



URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2019

City Hall, Lovejoy Room

Commission Members present: Chair Vivek Shandas, Vice Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Anjeanette Brown, Gregg Everhart, Megan Van de Mark, Lorena Nascimento, Daniel Newberry, Bruce Nelson, Damon Schrosk

Commission Members absent: Brian French, Thuy Tu

Urban Forestry staff present: Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Brian Landoe, Budget & Program Analyst; Angie DiSalvo, Outreach & Science Supervisor

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

Public Hearing - Vivek Shandas, UFC Chair

- Angie DiSalvo briefed the UFC on the proposed amendments to Title 11.
 - Remove the requirement that the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund be spent within the watershed from which payments are received.
 - Extend the timeframe for which the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund can be spent to establish trees from two to five years.
- The watershed requirement has unintended consequences which can perpetuate current inequities in the distribution of Portland's urban canopy.
 - The 2017 City Auditor report stated a similar concern and recommended removing the watershed requirement.
- The planting strategy focuses on low-income and low-canopy areas, which covers three of the four watersheds.
- Removing the watershed requirement also removes added layers of administration and reporting.
- UFC members provided comments on the proposed amendments:
 - The Commission expressed support for the amendments and recommended increasing the fee-in-lieu to capture additional establishment costs.
 - There was concern that while the intent of removing the watershed requirement is to pursue equitable distribution of the forest, it could do the opposite. Removing the requirement could result in the fund being spent in high-canopy areas in the future.
 - The planting focus should be on low-canopy areas in general, not just low canopy and low-income.
 - Angie noted that the Urban Forest Management Plan and the planting strategy guide the planting program and are adaptable to meet future needs. The code is more static and we wouldn't want to enshrine limitations to restrict future planting activity.
 - The Commission discussed adding guidance to the code that would restrict spending the TPPF in low-canopy areas only.

Urban Forestry Commission

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- Members of the Commission inquired about the outcomes of the Yard Tree Giveaway
 - Angie responded that UF staff visited every property that received a tree to follow up on planting, monitoring, etc. In the first year, 66% were planted, 10% had no access, remaining trees were not planted on the property.
- In order to be clear that the intent of Title 11 is to achieve equitable distribution of the urban canopy across all neighborhoods, the Commission recommended adding and intend to achieve” before “equitable distribution” to Title 11.15.010.A.
- Damon: Motion to support amending Title 11 to allow the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund to be used for establishment and maintenance for up to five years.
 - Barbara seconded the motion.
 - Yay: Vivek Shandas, Barbara Hollenbeck, Anjeanette Brown, Gregg Everhart, Megan Van de Mark, Lorena Nascimento, Daniel Newberry, Bruce Nelson, Damon Schrosk
 - Nay: None
- Barbara: Motion to support removing the watershed requirement while inserting “and intend to achieve” before “Equitable distribution”
 - Anjeanette seconded the motion
 - Yay: Vivek Shandas, Barbara Hollenbeck, Anjeanette Brown, Gregg Everhart, Megan Van de Mark, Lorena Nascimento, Daniel Newberry, Bruce Nelson, Damon Schrosk
 - Nay: None

Workshop Recap – Vivek Shandas, UFC Chair

- Vivek provided an overview of the February workshop and reviewed the priorities for 2019 established by the Commission.
- Barbara advised that determining a committee structure to meet the current needs of the Commission is an ongoing process, rather than a one-time decision.
- Daniel recommended that the Street Tree Task Force be included in the priorities list.
- Gregg emphasized the need to prioritize recruitment of new UFC members.
 - Brian L. will share the UFC rotation list with the Commission.

Forestry Report – Jenn Cairo, City Forester

- Bruce Nelson was introduced as the newest member of the Urban Forestry Commission.
- Two new Urban Forestry staff members were also introduced.
 - Mariano Masolo joins UF as a Tree Inspector.
 - Clare Carney joins UF as a Botanic Specialist I.
- Due to the need to focus on PP&R’s challenging budget process, the start of the Street Tree Task Force has been pushed to June 2019.
- Jenn provided an update on the PP&R budget for fiscal year 2019-20, including proposed reductions to close the bureau’s \$6 million gap.
- The Commission offered several cost saving recommendations:
 - Reducing mowing under trees would reduce costs and protect trees from accidental damage.
 - Explore how the City’s new Clean Energy Fund could be utilized to meet Urban Forestry program goals.
- Gregg asked if the reduction of a City Planner position would impact the Urban Forestry Management Plan update or the Street Tree Task Force.
 - Jenn responded that those projects are not in planning group’s current work plan.
- Barbara asked if the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund were to be used for conservation easements, would that program fall under this budget?
 - Jenn responded that UF does not currently have plans for a conservation easement program.

Policy Committee Update – Daniel Newberry, Policy Committee Chair

- Bureau of Development Services Director Rebecca Esau responded to the Commission’s request for data related to the “large tree amendment” and offered to have BDS staff attend the June meeting to brief the Commission.
 - The Commission will respond and request neighborhood data be included in the report from BDS.
- The Policy Committee expressed concern about the City policy which prohibits planting street trees in narrow planting strips.
 - The Commission encouraged Urban Forestry to explore ways to open up these strips for planting in order to expand canopy in those neighborhoods.
 - Streets 2035 is the best opportunity to identify and implement potential options, including expending the planting strip into the roadway and creating larger sidewalk cuts to bring the planting strip up to standard.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30am.