

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Tom Early, Chair • Steve Zemke, Vice-Chair
Weston Brinkley • Leif Fixen • Reid Haefer • Donna Kostka • Richard Martin • Joanna Nelson de Flores
Erik Rundell • Andrew Zellers

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

March 1, 2017

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners

Tom Early – chair
Steve Zemke – vice-chair
Reid Haefer
Craig Johnson (non-voting)
Donna Kostka
Joanna Nelson de Flores

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Jana Dilley – Trees for Seattle, SPU
Jon Jainga - Parks
Pamela Kliment - Parks

Absent- Excused

Weston Brinkley
Leif Fixen
Richard Martin
Erik Rundell
Andrew Zellers

Public

None

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 called the meeting to order.

Public comment

None

Adoption of February 1 and February 8 meeting notes

Commissioners reviewed and provided input on the February meeting notes.

ACTION: A motion to approve the February 1 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the February 8 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Trees for Seattle presentation

Jana Dilley, manages the Trees for Seattle (T4S) program (formerly reLeaf). T4S is the outreach and engagement team for the City of Seattle and works closely with the Urban Forest IDT.

Jana presented an update on how the program is doing and 2016 accomplishments:

Outreach, communications, technical assistance

- Engage 2,424 people (4% increase over 2015)
- Monthly newsletter distributed to 1,799 people (66% increase)
- 397 technical assistance requests
- 486 Facebook followers (29% increase over 2015)
- 75 people participated in Park(ING) Day

Volunteer engagement

- 2,788 volunteer hours (56% increase)
- Trained 38 new Tree Ambassadors
- 6 volunteer trainings
- 36 landscape renewal events (177% increase)
- 16 Tree Walks (23% increase)
- Developed 8 new Tree Walks
- Inventoried 40% of SDOT's Street Tree Management Unit # 5 (Rainier Beach/Georgetown)

Residential planting

- Planted 1,015 trees with 46% households
- Held 2 structural pruning workshops for 45 people
- Delivered 2 site and species selection workshops for 40 people
- Planted 46 trees for 18 elderly and/or disabled residents
- Conducted field evaluation of past planted trees and provided feedback to residents

Interdepartmental, community, and regional work

- Supported the Urban Forestry Core Team and interdepartmental team efforts
- Supported SCL in planting 76 replacement trees at 27 households
- Served on King Conservation District (KCD) Urban Forestry working group
 - o Supported funding allocation to Parks through KCD
- Launched volunteer work at SPI's Meadowbrook Pond
- Launched new Trees for Seattle brand

Urban Forest Equity

- Completed Trees for Neighborhoods stakeholder analysis
 - o Determined future focus on S Beacon Hill & Rainier Beach Asian & African American residents
- Targeted Trees for Neighborhoods (T4N) project outreach to Vietnamese residents
- Supported DIRT Corps Crew training
- Delivered a Highland Park English/Spanish Tree Walk

2017 goals

- Support 2,500 hours of volunteer efforts
- Host 15 public Tree Walks
- Hold 30 tree stewardship events
- Care for 400 public trees
- Plant 1,000 trees with 400 residents
- Hold 2 pruning classes, 2 site selection workshops, and 2 planting workshops
- Increase social media to 650 followers
- Add 400 people to newsletter list
- Provide technical assistance to 400 people
- Engage 2,500 people in all events

2017 Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities:

- KCD/Parks partnership
- New T4N support contract

Challenges

- Budget
 - o 26% increase in tree costs over the past 4 years
 - o Rising intern costs
 - o Printing & graphic design
- Constraints on volunteer work
 - o Receive more requests for volunteer work support than we have staff time for, particularly landscape renewal sites.

Commission question/comment: What's the survivability rate for T4N trees?

Answer: Don't have numbers off top of my head but they are similar to other nation-wide programs.

Commission question/comment: This program is so great and it seems to be under-celebrated.

Answer: The program started in 2009. Trees for Neighborhoods has planted 7,300 trees with Seattle residents.

Commission question/comment: what would an additional staff person help accomplish in your program?

How much more money would you need to support ongoing planting of 1,000 trees/year?

Answer: There is always more we can do with another staff person. There is so much potential to work with volunteers and that requires more staff time. The bigger impact we are seeing is on the volunteer side. The program has a dedicated staff person for the tree planting but not for the volunteer support.

Commission question/comment: If you had more money could you double the number of trees?

Answer: Would have to think about that. The constraint is on the volunteer side.

Commission question/comment: If there was another entity to partner up with would there be an opportunity for increase Tree Ambassador work? A separate entity could manage the program following the Tree Ambassador model? Eventually, as the Green Seattle Partnership meets their goals, what's left is the rest of the land in the city.

Answer: There are many areas that would benefit from the work. We've been looking at right-of-way (ROW) landscapes there are also unimproved ROW. SPU could also do improvements on SPU land.

Commission question/comment: If you doubled the size of your crew, how many more trees could you plant? What's your budget?

Answer: Non-labor is \$200K/year: \$50K for trees, \$14K watering bags, \$45K support contract, \$50K contract to support volunteer work. The program has two permanent staff and one intern.

Sandra will meet with Jana to follow up on the costs for additional staff and to increase the number of trees T4N gives away each year.

Commission question/comment: There are motivated people out there that we are turning down and are unable to accept their applications because our trees are sold out. Do you track those numbers?

Answer: Don't have a number. We are starting to track where we are getting requests from.

Commission question/comment: Do other City staff contribute to this effort?

Answer: SDOT staff is a partner and provide support.

Colman Vista Project presentation

Jon Jainga and Pam Kliment presented progress on the Colman park on 31st Ave S and S Massachusetts Street. Parks is hiring an environmental consultant to help evaluate the proposal.

Parks' mission: Seattle Parks and Recreation provides welcoming and safe opportunities to play, learn, contemplate, and build community, and promotes responsible stewardship of the land. We promote healthy people, a healthy environment, and strong communities.

The site is around two acres of Alder and Big Leaf maple. There are some evergreen trees providing steep slope stability.

This is a community-led effort being funded with a Neighborhood Matching Fund grant. The initial community goal was to restore the site to the Olmsted Vision (it's important to note that there are different ideas of what that means). Their vision is that there would be a better view with less vegetation (trees). The community group hired a consultant to do historic research. The project has held three community meetings. The landscape architect did a presentation that included site history and an arborist report. The community expressed having a memory of an open view and a place for gatherings. The options they showed all included complete clear cut of trees with benches and picnic tables. Parks didn't agree to move that proposal forward and made comments on the plan.

Existing conditions include a mature canopy of deciduous trees. The site is part of the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) restoration effort. Parks asked the community to re-think their proposal. The community

came back with a proposal that showed over 600ft of clear cut with low-growing shrubs and ground cover. GSP provided the plant palette that they use. The community's landscape architect proposal did not include any of the GSP recommended plants palette. They want a complete view from 31st. Parks is hiring an environmental analyst to look at this and include SDCI's updated ECA code.

Even though Parks has invited the community group to visit other GSP restoration sites, they have not been interested. The community group would like to ask the Parks Board to declare this as a view corridor. Parks staff is more supportive of tree framed views.

Commission question/comment: is there any support we could provide?

Answer: we just wanted to share the situation and process we are going through.

Commission question/comment: are GSP activities underway?

Answer: yes, this is a GSP site but have no forest steward.

Commission question/comment: how much of the impetus behind the proposal is coming from the neighbors across the street from the view?

Answer: several people in the committee lives across the street.

Tree maintenance coordination and SCL pruning cycle letter departmental feedback - discussion

The Commission requested feedback and input from SCL and SDOT staff. The biggest question is which comments to discuss now and which to possibly address later.

When Tom looks at this, he feels that the comments show how the letter diverged from the original intent which was recommend more coordination between City departments. In Tom's memory, the thrust of this letter came from Lance Young having an issue with SCL pruning. The UFC examined that, went on tours, and talked to SCL to better understand the issue. What the UFC discovered is that there is a lack of coordination around trees surrounding powerlines. SDOT will get called in to prune trees and they can't do it until SCL 'makes it ready' for SDOT to work on. Another issue is how much SCL is pruning. The UFC would like to encourage management of trees as an asset. Tom will work on adjusting the letter for further discussion.

Arboretum presentation discussion - continues

Move to next week.

Creative ideas to expand Seattle's urban forest – initial discussion

Move to next week.

Public comment

None.

New Business

None.

Adjourn