

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Weston Brinkley, Chair • Joanna Nelson de Flores, Vice-Chair
Tom Early • Megan Herzog • Craig Johnson
Sarah Rehder • Sandra Whiting • Andrew Zellers • Steve Zemke

The Urban Forestry Commission was established to advise the Mayor and City Council concerning the establishment of policy and regulations governing the protection, management, and conservation of trees and vegetation in the City of Seattle

March 7, 2018

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners

Joanna Nelson de Flores – Vice-chair
Tom Early
Megan Herzog
Craig Johnson
Sandra Whiting
Steve Zemke

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE

Guests

Dominic Barrera – Plant Amnesty

Public

Michael Oxman

Absent- Excused

Weston Brinkley – chair
Sarah Rehder
Andrew Zellers

NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at: <http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocs.htm>

Call to order

Joanna called the meeting to order.

Public comment

Michael Oxman – MHA – the draft EIS was defective. It didn’t portray any significant action to change 25.11 or 23.00. Our tree ordinance is scattered in many chapters in our SMC, and that’s a problem. It’s challenging to comply with it. Would like to see consolidation of the tree ordinance. The ordinance has been stalled. Hope that UFC work to move tree protection forward.

Approval of February 7 and February 14 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the February 7 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the February 14 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Plant Amnesty – Dominic Barrera (new Executive Director)

Dominic recently started in the Executive Director role. Met Cass Turnbull around the time she was working on saving Myers Parcels. He has been involved in the TreePAC.

Plant Amnesty was founded 30 years ago to stop senseless mutilation of trees and plants. The organization's main goal is to raise awareness of proper pruning. They offer classes and have a referral service for good arborists and gardeners. The third goal is to engender respect for plants. He is moving the organization to more policy advocacy.

He wants to focus on the update to Seattle tree ordinance. He favors consolidating the code. He submitted a letter to SDCI with recommendations including: require permits for tree removal on public and private land; Include no net loss of tree canopy; provide enough soil for trees to thrive; capture the true value of trees; valuation shouldn't just include the cost of replacing the tree but all the different benefits; include a performance bond; arborist registration with the City, etc. Sandra PdB requested a copy of the letter he sent to SDCI.

Invited the UFC to attend this year's Urban Forest Symposium which is taking place May 15. This year's topic is forming partnerships to support the urban forest.

UFC question: what's the scope of your policy work?

Answer: He has focused on issues impacting King County.

UFC question: Do you have staff?

Answer: Yes. Has two new staff members: volunteer coordinator and new office manager.

UFC question: what events are coming up?

Answer: Arborist day care is coming up on April 11. Arborists will be volunteer to prune trees at Georgetown Playfield. Young people (DIRT corps, Duwamish Valley Youth Corps will be there job shadowing arborists).

Sandra PdB will introduce Dominic to Jana Dilley, Trees for Seattle program manager. The UFC thinks there could be opportunities for collaboration between Trees for Neighborhoods and Plant Amnesty.

UFC question: are you planning to expand to other languages?

Answer: yes. Wants to start with Vietnamese.

Dominic has also been thinking about increasing awareness of the most recent canopy cover assessment the City did. Would like to find ways to have canopy consistently measured. This will be very important to see how we are doing in accomplishing our goals.

UFC comment: Has always appreciated the niche work Plant Amnesty does with tree advocacy.

Plant Amnesty would also certify arborists. They require a referral from a current Plant Amnesty certified arborist and then they are evaluated by a panel of arborists. They would do this certification on top of ISA certification and more focused on consistency of how they do the work.

MHA Ordinance review and discussion

Steve shared the information he put together. The 180-page ordinance is on a schedule to be approved in July. Is currently out for public comment. Steve recommended repeating the recommendations the UFC has provided in the past:

- Track tree canopy removal per project. Track significant tree removals, exceptional tree removals and removed canopy coverage, in square feet, as part of a complete application.
- Provide a fee-in-lieu option for projects unable to replace trees equal to the number of trees and amount of canopy removed by a project.

Would be useful to specify trees 6" and larger. The maintenance bond makes sense. Concern about tracking tree canopy removal by project might not be as useful and might undermine regular Canopy Cover Assessments.

The UFC discussed.

Three main points to include in a letter are:

- Tracking removal of trees 6" and larger.
- Provide a fee-in-lieu option.
 - o Establish replacement ratios?
- Establish a maintenance bond to ensure survival of new and retained trees for five years.

The question is, do we want to weigh in on the Green Factor piece as well?

Tom will provide language on the maintenance bond. Get the draft letter started at the next meeting. Sandra W and Craig will work on a draft for discussion in April and then will back to wrap it up in May.

2018 Work Plan – review continues

Commissioners will continue to review and express interest in leading work plan items.

ACTION: A motion to approve the 2018 work plan as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Public comment

Michael Oxman – there is a lot of work that get done around Christmas time when inspectors are gone. Next to Kubota Gardens there was work done on a site. The developer cleared the majority of the site removing 61 trees. It would be very good to require installation of protective fencing from project approval to permit application. Adding several months to tree protection would make a big difference. He has three complaints on three properties on the subdivision next to Kubota Gardens. For example, some of the mitigation trees are planted within 1 foot of the property line. Michael will share with Sandra PdB some of those letters to share with the Commission.

New Business

Adjourn

Joanna adjourned the meeting.

Public input:

None