

## SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Peg Staeheli, Chair • Tom Early, Vice-Chair

Gordon Bradley • Leif Fixen • Donna Kostka • Joanna Nelson de Flores • 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*

**November 12, 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

Tom Early – vice-chair

Gordon Bradley

Donna Kostka

Jeff Reibman

Erik Rundell

Steve Zemke

##### Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader (OSE)

##### Guests:

Mark McPherson

##### Public

Joel DeJong

Robert Kettle

Sarah Welch

Susan Zeman

#### Absent- Excused

Leif Fixen

Joanna Nelson de Flores

**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

Tom Early called to order and read the Commission's mission statement and today's agenda.

#### Chair report

None

#### Chair and vice-chair elections

Moved to next month to allow for proper nomination process.

#### Cheasty letter

Sarah Welch has worked to preserve the Cheasty Green space, she is part of the group Friends of Cheasty. The Parks Department is committed to developing a city-wide policy for green spaces. Sarah has asked staff about progress and has not received a response.

UFC in an earlier letter asked Christopher Williams to be included in the process. Sarah is concerned that a policy might look like an application process to bring more active uses to our natural areas. Allowing

more active uses to our natural areas would have an impact as population grows in Seattle in the next several years.

UFC comment: Reviewing letters of recommendation shows that we have had no response on the Cheasty letter of recommendation. Reach back to people cc'd on that letter and remind them of the letter and that the UFC wants to be involved.

Follow up on the Cheasty letter and say the Commission requested involvement on this project and would like an update.

UFC chair comment: This would be a new letter broader than Cheasty. It's about the future of Seattle regarding active uses. This could be a short letter. Draft brief letter requesting involvement in the investigative stage and bring it back in December. SANDRA TO DRAFT AND RUN BY PEG. If they set up a group to help review policies, that a member of the UFC be a member of the group.

Sandra requested Parks to share the Cheasty map that shows cross trails. Sandra will follow up.

Note: Sandra to ask Parks to come brief the UFC on Cheasty and to include Commission in process to review green space policy.

### **Queen Anne Children's Home Letters**

Robert Kettle was invited to the table to give a brief overview of the issue. He is a member of the group Future Queen Anne. The group is proponent of smart growth. They have been engaging with DPD on the development of the Children's Home property. They are concerned about the density planned for the site.

Members of the group have met with DPD planners. Seattle Children's Home is a 2.5 acre Low Rise 1 zone mostly surrounded by Single Family. Trees have been suffering in Queen Anne. An example is when SDOT fixed sidewalks along Queen Anne Blvd and Boston Street they removed the trees.

Initially the developer wanted to put 66 town homes on this project in the west central part of Queen Anne. They have come down to 59 (on the other side of the street, in an area roughly the same size there are only 18 homes). The initial arborist report shows 86 trees on or adjacent to the property. 23 are exceptional, and 14 additional trees are part of a grove for a total of 47 exceptional trees. There are several large elms on the right-of-way on McGraw. The group is looking for support from the UFC to ensure that protection measures will be put in place. Also looking at ensure good practices in terms of pruning and prepping. The revised arborist report from the end of the summer said that three of the exceptional trees were dead, diseased/compromised, and had damaged roots.

The second report is of concern it read as if an attorney had written it and went to the code to find reasons why some trees are no longer protected. Protection due to exceptional status is being lost. The document shows only 21 trees being retained. The second report created a lot of concern to the group:

Director's Rule says that ROW trees do not count as part of a grove. They would like the UFC to weigh in on that.

Commission comment – to clarify, the trees on the ROW are between the sidewalk and the property. This is the condition arborists prefer because it allows trees larger area for the root zone. This is an unusually large piece of property.

The project is undergoing MUP process.

Open to discussion by UFC:

- An option may be to appeal the permit.
- Clarification on heritage tree designation – none of the trees are subject to Heritage tree designation because it requires the property owner to be in agreement.
- Street trees would be under SDOT's protection. DPD asks for tree protection as long as it doesn't preclude the owner's ability to develop the property to its full potential.
- In the proposed Street Tree Manual a street tree is one that is planted or growing within a public place.

Robert - Developer is asking for a number of departures. The major one they are asking for is for townhouses that can only be a maximum of 60ft wide and they are asking for up to 168ft. In return they have put a few openings (code doesn't require openings to row houses anymore – which is probably okay for smaller properties, but this is a pretty large property).

UFC – Do they have a planting plan? It would be good to look at it to see if the plan responds to the UFSP canopy goals (since they are asking for departures). Is the intent to have new trees planted and able to grow? You will have to build a case going to the Design Review Board during public comment period. The Board can condition their approval of the departure.

- They are supposed to present a scheme that preserves all the exceptional trees.
- All development standards are 'departable', except for 23.41.012 Section B of the code.
- There are diseased trees that are not hazardous. It's important to separate for replacement purposes.
- If they get approval to take out the internal exceptional tree they haven't done anything to compensate.
- If they are requesting departures, they could provide a planting plan (with specific canopy cover) that is viable in the space they are given.

Robert – would like to remain engaged with the UFC around this development. Need an advocate within the City for tree protection.

UFC - City arborists provide direction on what they may approve when they do a walk through the site.

The group has retained an arborist that will issue a report. They are part of the group. This letter is also part of the record. Sandra will ask Robert to send a copy of the letter from CM Conlin and CM Burgess to Diane Sugimura.

Process – have responded to revision letters and submitted their plan.

Robert is also part of the Queen Anne Community Council. Have been engaging with the developer and they have incorporated some of their ideas.

Peg requested the group to stay in touch and send notices of Design Review Board meetings for the UFC to remain involved.

**Review of 2014 UFC letters of recommendation and follow up plan**

Move to next meeting.

## Carbon Policy issues and UF

Mark McPherson briefed the Commission on Carbon Cap and Trade. Mark met with the State Advisory Council this morning.

Background:

California passed the cap and trade law. Governor Inslee would like to have one too. What does Cap and Trade has to do with UF?

Cap and Trade in CA:

- Covers 350 businesses (600) facilities representing 85% of CA's greenhouse gas emissions.
- Established in 2011, but compliance began in 2013.
- Declines 2% annual, then 3% in 2015 to 2020.
- The 2020 cap is about 15% below 2012 levels.

How does it work?

- CA gives each source 'allowances' for up to 90% of their emissions.
- State sells the other 10% plus a strategic reserve.
- Allowances trade on a public market (and may be banked)
- Sources must reduce their emissions, buy allowances, or buy offset credits.
- The State has raised over \$700M in revenue from allowance auctions.

Offset projects:

- Sources may buy offset credits for up to 8% of their emissions
- Four offset projects approved:
  - o Forestry
  - o Urban forestry
  - o Dairy digester (remove methane from manure)
  - o Destroying ozone-depleting substances
- Projects may be anywhere in the US

Urban Forest Carbon Offset Projects:

- First protocol in place but no applicants.
- Climate Action Reserve received grant to develop second protocol
  - o Finished June 2014, but no applicants
  - o Tree planting and canopy protocols, but long, complicated, and burdensome
  - o Disappointment in urban forestry circles, but revenue assuages the pain
  - o State of CA is nervous because no one is using their offset projects.

Protocols were not feasible. There was a lot of disappointment on the protocol group.

This could be a great way to find funding for Urban Forestry. CA emitters can buy offsets in WA. CA wants their Cap and Trade legislation to be successful. They are nervous that they are not being used. CalFire (equivalent of DNR) has a department of urban and community forestry. \$17M went to grants and CA reLeaf manages the grants. Require that the money goes to projects on disadvantaged communities.

Carbon Policy in WA:

- Task Force – set up by the Governor made up of blue ribbon members (CEOs, etc.)
- Governor staff is leaning towards a cap and trade recommendation. The recommendation is November 17 (not going to be carbon tax but something that has incentives as part of the mechanism). A cap and trade bill might be introduced in January. With GPO senate the bill will not pass.

### Opportunity for UF in WA

- UF carbon offset projects in a cap and trade law
  - o Costs
    - \$95 to plant a tree
    - \$4-6/year to maintain, plus mortality, removal, etc.
  - o Carbon credits
    - An early mature high-sequestering hardwood will sequester 100kg/year, or 10 metric tons over 100 years. At a carbon price of \$20 per metric ton, the tree will generate about \$2/tree/year
- Cap and Trade or Carbon Revenues
  - o CA's first revenues were over \$500M
  - o CA allocated over \$17M to its state UF agency (CALFire's UF program)
  - o All \$17M has to go to disadvantaged communities
- A WA urban forestry protocol here could be recognized by CA
- A share of any carbon revenues in WA for UF – need advocates to lobby for UF to be part of the conversation.

### Challenges:

- The Bill has offsets, but no urban forestry offset projects.
- The Bill has urban forestry projects, but copies CA's (complex)
- Revenues from a carbon policy or law omit urban forestry

Additionality and permanency requirements make CA's protocol difficult to implement.

### Learning from CA for UF in WA

- UF protocol must be simple, clear, not burdensome
  - o Example: schools that integrate a carbon project into curriculum.
- CA reLeaf (state-wide non-profit, very lean and effective): an urbanforestry protocol in the cap and trade bill and \$17M.

### What does Mark propose to do?

- State-wide non-profit in WA for UF:
  - o Advocate and Lobby:
    - For urban forestry carbon projects
    - For allocations from any carbon policy revenues
    - Fund Green Communities, etc.
  - o Fund Raise
  - o Promote on state level UF benefits and projects
    - Data on ecosystem benefits of trees
    - Consider UW's Kathy Wolf's research and other data on health benefits
    - Property value benefits
    - Inventory data on WA UF: population living in cities, number of trees, trees per person, trees per street mile, decline in canopy, etc.
  - o Urban forestry carbon protocol development
  - o Offer help with UF carbon projects (schools, utilities, cities, neighborhoods)

NEXT AGENDA: Include this for discussion – ADD TO 2015 WORK PLAN.

**Public comment**

Susan Zeman and Joel DeJong – they are part of the group that proposed the mountain bike project. Advocating for equitable access to natural areas. Bike trails is one way to engage urban youth to engage with urban forests.

Peg – were interested in doing a field trip to Cheasty. SANDRA TO SET UP WITH SUSAN ZEMAN AND SARAH WELCH, GSP, AND CITY. Keep focus and agenda on Cheasty.

Set up a briefing with Joel DeJong and Susan Zeman.

Sandra to produce three draft letters:

Carbon Cap and Trade and Urban Forestry

Queen Anne Children's Home project

Green Space Policy – UF involvement

Peg - DPD operations – Maybe need a facilitated session on what it should be.

**New business and announcements**

None

**Adjourn****Community input**

**From:** Ruth Alice Williams [mailto:ruthalice@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 12, 2014 11:13 AM

**To:** Clark, Sally; Williams, Christopher

**Cc:** Godden, Jean; Harrell, Bruce; Rasmussen, Tom; Sawant, Kshama; Pinto\_de\_Bader, Sandra; Acosta, Rachel

**Subject:** Revised permanent use policy for Seattle's Natural Areas and Greenbelts

[letter attached and below]

Thornton Creek Alliance

Post Office Box 25690

Seattle, Washington 98165-1190

November 1, 2014

**Re: Revised permanent use policy for Seattle's Natural Areas and Greenbelts**

Dear Councilmember Clark and Acting Parks Superintendent Williams :

In the memo dated August 4, 2014 that contains your discussion of Cheasty Pilot Pedestrian and Mountain Bike Trail, Section Four, you state, Supt. Williams, that Parks and Recreation will develop a new use policy specifically for of Seattle's natural areas and greenspaces. The agreement was that a policy would be ready for Parks Board review by late spring 2015. To date there has been no call that we are aware of for community input. We are very interested to learn where Parks is in the process, and how we and others in the community may participate.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth Williams, President

cc.: Councilmember Jean Godden  
Councilmember Bruce Harrell  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen  
Councilmember Kshama Sawant  
Sandra Pinto de Bader  
Rachel Acosta



**THORNTON CREEK ALLIANCE** (TCA) is an all-volunteer grassroots, nonprofit organization of 100 members dedicated to preserving and restoring an ecological balance throughout the Thornton Creek watershed. Our goal is to benefit the watershed by encouraging individuals, neighborhoods, schools, groups, businesses, agencies, and government to work together in addressing the environmental restoration of the creek system including: water quality, stabilization of water flow, flood prevention, and habitat improvement through education, collaboration, and community involvement.

[www.thornton-creek-alliance.org](http://www.thornton-creek-alliance.org)

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