

## SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Peg Staeheli, Chair • Tom Early, Vice-Chair  
Gordon Bradley • Leif Fixen • Jeff Reibman • Erik Rundell • 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*

**April 9, 2014**

### Meeting Notes

SMT 2750

700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

#### Attending

##### Commissioners

Peg Staeheli - chair

Gordon Bradley

Leif Fixen

Donna Kostka- non-voting

Jeff Reibman

Erik Rundell (via phone)

Steve Zemke

##### Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader

##### Public

#### Absent- Excused

Tom Early - vice-chair

Leif Fixen

**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

Shifted order of agenda items to accommodate quorum.

#### Parks Legacy Plan – Seattle Parks District letter of recommendation – initial conversation and vote

Commissioners expressed their opinions about establishing a Seattle Parks District.

Some of the concerns expressed were:

- How does a park district affect the role of the UFC on decision making?
- How would the update of the tree ordinance be affected?
- It seems that this funding mechanism is dividing the parks advocates and environmentalists in the city.
- Will this new entity comply with regulations on tree protection?
- Is it the case that setting a metropolitan parks district as an independent taxing authority could only be dissolved or challenged by the state legislature?
- Will the parks district be able to issue impact fees?

Positive aspects of this proposal included:

- Distribution of sites to spend the money was distributed across the city.
- It's about a providing a sustainable revenue stream to fund the parks system.
- You can't protect trees if you don't have money.
- The UFC and the Parks Board would continue in their advisory role.
- Would like to give the voters of Seattle the opportunity to vote on it.
- Tree regulations apply to all departments. This would not be an entity separate from city government.
- Main concern is to undertake actions that achieve the UFSP goals and UFC mission.
- Current maintenance backlog is huge in our natural areas. Having money to do that is probably the most important reason to support this.
- Would provide more predictability which would allow for better planning.

The Commission agreed that the recommendation would be to put the measure on the ballot, not to support the measure itself.

**ACTION: A motion was made to adopt the letter as amended. The motion was seconded and carried.**

#### **SCL surplus substation disposition letter of recommendation – initial conversation**

The Commission discussed the points made by the Law Department during the last meeting. The concern falls with State Supreme Court's decision on what SCL can do with their surplus substations.

The Commission might want to move forward with a recommendation that would encourage more analysis including a feasibility study about using bio-remediation to remove soil contaminants. Perhaps there could be a pilot project on one of these sites. Ask for a hold to be placed on the sale of these properties until a study can be done about the feasibility of establishing a mitigation tree bank and using bio-remediation.

#### **Race and Social Justice – Pacific Science Center event debrief - community outreach and stakeholder engagement – initial conversation**

Commissioners brainstormed on ideas to engage a larger and more diverse audience.

What other ideas are there to get a broader understanding in the community about urban forestry and how it relates to different populations. Ideas considered include:

- Review the UFC technical qualifications to increase diversity in UFC recruitment.
- Consider adding a horticulture member.
- Find ways to bring operations and management experience to the table.
- Consider expanding UFC membership.
- Include a Get Engaged member.
- Write an article for low-canopied neighborhoods newsletter.
- Focus outreach and listening to figure out barriers to increased canopy cover.

**Public comment**

None

**New business and announcements**

Upcoming agenda items:

- Briefing on Freight Master Plan
- Tour of a neighborhood, park, or city street.
- Past Commission member recognition. Establish UFC grove. Could be a tree walk along a trail.

Bike Mater Plan – include greenways.

Invite CM Bagshaw.

**Adjourn**