

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

September 4, 2013

Meeting Notes

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

Attending

Commissioners

Matt Mega (MM) – acting chair
Tom Early (TE)
Leif Fixen (LF)
Erik Rundell (ER)
Peg Staeheli (PS)

Absent- Excused

John Small (JS) – vice-chair
John Floberg (JF) - chair
Gordon Bradley (GB)
Jeff Reibman (JR)

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE
Brennon Staley (BS) - DPD

Public

Mary Fleck
Stephen Schreck
Jim Snell
Steve Zemke

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

Matt will act as chair in the absence of John Floberg and John Small.

Public comment

Jim Snell – might want to wait until next week when more members are present. I might leave some pictures with you to distribute to the members. They have to do with very improper cutting for view in ECA. Mark currently has exceptions but we have to follow DPD requirements. Those have been violated. I think supervision is very poor. The combination of years of complaints by three neighbors has gone ignored. Even with Mayor's Office. They said there would be a moratorium. The UFC completed their advice on pruning for views. Your recommendation got me interested again. Parks has used this particular case to show their good work, which is not the case. This is a very important case that you should be using to get Parks to comply with neighborhood complaints and ECA requirements as established by DPD.

The address of the property is 3333 East Terrace.

Sandra to scan and send to Commissioners and include in notes.

Have presented this problem to Parks Board twice.

Stephen – would like to get UFC bylaws.

Sandra – they are available in the UFC website.

Steve Z – two issues. Ingraham HS trees. They have planted trees and have gator bags but they are not using them. The trees are dying. Probably about half the trees are dying.

Second issue is N 128th and W Meridian (1730 N 128th St/1732 N 128th). There is a property that is being subdivided. It points out to a significant problem with tree protection during development. They dug for the sewer line right next to a large tree that has no protection and tore up the roots. There is nothing that says you need to protect the tree in the development documents. They are not saying that the developer needs to protect trees or instructions on how to do it. This shows that DPD is not about protecting trees.

Steve will send Sandra the photos to share with the Commission and include in the notes.

Mary – Genessee-Smith Neighborhood Council. Would like to know what the mission of the Commission is regarding green spaces. I see that a lot of what you are concerned about is canopy. SCL has notified us that they had surplus properties that have been slated for disposition. City Council has asked them to do a report on them. With the properties in West Seattle we have been choked with high density development. We would like to work with some people to find out how we can protect these green spaces that SCL is disposing of so that they don't get sold for development. I don't know if this is in your purview.

Matt – the mission of the UFC to advise Mayor and City Council on urban forestry issues. In a nut shell all issues that impact urban forest. This might also include open spaces. I would recommend you send something in writing. We try to stay away from individual projects and focus on higher level policy issues. The question I would have is where are these properties.

Mary – are stand-alone properties and several are heavily wooded.

Tom – SCL will make the argument of highest and best use. Depending on how they are situated might make a case for their development. The argument would be to potentially not develop and provide a buffer to adjacent areas.

Mary – they are surplus properties that were used as storage areas or sub-stations. The final report from City Council said that no organization came forward to provide alternative uses. Maybe the UFC could say that they could be kept as green spaces.

Matt – go back to the neighborhood plan and see what kind of plans for open areas are. Sometimes the community has come together and gotten the money to buy the property. Ask Parks for information and how often does the community purchase land for pocket parks.

Tom – might want to approach Seattle Parks Foundation.

Approval of August 7 and August 14 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the August 7 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the August 14 meeting notes as amended. The motion was seconded and carried.

DPD tree ordinance update - DPD

BS – I was asked to come in to give an update on the status on private tree regulation. In November 2012 CM Conlin asked DPD to put the project on hold while his office considered the UFSP. Just last month started working with Phyllis again. We are going to start moving forward with the approach and drafting an ordinance once we have looked at the issues. Put proposal in 2014. The concern was that the political season was going to get in the way of the schedule. We may not have the same mayor come November, so the exact timeline will depend on that. If there is a new administration they'll have to be brought to speed and understand the background. We are planning on bringing a proposal to UFC in early 2014.

Tom – is the new piece including private property tree protection?

BS – Yes, having a permit for 12” and above. Removal will be considered on a per-tree basis. There would be a tree credit system too.

Matt – are you going to give another chance to comment?

BS – yes. There will be opportunity for comment.

UFSP Resolution and Fiscal Note update - OSE

Tom – letter H – goes with funding strategies. Maybe reaching out to USDA to tailor iTree to the PNW?

Matt – when you go for fundraising like beers for trees would have to be more neighborhood specific. Where they can see the benefit they are getting.

Peg – we need to have a balance.

Peg – I don't see addressing maintenance. Had a high priority to escalate the SDOT

We believe an action agenda item specifically addressing much needed improvement in city-wide maintenance cycles. As the UFSP mentions on Table 6, WE proposed adding new action #P13 to say: Bring in maintenance cycles for all Seattle public trees to the industry standard of 5-7 years.

Re-number all P actions accordingly.

ACTION: A motion was made to approve the letter of recommendation as reviewed by Peg. The motion was seconded and carried

UFC/IDT annual meeting -OSE

Sandra – we had an initial meeting to set the agenda for the event yesterday. As usual, the purpose of the meeting is to give both groups an opportunity to interact and build a stronger relationship. We

thought that having a work objective for the meeting that would keep everyone engaged would be very good. Since the Commission has been working on analysis of departmental budgets; had a conversation with Phyllis around funding efforts for the UFSP and given Council's amendment to the Resolution, we thought that having an activity to come up with creative funding ideas for private sector support of urban forestry projects would address a very timely issue that departments have been tasked with. We thought that setting a fundraising goal of \$50K - \$100K to maybe fund a specific project from the Plan's Research Agenda in partnership with, for example, the University of Washington, could be a good objective for the meeting.

Tom – some of the items that are on the resolution to move as a priority are already underway such as SDOT work to produce a tool kit for making decisions when there are conflicts between trees and sidewalks.

Sandra – This action is actually asking for the same type of effort for all departments, not just SDOT.

Tom – That makes sense.

Peg – tree evaluation is usually not looked at in context of larger canopy goals. For example, siting of vaults. Or if you are putting in a street car that is going through a root zone, there is no much guidance there.

Tom – I don't know how much guidance would help.

Matt – that raises another question. There are so many pieces that are being prioritized. It's going to be like herding cats to move things forward. It's going to be an important role for the UFC to provide help.

Peg – you do make a valid point that we don't know if the tool would be helpful.

Erik – we talked about funding for reLeaf.

Tom – considering how many changes are going to happen to Seattle trees in the next year and a half. It might be good to talk about outreach because a lot of people are very confused with the regulations and they will be changing. We might want to talk about outreach as part of the funding conversation.

Matt – getting to the tree companies is going to be important so we make sure they understand the new rules. There will have to be a mechanism whereby the tree companies are going to be responsible.

Funding UFSP efforts - continues

Matt- sounds like we are going to be addressing that at the UFC/IDT joint meeting in October.

New business and announcements

Adjourn

Community input

Provided by Jim Snell on 9/4/13
to UFC

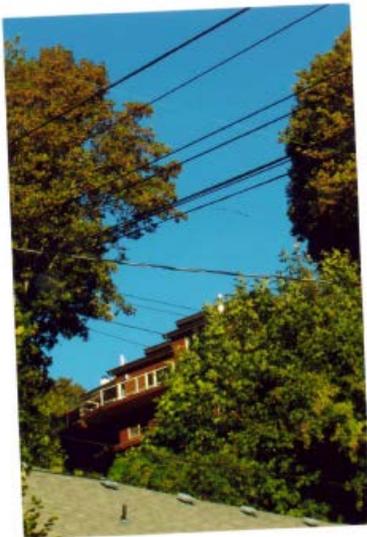
Photo description:
Illegal additional cutting beyond permit for Smiths (2008)



Photo description: Coppiced saplings. Requested by Smiths
(for Ms Broe) 2008



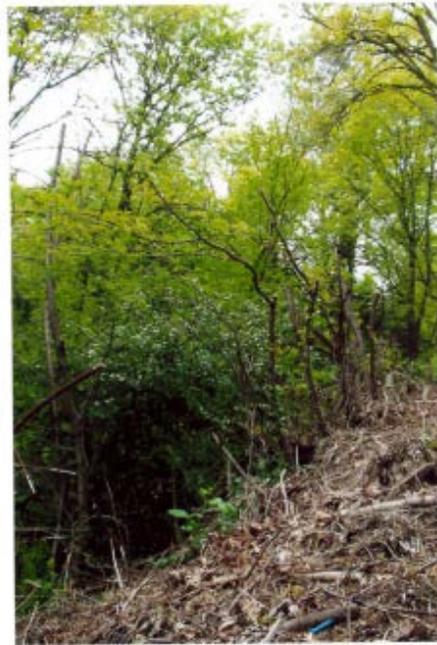
View of Broe house prior to cutting in 2011
Young trees beginning to encroach on view (2009)



Cut saplings in distance
Can be seen to have been
topped (May 2012)



More cut saplings - not easy
to distinguish (May 2012)



Brce house sliding (Spring 2012)

