

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

John Floberg, Chair • John Small, Vice-Chair
Gordon Bradley • Tom Early • Leif Fixen • Matt Mega • Jeff Reibman • Erik Rundell • Peg Staeheli

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

January 9, 2013

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower Room 2750
700 5th Avenue, Seattle
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Attending

Commissioners

John Floberg (JF) - chair
Tom Early (TE)
Leif Fixen (LF)

Matt Mega (MM)
Jeff Reibman (JR)
Erik Rundell (ER)
Peg Staeheli (PS)

Absent- Excused

Gordon Bradley (GB)
John Small (JS) – vice-chair

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE
Phyllis Shulman (PSh) – CM Conlin’s Office
Meg Moorehead – Council Central Staff
Brennon Staley (BS) - DPD

Guests:

CM Richard Conlin

Public

Steve Zemke
John Dixon
Rich Ellison
Michael Oxman

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

John Floberg is the new UFC chair and he called to order.

Approval of December 5 and December 12, 2012 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the December 5 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the December 12 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

Urban forestry planning and regulation working session – Urban Forest Management Plan and DPD’s tree regulations proposal (See document posted on the UFC website)

SPdB – changes to the agenda and introduced Phyllis.

PSh – Would like to walk the group through the ideas she has on urban forestry. Has been reading all public comment, doing research on the issue, programs on other cities, Background is in natural resources. Want to make sure the plan provides the policy direction. Creative thinking and would like to hear from UFC.

General cultural orientation is towards ownership of trees, and trees as accounting units. Embedded are values that don't necessarily match the attitude of ownership. My tree, my yard.

Concepts around ownership. We cut one tree, let's plant two. Trees bound by property lines. Individual entities and not necessarily as they impact other trees or the community. Monitoring on the short-run. Management units based on land use.

Stewardship framework/ecological framework. Develop principles based on natural living systems. What does it take to have healthy trees. Shift attitudes, government is not able to fully control or buy ourselves out of a situation. Community stewardship that includes government, develop value base, create more stewardship of trees. Long-term regeneration of the UF ecology. Framework looks at what are the needs of trees. Have conditions in place for health. Enhancing and replacing ecosystems services. Replace those services with our policies (take a mature fir and replace it with a small Japanese maple). Shift policy to create community stewardship for the long haul. Regulatory piece is just one piece of the puzzle. Ecology of place and ability to connect ecological practices with the right locations. Focus tree planting to riparian corridors and areas that need support for drainage.

1. More of what is in place is more on the accounting model. Shift to stewardship model. See trees as part of the commons and develop strategies to replace essential ecological services. Title UFMP, shift to Urban Forest Stewardship Plan.
2. What's our theory of change. We are trying to change environment. Is it a technical problem or an adaptive challenge. Be more explicit about why trees are important. Lack of clarity around what is the theory of change. Technical problem lends itself to technical solutions. Adaptive challenges are met with behavior change. Need to support a shift in people's views and actions. Emphasize skill building, outreach, and stewardship bldg.
3. Not grounded on ecological principles. Why planting 2 or 4 trees for every one tree. Based more our strategies on ecological principles and better articulate them in the plan. Actions to reflect a more systems orientation. Ecological based time horizon based on how we renew and replace ecological services. Align with the ecological conditions that sustain trees. We want to clearly id in the plan the systems conditions that support healthy trees. Diversity of species, proper maintenance, placement in appropriate places. Look at regeneration. How do we better articulate the ecological condition requirements. Public comment strives for a more ecological approach.
4. Goals and objectives can be consolidated and made more explicit. Under stewardship model, there are some ideas to articulate regeneration, increase capacity for stewardship of trees, develop programs that enhance and deepen stewardship.
5. Priorities are dispersed and need to be better expressed in a hierarchy. Preserve and maintain mid-large size trees, maximize health of existing trees (invasive removal and proper pruning), plant trees that provide the greatest benefits including food. Replacement that will provide in

the long-run similar services. Provide essential wildlife services. Articulate these priorities up front in the plan.

6. Current draft of the planned tree regulations – what might an ecological –based framework looks like. Where in the City can we support the larger trees, for example allow for subdivisions in areas of town that have larger trees. It might be appropriate to plant more trees in areas that need erosion control and additional drainage needed. How do we match our tree planting efforts with those needed benefits? Where are some of the really big trees, if a large tree has to be cut down, where else in the city could it be planted or where within the neighborhood... maybe there are view corridors where planting big trees are going to pose a problem, so why focus on planting there? Start with the watersheds maps and divide the city up in eco-hoods (smaller ecological system units big enough to provide identity but small enough that neighborhoods can identify with). ID where in the eco-hood where are groves, greenways, exceptional trees, what parks are there, where is drainage needed? Where are important trees we want to protect.
7. Structure tree regulations based on the eco-hood. Where in the eco-hood can we replant trees as replacement when some trees have to be cut down. Neighborhood based approach. Where we have competing interests (industrial use, solar access, gardens) we provide more flexibility and balance uses better. Merge ecological concept with stewardship opportunities. Develop opportunities for people to be involved. Trees in my yard are part of this eco-hood and the watershed system.
8. ID what entities can most appropriately do certain activities. Develop stewardship.
9. Possibility to creatively explore additional resources for implementation of tree policies and programs. When elected clearly understand priorities they make adequate budget decisions. Having the understanding of the priorities will support funding for those programs that support them. Plan to help provide rationale for decision makers. City-wide programs to support our objectives (i.e. Xmas trees that get planted at the end of the season).

Next steps, have a conversation to hear UFC ideas. What it means for the plan would be to use the existing plan and describe orientation, expand on goals and priorities. Then see what areas don't fit anymore and adjust them. Can be done in the next few months. Then you can go into the ordinances and see if they are aligned with the UFSP.

Discussion:

JF – very impressive. In research have you see other cities adopt the eco-hood approach?

PSh – have not seen it but didn't do a lot of research. Some have done Comp Plan based on watersheds.

JF – Seattle has watershed approach with Hood Canal, Lake WA

PSh – city has some watersheds

JR – watershed are an interesting organizational structure. Challenges for mitigation on site vs. off-site is equity. Would be interesting to see how other forces (like reLeaf) can influence this. More affluent neighborhoods already have higher canopy cover. How much of this is UFMP and how much is this about other organizations that would need to coordinate.

PSh – how to integrate and coordinate. A whole other level of coordination. It's a concept, how to create a more ecological oriented structure that people can identify with.

JR – how would we use the UFMP to direct the various efforts in that way. To compel departments to behave in the way we want. How do we do it?

PSh- Local food action initiative. City departments aligned their efforts within that effort. Then figure out the coordination piece. Mission of different depts. Have changed to better adapt. The current UFMP doesn't currently clearly articulate the priorities that can direct depts. Actions.

RConlin – give policy guidance to departments. If Executive and Council are aligned, then departments align. Put funding to make things happen. More clearly state that there are areas that need money and this is a way to get things started.

JF – how do you kick start this. Can describe a priority but what are the incentives for property owners to do the right thing.

JR – the Ped master plan did a very good job of layering and created a mpa that helped decision making. We can't ignore underlying zoning. Eco-districts would add another layer, we could compose various layers to figure out what should be happening in a particular location.

Peg – What's being described is that. Wondering if there is a way to keep things moving forward. Q1 is already over. I'm wondering if there is a way to keep things moving. This is really good, I don't see it as different. Maybe in the section of the action plan we could bring that out. 2013 element that rolls because it needs work. The GIS approach can be done by city staff, but you'd have to get some budget attached to that. We would test the layers the way we did that in the Ped Master Plan. WE would get hot spots and re-calibrate. That might be a 2013 task to take this and reform it and work it. That would allow the urban forest plan to start moving forward and bring people along and insert all of this right in. Not quite sure on the dollars, but it's doable. Then you can start working on the details and keep things moving.

JF – are you saying that the frame of the UF plan needs tweaking so that the outcome is more stewardship?

PSh- more ecological based.

JF – more an expansion of something that is narrow.

PSh – It's about the framework and clarity of ecological and more stewardship focus. The theory of change is that unless we have a more common understanding of the value of trees, in the long term we are limited in the way we accomplish our goals. See the UF as part of the commons. Be more clear on the priorities, principles and goals. Main goal 30% canopy cover goal, doesn't tell me that big trees is more important and preserving them is more important than planting new trees.

JF – you are not suggesting that the canopy cover shouldn't be used but that it should say more.

PSh – provide a strong framework for approaches. Outreach becomes an essential element of tree protection program. Funding is not discrete and separate but pulled together. We've talked about the timeframe and re-tool and re-frame part of it. Part of it might not be relevant anymore. RE-framing.

LF – Not de-emphasizing quantitative goals but providing reasons of why they are important and prioritizing.

MM – a lot to digest. A lot of this we've thought about. 30% goal is easier. The rest is more complex it takes a lot of money and activity. What regulation does in the city is try as much as possible not to create winners and losers. I'm worried that when we do the ecosystem approach and corridors, we'll need more regulation. If someone has a grove spanning 3-4 properties, creates conflict. If I live in a riparian corridor and can't cut a large tree. We have to be careful about setting out winners and losers. You are talking about the community and getting people energized, we can't lose the regulatory approach. There is a balance. Whenever I see commons it's always someone else that takes care of that, the City will need to take a more active role to make sure they are protected. Intimate community based discussion and not coming from the City.

PSh – It is a balance between regulations and stewardship. What are the kinds of things we need to do that replaced ecosystems services.

JR – riparian corridor. We have already regulated it. That tree is already protected. Right?

PSh – there are going to be ecological impacts. WE won't be able to re-do the system and that's the impact of human impacts. What are our goals as a city to protect as much as we can the UF. Repair and restore over time. Maintain the big picture view.

MM – outreach is the key.

PSh – have flexibility within the system to replace ecosystem values and services.

JF – I'm more comfortable about talking about incentive programs. Less comfortable thinking about implications for regulations and how that might play out. Simplicity is important, as we look at the more nuanced approach looking at canopy, soil, tree architecture, species, the more complex it becomes. We have to think about what we've been through in the context of what

TE – This would add longevity to the plan.

MM – the plan has age, diversity and structure. We just didn't incorporate the mechanisms which bring about this.

JR – be more specific on what are the goals and why those are the goals. Mechanisms will come down to the departments and what they do on the round.

Erik – like stewardship. Tracking by unit is easier to track and evaluate to evaluate goals. Not sure how to measure thing in the stewardship approach.

LF – it's important to be able to say we are gaining trees at the end of the year.

JF – we are not saying we won't have a canopy cover goal. But that is more narrow.

PSh – create a more articulated and clear direction of priorities and principles. It is different to take accounting approach vs. ecological. It's not about getting rid of accounting but it's embedded within the ecological system. Still have the ability to monitor. Want to plant new trees but also have the conditions

for health of those trees. The win is that we articulated the conditions for health, set them up as much as we can, and hope they'll sustain themselves in the future.

Peg – I look at this. I think we are more in alignment. Back to next steps, the metric issue on the accounting, it's using the same counting but use both, reporting it in multiple ways. That can be done. I'm not seeing a conflict. From a step standpoint. I'm a doer, I use the ordinance, they allow us to have certainty in the world of urban planning. The last couple of years have been very challenging. We have to move a couple of things forward. Guide the way when we move fwd with a development project. The testing has been mushy lately, they know there is a new ordinance but there isn't so people are not sure what to use. SDOT has gotten held up. I'm nervous to say, let's wait. It would be nice to move to some other plans we have in our workplan. Let's see what we can do with this. Reorg the early stuff. That can be done in Q1 and do the tweak and insert. But if we take on the whole thing we are talking a whole year. As a community I would want to know what that means for me.

PSh – that wouldn't be in the plan. That was more as an illustration. After the plan then we move to implementation.

JF – 2-3 mo. Changes would be made involving the UFC and the IDT and by Earth Day have the plan done. The specifics of implementation can be continued by looking at where are they in alignment with the new orientation.

Peg – just to be practical I think the layered analysis is the next step after re-wording the plan. Is there a possibility in this to move forward?

Richard – WE are planning on moving the SDOT ordinance in the next couple of months in Q1. Some changes to that piece. Move that, then the urban forestry plan, then DPD ordinance. I would like to do everything in the spring.

Peg – I see impacting ordinance for DPD.

Brennon – June to 2014 to be ready with his piece.

Peg – analysis has to be done first. Might have to have another interim ordinance that fixes the issues with the existing interim ordinance.

PSh – we are looking at more comments and ideas with the DPD work.

MM – We've made great strides on the DPD piece.

PSh – next steps with SDOT is to maybe reflect some of the stewardship language in there. .

CM Conlin – appreciate everyone's willingness to do this good work.

PSh – appreciate everyone considering. Deep valuing of the work we are trying to achieve. Develop the rationale for current and future decision makers.

Peg – one more question. Where does this fit in the context of the Neighborhood plans and the comp plan.

BS – comprehensive plan is a state requirement that looks at the built environment. High level policy not meant to be specific. Neighborhood plans are updated infrequently, very time-intensive process, guided by what neighborhoods are interested in. They are meant to provide specific goals for the community to implement city-wide goals.

Peg – we need to link with the comp Plan efforts for them to understand this. It has to be mentioned . On neighborhood plan basis I think that there are plan updates going on now. We need to be aware of that in the work plan. There should be some alignment – the UFMP might have to say that the neighborhood plans say something that links to the new approach.

JR – don't know how much guidance is given during neighborhood plan updates.

JF- have a chart of all the plans that have to be connected.

PSh – when the plan is complete, then you go look at what's in the comp plan and see if there is anything that we might want to change there.

JF – thank you for taking on to put all of this together.

Public comment:

SZ - What Phyllis is proposing is good. It's a realization that the couple of things you are measuring is at macro level (30% canopy) that are subject to different interpretation and can be accomplished in different ways. Micro-level habitat, trees (conifers vs. deciduous, native vs. exotic). It's a question of sustainability vs. un-sustainability. Why do you want to sustain a level of canopy, sub-values when it comes to different trees, habitat value, effects on stormwater, air, size at maturity, how long does it live? Is the UF system we are looking at sustainable. Eco-restoration, what do you want in the city in terms of the value the UF is providing. What parameter can you put out there and look at both macro and micro values. Look at the eco-system values and lay them out clearly, purify air, reduce stormwater runoff, etc. What can we do to sustain and enhance what we have. What's possible. Discussion is very good.

John Dixon – Mid 80s bought a house in N Seattle because of the native over-story. Started taking out the lawn. Planted 20 trees and this bird is our Northern flicker. To address situation in the neighborhood adopted a 20 acre wetland. Have planted 300 native conifers and 200 broadleaf. Started assessing neighborhood around wetland, started seeing healthy trees being cut down. You get a sense of what 's happening. We are creating an island effect with our parks. We might lose of so much over-story for lack of regulation, in 50 years it's going to be an island. We need to have a holistic approach and explain the ecological value of the trees and set an overarching regulatory structure that the community values trees. If we need a permit to build a deck we should require a permit to cut down trees.

Rich Ellison – Ecological matrix. As we create isolated protection areas in different areas of the City. Sacrifice zones, sacrificing Seattle in order to preserve outside areas. How do we allow development to proceed while protecting the trees we have. Need carrot and stick approach. Trusting the City to educate the community is not being effective enough, there needs to be a strong regulatory approach paired up with education efforts. Help preserve mid- and large trees. We want the city to be livable in 50 years. Preserve what we have now and plant for the future. There has to be a means to preserve the best trees in every community even if they don't fulfill a threshold.

Michael Oxman – Fred Mayer on 85th and Greenwood. Covenant written in the deed and has to carryover to the property owner. Trees are under attack. Wrote a letter to DPD . Bill Ames is going to go

out there and look at the destruction. There is no construction fence around drip line of trees. There is no project arborist. Soil shouldn't be stock piled under drip line. It's all wrong, the only person who won was the backhoe operator. These are not street trees. Comp Plan establishes 40% as canopy cover goal and it's incompatible with UFMP which sets 30% as a goal. Staff failure to measure drip line of trees. We measure trees as sticks we are not looked at the drip line of trees removed. SDOT proposal allows plumbers to prune street trees.

Adjourn

Community input:

From: Michael Oxman [mailto:michaeloxman@comcast.net]

Sent: Friday, January 11, 2013 11:30 AM

To: Pinto_de_Bader, Sandra

Subject: Comment to UFC Jan 2013

Hi Sandra,

Here is the front side of the comment letter. The back side contains the email chain & 3 photos. Thanks for posting this to the minutes.

Michael Oxman

Comment to Seattle Urban Forestry Commission by Michael Oxman 1-9-2013

In 2001, a rule was made by the planning department to require that exceptional trees be preserved during development (view it at: <http://www.seattle.gov/dclu/codes/dr/DR2001-6.pdf>).

If they possess certain qualities, such as size or rareness, a building permit can require they be retained by landscaping beds in a setback.

A tree inventory of these exceptional specimens could allow us to measure the cumulative value of our forest, and track maintenance needs. Where are these special trees in our town?

Implementing the urban forestry management plan involves hiring more arborists to assess tree health, and direct pruning crews to improve structural stability of the urban forest. The city arborist already has several crews in the field, but our trees are growing faster than our ability keep up and trim them up with a chainsaw haircut.

Compare Seattle with some cities of comparable size, such as Milwaukee, that has allocated enough funding to prune each publicly owned tree every 10 years. Responsible tree owners know that no more than a decade should pass before their trees are checked and looked after by a professional arborist. Citizens should expect their city government to attend to all trees in parks, right of ways, and public building landscapes on a reasonable schedule.

Those taxpayers with green thumbs recognize an unkempt tree when they see one, and frequently call with their concerns to the city arborists hotline, 364-8733 (TREE), but the workload for the tree crews is backed up. Now that the sustainability benefits of the green infrastructure are being recognized, the value of proper tree maintenance will save money by more efficient, frequent pruning that corrects growth defects before they lead to wood decay.

The people also expect reasonable laws preventing unnecessary tree removal during construction. Seattleites climbed trees as kids, and they expect that there should be some left for their kids to climb in.

A meaningful report of our current tree maintenance capabilities should be included in a working computerized inventory to allow an assessment of how many crews we should hire. It is a good investment to adequately groom the urban forest, which leads to an extension of tree lifespans. It is our older trees that give us the most of the shade, beauty and ecological benefits provided by the forest, such as stormwater management. It is these older trees that can be strengthened by pruning to withstand winter storms. If we let our trees go untended, why is it a big shock when one crashes down? Why pay settlements for litigation, when we could use the money for preventive tree surgery.

The monitoring by the city of elm trees on private lots, involves control of a disease that can spread, unless standing dead infected trees are not removed promptly. Many of the American Elms in Seattle are of an extra large size, and we can easily see their contribution to the canopy overhead. Because we want these large elms to persist in providing their graces, we have implemented an expensive immunization program.

In the case of the Greenwood Bog, the poor drainage has encouraged the growth of riparian species such as Aspen, Yew and Sitka Spruce. These are 3 types of trees included on the rare species list, which the rule states, must be spared from the bulldozer during development. The parking area of the shopping center was designed to occupy the wetland where the Aspen grove is located. Now that it is known they are on the rare species list, another place will have to be found for the parking lot.

Arboreally yours,

Michael Oxman

From: Michael Oxman [mailto:michaeloxman@comcast.net]
Sent: Friday, January 11, 2013 11:24 AM
To: Pinto_de_Bader, Sandra
Subject: Fw: 100 NW 85th St - Root Protection

From: [Ames, Bill](#)
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2013 2:20 PM
To: [Michael Oxman](#)
Subject: RE: 100 NW 85th St - Root Protection

WHOA! I'll be out there tomorrow!
Bill

From: Michael Oxman [<mailto:michaeloxman@comcast.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2013 1:36 PM
To: Ames, Bill
Subject: Re: 100 NW 85th St - Root Protection

At the Fred Meyer remodel at 85th & Greenwood, an irrigation trench was dug yesterday.

No arborist supervision,
no dripline fence required,

no threshold of 2" diameter roots being exposed requiring arborist supervision,
soil stockpiling allowed within dripline (which requires a backhoe to remove),
no requirement of hand work within dripline,
no wrapping with burlap & moistening roots in trench left exposed overnight,
no clean pruning of shattered roots.

A complaint as been lodged with DPD.

----- Original Message -----

From: [Ames, Bill](#)
To: [Michael Oxman](#)
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2013 1:28 PM
Subject: FW: 100 NW 85th St - Root Protection

Hi Michael,

Thanks for your observation at Fred Myer. Please see below.
Bill

From: Patrick Barnum [<mailto:patrick.barnum@deacon.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2013 7:47 AM
To: Ames, Bill
Cc: McCandlish, Mike; Andrew Falaniko; Frank Falaniko
Subject: RE: 100 NW 85th St - Root Protection

Thanks, Bill. I will make sure this happens immediately. See you tomorrow.

Regards,

Patrick Barnum

Project Engineer, S.D. Deacon Corp. of Washington
Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: Ames, Bill [<mailto:Bill.Ames@seattle.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2013 7:34 AM
To: Patrick Barnum
Cc: McCandlish, Mike
Subject: 100 NW 85th St - Root Protection

Hi Patrick,

For the Douglas firs on the back side of the store, the following should happen:

- Exposed roots should be cleanly cut—loppers should do it.

- If the soil face will continue to be exposed, it should be covered with burlap or other material so that the soil and fine roots do not dry out (yes, the fine roots can die being exposed to air even if it is raining. This should happen ASAP.
- As soon as the irrigation is complete, these areas should be back-filled ASAP.
- IMPORTANT—further grading around the root zones of the Douglas firs needs to be held to a minimum.

I'll be out tomorrow, Weds. In the meantime, please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Bill Ames
Forester
Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
phone: 206/684-5693
fax: 206/615-0899
www.seattle.gov/transportation/forestry.htm

ISA Certified Arborist #0313A/Certified Tree Risk Assessor #288



Fw: 100 NW 85th St - Root Protection

[VIEW SLIDE SHOW](#) [DOWNLOAD ALL](#)

This album has 3 photos and will be available on SkyDrive until 4/11/2013.

