

**URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes

June 21, 2018

City Hall, Lovejoy Room

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<b>Commission Members present:</b>	Secretary Catherine Mushel, Damon Schrosk, Gregg Everhart, Anjeanette Brown, Megan Van de Mark, Daniel Newberry
<b>Commission Members absent:</b>	Chair Vivek Shandas, Vice Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Brian French, Lorena Nascimento, Thuy Tu
<b>Urban Forestry staff present:</b>	Casey Jogerst, Permitting & Regulation Manager and Acting City Forester; Brian Landoe, Budget & Program Analyst
<b>City staff present:</b>	Tony Garcia, City Attorney's Office; Bill Cunningham, City Planner, Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability; Denver Igarta, Supervising Planner, Portland Bureau of Transportation
<b>Guests present:</b>	Mary Vogel, Meryl Redisch, Policy Committee Member

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**Public Comments**

- Mary Vogel expressed concern for trees in low-income areas downtown.
- There are areas of downtown that are very low-income that should be a priority for the Urban Forestry Commission.
  - Nearly all of the housing units along SW 12<sup>th</sup> are low-income or subsidized housing.
  - Daniel: Is there anything specific that you're asking of us today?
    - Mary: No—rather she is repeating a message she has stated many times; also, she did testify before the Design Commission asking for development in this area to include more trees.

**City Forester Report – Casey Jogerst, Permitting & Regulation Manager and Acting City Forester**

- Casey Jogerst is serving as Acting City Forester while Jenn is out on vacation
- Since January 1, 2018, Urban Forestry has processed about 4,000 permits, which is a steady increase from the previous year. In 2017, UF processed nearly 10,000 development and non-development permits
- Fast Track Pilot Project: The Bureau of Development Services, which is the primary bureau of development permitting. The Mayor's office asked BDS and the infrastructure bureaus (Transportation, Environmental Services, PP&R Urban Forestry, etc.) to come up with a process to more efficiently review and issue development permits. This is in response to the large increase in development activity in the city. A dozen large scale projects, such as the Adidas campus expansion, have been selected as pilot projects for new processes. A number of efficiencies, including digital plan review, are included in the pilot.
  - Catherine: Do you know why large projects were selected for the pilot rather than smaller ones?
    - Casey: I can't speak for the mayor, but I in general the larger projects are more complicated and have overlapping regulations which need to be applied. It's likely



- Preservation bonus is not very valuable in East Portland where increased density is not likely. This allows them to transfer that bonus somewhere else in the city where the added density is more usable.
- The bonus would be provided in exchange for preserving trees at least 12" dbh, with greater bonuses awarded for larger trees. The tree would need to be preserved for 50 years.
- Outdoor spaces and green elements is another major topic of the plan.
  - Addressing issues of large paved spaces with little green space,
  - Adding requirement for outdoor space in RM3 and RM4 zones
  - Requiring at least 10% of the surface area needs to be common space if the site is larger than 20,000 square feet.
  - Allowing flexibility for non-traditional landscaping like ecoroofs and raised courtyards to meet a portion of the landscaping requirements with restrictions:
    - Many stakeholders noted that non-traditional options should not substitute for in-ground landscaping, so this will be limited to 50% of landscaping on site.
    - 4 square feet of ecoroof is equivalent to 1 square foot of in-ground landscaping in terms of meeting the requirement.
- BHBD also limits paved vehicle area to 30% of the site, and asphalt can only be comprised of 15% of the site.
- Limits front facing garages to a maximum of 50% of building frontage, since the driveways decrease space for street trees.
- For these higher density zones, the setback has been increased to 10', although when the building has a courtyard open to the street, the wings can be closer to the sidewalk.
  - Façade articulation will be required.
- Also requires 25% of site depth for rear setback
- Denver Igarta, Supervising Planner, PBOT, introduced himself and offered to answer questions involving new street connections in East Portland.
  - New street connections are intended to address lack of connectivity in East Portland
  - Downtown blocks are 300' long, while those in East Portland the are often 1,000'.
  - The new connections will primarily be in centers where most growth and development is expected.
- In terms of preserving groves of Douglas firs on the interior of lots, the intention is not to create a complete street grid. The goal is to preserve space by creating bike and pedestrian connections rather than automobile-centered streets.
- Questions from the Urban Forestry Commission
  - Damon: Will paved parking areas count towards the common area requirements?
    - Bill: No, paved areas will not count as common area.
  - Damon: On the tree preservation transfer credit, has there been a cost/benefit analysis to the 2-mile zone versus citywide and how that might impact low-canopy neighborhoods?
    - Bill: Yes, there has been a discussion. Southwest Portland has a lot of environmental protection zones and other tools which help to preserve trees. These tools largely do not exist in East Portland. Expanding the transfer zone will help to make tree preservation in East Portland more valuable to developers. There is no track record, however, which provides a guide for how effective this will be.
  - Damon: Will the street connections prioritize walking and biking over auto lanes? When driving in a car, the longer block is not really an issue, but it can be for pedestrians.
    - Denver: Yes, there is a focus for pedestrians, particularly because we're focusing on centers where there is a more public transit service.
  - Daniel: These mid-street connections, will they be blocked off from automobile traffic?
    - Denver, in some cases they will be, but not always. They will be developed in pieces when development happens on each lot, at which point a ROW dedication can be established. This will be a gradual process over time.
  - Daniel: Encourage BPS and PBOT to coordinate so that when large housing developments with high percentage of lot coverage are proposed, the right-of-way is increased to ensure

space for street trees is provided. Otherwise, we're getting large buildings with no on-site trees and a small sidewalk without space for street trees. This typically happens in low-income areas and without this kind of coordination we're depriving these populations from canopy coverage.

- Denver: This would be addressed in the pedestrian design guide, which is being updated through the Pedestrian Master Plan currently under development. New development should always result in the ROW being upgraded to the standard.
- Anjeanette: I appreciate the new requirement for common spaces. Having these communal green spaces is extremely important, particularly in East Portland where this is often not provided.
- Megan: Is there any flexibility to decrease the rear setback to increase the front setback? The 10' setback currently proposed doesn't provide much space for large form trees. Similarly, the 4' planting strip does not provide space for large form trees either. You will end up planting smaller trees there, which does not result in good canopy. At least 6' should be required to address low canopy in East Portland. Finally, in talking to East Portland residents, what has been the response to this project?
  - Denver: I appreciate the need to increase space for street trees as we rethink how streets are built in East Portland.
- Catherine thanked Bill and Denver for attending, and particularly for coming together. It is an enormous benefit to have both BPS and PBOT available to answer questions given the connection between housing and transportation.

#### **Policy Committee Update – Daniel Newberry, Policy Committee**

- The comment deadline for Better Housing by Design is June 25th at 5pm.
- East Portland has narrow sidewalks with limited space for trees.
- The UFC wants to ask BPS/PBOT to coordinate on how they address situations where there is no 10-foot setback and limited planting strip space – this results in no space for trees. Particularly an issue in low-income/low-canopy issue
- Anjeanette: this is a pivotal moment and it will be important to connect with our street teams to help advocate for these issues.
- The UFC held a discussion on which issues to express support for in the comment letter:
  - Support the revisions to the transfer of development rights
    - Worth repeating the need to make it valuable so it is utilized in favor of preserving more trees.
  - Support limitations on impervious surfaces
    - There are currently no limits on impervious surfaces, except in certain overlay zones.
  - Support the limitation on asphalt.
  - Support the outdoor spaces, interior courtyards, etc.
  - Support creating new pedestrian paths.
  - Supportive of the 25% rear setback.
  - Support undulating building facades and setback.
- Damon: Motion to authorize the Policy Committee to draft and submit a letter addressing the issues discussed.
  - Megan: seconded the motion.
  - The motion passed unanimously.
- Gregg closed the meeting by providing a brief Heritage Tree Committee update:
  - The committee has 22 nominated trees and has held two, full-day tours. The North and Northwest tour resulted in a likely six new Heritage Trees and four Trees of Merit. The committee also toured Southwest and Northwest, with four new Heritage Trees and one Tree of Merit identified. The committee will tour 15 nominated trees in the Southeast next.

*Meeting adjourned at Noon.*