



URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

December 20, 2018

City Hall, Lovejoy Room

Commission Members present: Chair Vivek Shandas, Vice Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Anjeanette Brown, Gregg Everhart, Brian French Megan Van de Mark, Daniel Newberry, Damon Schrosk, Thuy Tu

Commission Members absent: Lorena Nascimento

Urban Forestry staff present: Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Brian Landoe, Budget & Program Analyst

City staff present: Tony Garcia, City Attorney's Office

Public Comments

- Dayne Galash, an arborist with Treecology, provided a public comment concerning street tree planting requirements.
 - Mr. Galash expressed concern that there is disconnect between the species approved to plant as street trees, and the nursery availability of those species at the required caliper size. The availability of stock at the minimum allowable caliper size is a limiting factor in the diversity of available street tree species.
 - Mr. Galash appreciates the need for minimum size requirements to avoid substandard trees being planted. However, the current standards limit the ability to plant a diver range of species.
- Jenn Cairo: The standards that the City has are consistent with the standards of other municipalities in the region and represent established best practices.
- Catherine Mushel: If finding appropriate stock is challenge, why doesn't the City purchase trees while they are still growing so they can be planted when at full size?
 - Jenn: "Grow contracts" is something Urban Forestry has encouraged BES and Friends of Trees to establish in order to procure the desired species at the required size. Our understanding is they do have some contracts in place. It is a very common practice in municipal forestry. Additionally, Urban Forestry will be looking at establishing grow contracts for its new planting program.

City Forester Report

- Development in the city is on the decline, which in turn means less revenue from development permitting. Urban Forestry's add package last year which created nine additional positions was funded by development permit fee increases. Several positions will not be filled at this time due to revenue not meeting projections.

Urban Forestry Commission

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- Title 11 requires Urban Forestry to submit an annual report on the two revenue and expenses of the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund and the Urban Forestry Fund. Those reports are complete and will be submitted to City Council soon.
- Related to the use of those funds, Urban Forestry is considering amendments to section of code which regulates the use of those funds. The amendments will be brought to the Urban Forestry Commission at a public hearing in the near future.
- The Street Tree Task Force should convene in February 2019. The contracts for the technical advisory and facilitator are in process.
 - Catherine: Is the Street Tree Task Force being run out of PBOT or Parks?
 - Jenn: Parks is leading the Street Tree Task Force, and PBOT and BES are supportive and will be involved. Other infrastructure bureaus will likely be involved as well.

FY 20 Budget Update

- Urban Forestry has experienced reductions in general fund over the last few years. Those reductions have been largely replaced by either fee increases or new interagency revenue (e.g. UF is now billing PBOT for the cost of clearing tree emergencies in the right-of-way). Permit and interagency revenue is more volatile and less reliable than general fund. This reduction in stable general fund support presents long-term challenges for Urban Forestry.
- Daniel: Given that UF's general fund has been replaced with cost-recovery revenue, how well does the work performed to secure that revenue align with the priorities of the Urban Forestry program?
 - Jenn: They are fairly closely aligned. For example, the add package last year primarily supported increased service to development permitting by hiring more staff and shifting responsibilities from Tree Inspectors who issue permits to Arborists.
- The mayor has directed all general fund bureaus to submit cut packages totaling 1% of general fund allocation. Urban Forestry is primarily focusing on potential realignments with no staff reductions.
- The City is also implementing a new budget development process which tasks bureau with drafting program offers describing the purpose and outcome of their funded activities. Draft program offers for Urban Forestry's three programs (Tree Maintenance, Permitting & Regulation, and Science & Outreach) are included in the meeting packets.
- Lorena Nascimento is the Urban Forestry Commission's representative on the PP&R Budget Advisory Committee. Her notes from the past meeting are included in the meeting packets.
- The Budget Advisory Committee's program priorities are included as well.
- For this exercise, UF is requesting feedback on program offers.
- The Commission discussed Urban Forestry's level of service at current resource levels and the various services not being offered, such as lack of tree planting compliance which results in 2,000 trees not being planted each year.
- The Commission also discussed whether PP&R is the appropriate bureau to house Urban Forestry.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30am.