

## 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*

**October 9, 2013**

### Meeting Notes

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

#### Attending

##### Commissioners

John Floberg (JF) - chair  
John Small (JS) – vice-chair  
Gordon Bradley (GB)  
Tom Early (TE)  
Leif Fixen (LF)  
Matt Mega (MM)  
Peg Staeheli (PS)

##### **Absent- Excused**

Erik Rundell (ER)  
Jeff Reibman (JR)

##### Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE  
Jana Dilley (JD) - reLeaf  
Mark Mead (MMe) - Parks  
Oliver Bazinet (OB) - Parks  
Michael Yadrick (MY) - Parks

##### Public

Steve Zemke  
Darcy Edmunds

**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

##### Chair report

JF – How many Commissioners were invigorated by the meeting with the IDT?

TE – I liked it.

JF – it was a good experience especially since it fits with the reality of the UFSP items that need funding. It was a good exercise. The ideas were very good, from the ‘Neighborhoodies’ to the chef competition. There was mention of having further conversations with Phyllis. We don’t have any meetings set up with CC yet. If any of those ideas are something you’d like to pursue.

I was looking at the work plan for 2013 we normally have elections for chair and co-chair in December, but we are going to move them to November. There are two open positions John F and John S. We are going to also vote on Erik’s re-appointment.

TE – exploring ideas that we could use as dual outreach if there are outreach efforts that could. Efforts that could dovetail nicely into the UFC’s work.

JF – connect the funding piece to the UFSP actions.

JF – ecosystems metrics position paper.

JS – we’ll look at it with Peg next time.

### **Approval of September 4 and September 11 meeting notes**

**ACTION: A motion was made to approve the September 4 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.**

**ACTION: A motion was made to approve the September 11 meeting notes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.**

### **Tree Ambassador update**

Jana – most of you are familiar with the reLeaf program and the Tree Ambassador as a component of it.

JF – reLeaf is an umbrella for Tree Ambassador. Are Tree Ambassadors just for ROW trees?

Jana – reLeaf is a citywide program. It’s intended to be the one stop shop for the public on information about trees. Trees for Neighborhoods is tree planting and Tree Ambassador is volunteer work that happens at the neighborhood level and some of the work happens in the ROW.

GB – is there a relationship with Forest Stewards?

Jana – yes, Forest Stewards are specific to GSP. There are relationships, Forterra provides a great bridge between both programs. Forest Stewards work on restoration projects. Tree Ambassadors work on different kinds of projects. It’s important to reduce see source of invasive plants from private property not to re-infect our natural parklands.

TA training: basics of community engagement and urban forestry. Three main types of projects:

1. Tree walks (tours of trees in a specific areas). The tree walk in north Seattle had 80 people attend.
2. Street tree weeding, stake removal, and mulching.
3. Landscaping renewal – work on small pockets of land that SDOT maintains. Tiny triangle pockets that SDOT doesn’t have the resources to maintain.

GB – do Tree Ambassadors get excited about these events and recruit more volunteers?

Jana – yes, we are working on improving our infrastructure including a better database.

JF – once you get beyond 12 in a tree walk it gets very difficult to manage.

MM – this is different from GSP.

Jana – we are working together but Tree Ambassador are removing invasives from non-Parks areas.

MM – does this intersect with traffic circles.

Jana – we usually don't work on those areas because they are very little.

John F – are there phases to the work such as GSP.

Jana – the program is very small and young. We are not restoring areas, that's why we call them landscape renewals. They are not at the same level as GSP. You have to support volunteers. We have provided jackets and name tags so they are identifiable when they are out there volunteering. We do an annual picnic. This year it was at Volunteer Park.

2013 accomplishments: 8 tree walks, 2 street tree mulching events, 4 landscape renewal work parties, 2 workshops and engages over 300 people.

TE – tree plantings are separate?

Jana – that program is Trees for Neighborhoods. Some applicants this year are not able to plant their trees so Tree Ambassadors are going to help them by planting the trees for them.

TE –do you supply Tree Ambassadors with business cards that ID them.

Jana – Penny made her own. It's a good idea so they can go to their neighborhood community meetings and hand them out.

TE – they become a City endorsed resource.

JF – are you tracking volunteer hours.

Jana – the programs are separate. The grant is part of GSP also but the reporting is separate. The Tree Ambassador program is integral to meeting the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan goals.

#### OPPORTUNITIES:

There is a lot of room to grow this program. The amount of staff time is the most challenging piece.

There are three of us running the program. We'd love to see more volunteers in the program but 40 is the maximum amount of people we can support.

Would like to have a tree walk in a different area of town every month.

#### CHALLENGES;

The grant is about to expire. For 2014 the staff time we get from Forterra would be cut in half.

LF – what's the budget for the program?

Jana – its' complicated because there are three staff people from different departments.

JF – how much of your time is put into this?

Jana – I'm .8 FTE and this is 1/3 of my time (550 hours).

LF – in a dream situation, how much larger could we make this program. It's a great platform that crosses departmental boundaries nicely. I'm talking about reLeaf, not just Tree Ambassadors.

Jana – a lot of great ideas that the Tree Ambassadors could do. It's a matter of what we would like to prioritize.

JF – what do you see as a success here and how would you prioritize them.

Jana – for reLeaf as a whole. Trees for Neighborhoods I feel is well established and I don't feel we need to grow it. I think it's the Tree Ambassador program that we are lacking resources on. My first priority is to bridge that hole. It's about \$30K worth of staff time to fill the gap that we would have when the grant expires. If we wanted to expand the program it would be different. If we had more staff we could support more volunteers, have more regular events, etc.

I think what Forterra brings to the table is invaluable. Having a partnership with a non-profit. The loss of staff time and the partnership would be a problem.

JF – would we give \$30K to Forterra and \$60K more to reLeaf?

Jana – I would focus on making sure the funding for Forterra remains in place.

JF – the next level that would be achievable. Feedback on that would be very good.

Jana – there are different models on how you gain staff time.

MM – if we are going to help recommend. There are a lot of budget items that we talked about. Should we do a letter separate for each piece?

JS – I would suggest that we would recommend Council to fund the commitments already identified in the UFSP.

Jana – 640 hours left in the grant. Next year would have 300 hours left. 2015 doesn't have any grant funding.

JF – I was looking for feedback on what would make sense to ask for.

Jana – Forterra writing another grant

JS – look at the future for the next biennial budget to address the drop off in hours in 2015 (zero hours).

TE – the additional \$20K to maintain the current level.

Peg – header to tie to the UFSP with a list of items. PEG TO WORK ON THE LETTER.

JS – releaf, GSP, City fruit, maintenance

**ACTION: A motion was made to write a letter to Council about budget levels. The motion was seconded and carried.**

### **Green Seattle Partnership fact sheets**

Mark – our biggest issue on reaching our canopy cover is increasing canopy on private property and removing invasives there as well. We have been gathering data about GSP's practices, volunteers and such but we have not been using it. Oliver has been working on putting this data to work for us. Oliver will give you a snapshot on some of those things that he has been putting together.

Oliver – I'll show the first results that we were able to see as part of the analysis of this GSP data. The data collection effort includes:

- Work logs and volunteer logs: entered by volunteers, contracts, and staff (data resides in CEDAR)
- Inventory and mapping by phase: collected by professional partners. Provide an idea of ecological outputs and initial outcomes as well as general information on many areas
- Forest monitoring: collected by Forest Monitoring Team. Includes permanent plot samples showing in depth ecological outcomes. Have precise information on a few areas.

Some of the data we analyzed includes field work hours totals and by group; volunteer participation by hours; work parties by number; participation over time; time spent on initial invasive removal, potted plant planting, mulching, and weeding; and distribution of reported field labor hours across restoration phases.

Some of the takeaways are:

- Importance and strength of volunteer participation
- Efficiency: crews – forest stewards – professionally led volunteers. Professionally led volunteers provide the biggest numbers.
- Transition from invasive removal to maintenance
- GSP has improved most acres. Some need revisit.

Next Steps:

- Monetize hours and add plants, supplies and overhead for total resources towards sites.
- Evaluate progress across more dimensions (inventory and monitoring data)
- Examine conditions leading to variation in effort (site – slope, interior to edge ration, soil, labor – contractors, size of groups (create predictive model for future work).

Peg – this information might be helpful to give an idea of cost for maintenance for both SPU and SDOT.

MMead - \$24 per volunteer hour is the new nation-wide standard.

\$8M dollars behind. \$17M over the next 15 years. Current funding level for CIP side is \$1M shy of the goal of \$3.5M annually that's only protected for the next two years. The PLP includes components for the addition of an area crew and a \$2M/year funding level. \$1.6M - \$1.8M to get back to level.

JF – Mark, could you send an email outlining what you would do with the extra funding?

### **Tree preservation – Seattle Children's Home 2.5 acre parcel on Queen Anne**

Peg – it's a message to get across. It would be great if neighborhoods could get more advice prior to submittal.

### **Public comment**

SZ – public sector – Audubon is moving forward with their tree wiki. I'll send it to Sandra for your feedback. Work in progress friends.urbanforests.org listing tree protection ordinances to place on this site. Montgomery County Maryland is putting together an ordinance with 3x1 replacement policy. Regarding trees on 123<sup>rd</sup> and Meridian (37" Doug fir). That huge tree was removed. Sent info to Brennon and I'm awaiting response. Is on the board of group called TreePAC responses back from Murray, Bagshaw, Conlin (not from McGinn or O'Brien). Not yet posted on website but they will be posted.

### **New business and announcements**

### **Adjourn**

### **Community input**

**From:** Irene Wall [mailto:iwall@serv.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2013 3:02 PM  
**To:** Pinto\_de\_Bader, Sandra  
**Cc:** ted.holden@comcast.net  
**Subject:** Request for time on Commission's upcoming meeting agenda

Hello Sandra,

Attached is a recent email exchange about a project I brought to the Commission's attention last summer concerning removal of a large WRC on a site in Phinney Ridge. Despite Janet Oslund (DPD senior planner) attend a meeting to answer the Commission's questions about why this tree was illegally removed, and how DPD could better protect trees on development sites, it appears that we're still stuck in the mode of inaction and inattention.

Despite promising again in August that no occupancy permit would be issued until the required replacement trees were planted, DPD went ahead and issued the permit. The lesson is clear. Developers can remove trees with impunity and DPD will not take action to enforce their own permit conditions.

Ted Holden, the current President of the Phinney Ridge Community Council and I are requesting a few minutes on the commission's agenda soon to review this situation AND to discuss another related matter. The other matter concerns needed strengthening of language in any final tree ordinance to ensure that trees in city parks are

protected. The language in the interim ordinance could not prevent the removal of 11 trees in Woodland Park Zoo to make way for another parking lot despite a Comprehensive Plan amendment expressly rejecting the destruction of trees and conversion of open space to car parking in Seattle Parks. The ordinance needs to be strengthened to REQUIRE that trees in parks can only be removed when there are no reasonable alternatives. In this case, there were several alternatives. However, the ordinance is so weak, that securing any permit for construction or grading anywhere on a site, allows an unlimited amount of tree destruction. Despite the expression in the code that clearly states that removal of trees be required (not merely convenient for a permitted project), DPD and the Hearing Examiner interpret the code to mean that removal of an unlimited number of trees is perfectly OK.

I would like to understand if the Commission feels the same way and if they have recommendations about improving the ordinance.

thanks

Irene Wall

**From:** Edwards, Darlene [mailto:Darlene.Edwards@seattle.gov]

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2013 1:51 PM

**To:** Ted Holden

**Cc:** dduthweiler@comcast.net; Mosteller, Cheryl; iwall@serv.net; Sugimura, Diane; Esonu, Onum

**Subject:** RE: 52nd & Phinney

Hi Ted.

I forwarded your email to Onum Esonu, another supervisor, who was actually involved with the original project and knows more about it.

He will be calling/emailing you shortly.

Thanks.

Darlene

**DARLENE EDWARDS | LAND USE PLANNER SUPERVISOR**

**City of Seattle**

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

**From:** Ted Holden [mailto:ted.holden@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2013 12:05 PM

**To:** Edwards, Darlene

**Cc:** dduthweiler@comcast.net; Mosteller, Cheryl; iwall@serv.net; Sugimura, Diane

**Subject:** RE: 52nd & Phinney

Hello Darlene,

Address - 5201 Phinney Ave. N.

Permit's - 6318733(BLDG.) & 6346741(tree removal and replacement)

It appears the Occupancy Permit was issued at the end of September. I and the rest of the Council need to know why and under what conditions. The Community Council meeting is 10/01/2013. They are very curious and shall be very vocal as to why a contractor who blatantly and clandestinely cut down a major Western Red Cedar on an early Sunday morning which by permit was to remain was not fined, was given an 'after the fact' revised permit calling for replacing the major tree with two 2" cal. Pinus Contorta (Shore Pines), instead planted two Pyramidal European Hornbeam (which still remain), and now according to DPD's web site has been issued an Occupancy Permit even though the 08/13/2013 email from Janet Oslund said they would not. This is really an outrage.

Ted Holden, President  
Phinney Ridge Community Council

**From:** Edwards, Darlene [<mailto:Darlene.Edwards@seattle.gov>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2013 10:50 AM  
**To:** Ted Holden  
**Cc:** [dduthweiler@comcast.net](mailto:dduthweiler@comcast.net); Mosteller, Cheryl  
**Subject:** RE: 52nd & Phinney

Hello Ted.  
Cheryl and I are running off to a meeting and are in meetings for the rest of the day.  
Could you please send us a project number and address so that we can look into this later?  
Thank you very much.  
When is the Community Council Meeting?  
Darlene

#### DARLENE EDWARDS | LAND USE PLANNER SUPERVISOR

**From:** Ted Holden [<mailto:ted.holden@comcast.net>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2013 10:38 AM  
**To:** Edwards, Darlene; Mosteller, Cheryl  
**Cc:** [dduthweiler@comcast.net](mailto:dduthweiler@comcast.net)  
**Subject:** FW: 52nd & Phinney

Hello Darlene and Cheryl,

I received a reply that Janet is out on vacation and one or both of you would address this issue. There is a long story behind this issue. It may be more expeditious for you to call me to get the background. In a 'nutshell', the developer cut down a major tree on an early Sunday morning which by permit was to remain. He replaced it with two trees as directed by the 'after-the-fact' revised permit (no penalties for the removal were issued, which is bogus), but he installed the wrong trees as specified in the revised permit. Janet has always contended the Occupancy Permit would not be issued until the correct trees were installed. The rest is as stated in my email below. I do need an answer prior to the Community Council meeting. Please call me or respond to this email. 206 784-0338

Thank you,  
Ted Holden, President  
Phinney Ridge Community Council

**From:** Ted Holden [<mailto:ted.holden@comcast.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 24, 2013 3:52 PM  
**To:** 'Janet.Oslund@seattle.gov'  
**Cc:** 'iwall@serv.net'; 'dduthweiler@comcast.net'; 'Jan Satterthwaite'  
**Subject:** 52nd & Phinney

Hello Janet,

All three units in this development have now been sold. It appears someone is occupying the south unit. Did they get an Occupancy Permit? The Hornbeam still remain. What is up with all this?

Here is what you said in August:

**From:** Oslund, Janet [<mailto:Janet.Oslund@seattle.gov>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 13, 2013 4:40 PM  
**To:** Ted Holden  
**Subject:** RE: Development at 52nd and Phinney

Hello Ted,

No they are not getting an occupancy permit until they fulfill the requirements of the permit, one of which is planting the correct replacement tree.

The inspector has been alerted to this condition since July.

I hope this information helps.

Janet

Please get back to me with whatever information you can get. We have a community Council meeting next Tuesday and the council members are very interested in this topic.

Thank you,  
Ted Holden, President  
Phinney Ridge Community Council

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**From:** Ruth Williams [<mailto:ruthalice@comcast.net>]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 11, 2013 10:53 AM  
**To:** Pinto\_de\_Bader, Sandra  
**Subject:** FW: Mountain Bikes in Natural Areas: Take it Slow!

Hi Sandra,

Here are the comments I sent in to the Park Board. The SUFC will find that on the web there is a raging battle going between the mountain bike and the environmentalist communities over the amount of environmental damage mountain biking does. It's necessary to pick through and find the least biased sites.

At the Parks Board meeting last night the mountain bike supporters came on strong in favor. There were only three of us speaking up for the health of the natural areas.

Thank you!

Ruth

**From:** Ruth Williams [<mailto:ruthalice@comcast.net>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 10, 2013 11:49 PM  
**To:** 'rachel.acosta@seattle.gov'  
**Cc:** [david.graves@seattle.gov](mailto:david.graves@seattle.gov)  
**Subject:** Mountain Bikes in Natural Areas: Take it Slow!

Dear Seattle Parks Board Commissioners:

Adding this use to some of our natural areas needs to be approached with a great deal of caution. Unlike the new ADA standard trails that are about to be added, mountain bike trails do not increase availability to a new group of people, they simply add a new use for people who already have access.

It would seem prudent to install the legally required ADA Standard trails first, and then determine if mountain biking would be a good fit. I believe that at this point there has been no discussion of how the two uses would work together.

The point is often made that mountain biking doesn't harm plantings and restoration efforts. Once the original clearing is done, this could be largely true. Even so, our urban forest is a fragile work in progress, unlike the forest in more rural areas.

I have had a look at how Portland, OR is building their mountain bike trails, which are intended to be shared with hikers. These trails add a fair bit of plant pruning and removal, and compacted soil, to any trail plan. The surface is a minimum of six feet, plus occasional wider areas for passing. In high use areas the width is up to ten feet. Corners often have to be reinforced for banking. (We have all seen what switchbacks can do to plantings even just with hikers.) Greater sight distances are needed, so some trails may have to be decommissioned and some other areas cleared for trails. The Portland Trails document is [here](#), and the discussion of hike/bike trails begins on page 31.

Mountain biking in Portland parks does not have a good reputation in the stewardship community, but I have not yet got a response from the Parks Dept. itself. I will share that response with you when I do.

If this is to proceed in Seattle, it must be begin with a survey of existing and planned trails, and end with a result of no net increase in compacted, dead soils. Any new area of soil compaction must require the closing and reforestation of an equal sized preexisting compacted area.

No one seems to talk much the impact of mountain bikes on wildlife. That's because the studies aren't very clear. It's turning out that even hikers affect wildlife much more than previously believed. Bikers move faster and further than hikers, and it has been shown that some species startle, or become alarmed, at the faster moving bikes from further away. Thus the animals move away and waste energy needed for their survival. Bikes definitely can have more impact because they do typically travel further than hikers.

In our urban setting, some mountain bike trails are likely to get quite a lot of use, thus wrecking the serenity, solitude, and wildlife viewing that people want to enjoy when they visit the forest. And this is a sport that doesn't even require a forest! Take the ever popular I-5 Colonnade for example.

Some stewards I have communicated with see adding this use as a solution to problems with illegal park use, and it may work for that. My preference would be to look for another solution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ruth Williams  
Green Seattle Partnership Steward