of city and resident responsibility for tree maintenance, preferred locations for tree planting, and barriers and opportunities to tree planting.
  - A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was created to provide review of all project outcomes and recommendations. Thirteen community members were selected representing

communities of color, immigrant, refugee, and residents from low income, low canopy communities.

- The survey showed that support for trees within Portland is very strong. 98% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that Portland's trees are important.
- Respondents east of 82<sup>nd</sup> were more likely to be unsatisfied with the number of trees in their neighborhood.
- The outreach also identified several barriers to tree planting in underserved communities
  - General lack of information of the tree planting programs available in Portland
  - Fear about the impacts of trees (sidewalk damage. Renters also expressed a hesitancy to ask their landlord to plant trees.
  - There is a perception that the cost of planting trees and ongoing care is prohibitive.
  - Many participants expressed that while they value trees, they had too many other competing priorities to worry about trees, such as lack of money and time.
  - While many immigrant and refugee community members felt connected to the trees from their home countries, they felt disconnected to trees in Portland.
- Angie previewed the planting tool at [www.branchoutpdx.org](http://www.branchoutpdx.org).
  - Developed by Portland State, the tool uses social and environmental data sets to identify areas of the city most in need of increased canopy coverage.
- Lorena asked about planting criteria and species preference.
  - Angie: A lot of species information did not come up, though Urban Forestry just advocate for large evergreen trees wherever possible. We did learn that while UF promotes these types of trees for their environmental benefits, many community members have other values, such as food from fruit trees.
- Megan: Is there a plan in the interim to address tree maintenance needs? Are there efforts ongoing related to educating about tree care? And with this plan nearly completed, what are the next steps?
  - Angie: On the maintenance issues, the Street Tree Task Force effort is ongoing to address this issue.
    - Jenn: The Community Tree Care program between BES, Urban Forestry, and Friends of Trees is one aspect of this. However, if the city's policy on street tree maintenance changed, this would reduce a significant barrier to planting.
- Catherine: What are the ongoing strategies we have that will help to reinforce a cultural norm that values trees? Will just planting trees help to change that?
  - Angie: I think we have to be careful about asking communities to change their cultural norms so that they value the same things that we value. We have goals that we are trying to implement, but because of the burden that tree ownership confers (cost of maintenance, for example), we have to be conscious about how we proceed.
    - Anjeanette: Low-income and communities of color have historically been bullied with regard to city policy making which places responsibility in the midst of gentrification. It's inappropriate for the city to come to a community and ask them to change their values. We can do better than that.
  - Angie: Our report also shows that people do value trees – the issue is the barriers to planting that we covered previously.
- Angie, please remember to submit comments by April 6.

*Meeting adjourned 11:00 AM*