



**SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION**

**Weston Brinkley** (Position #3 – University), Chair  
**Julia Michalak** (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist), Vice-chair  
**Elby Jones** (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist - ISA) • **Stuart Niven** (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA)  
**Michael Walton** (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA) • **Joshua Morris** (Position #7 – NGO)  
**David Moehring** (Position # 8 – Development) • **Blake Voorhees** (Position # 9 – Realtor)  
**Jessica Hernandez** (Position #11 – Environmental Justice) • **Jessica Jones** (Position # 12 – Public Health)  
**Shari Selch** (Position # 13 – Community/Neighborhood)

*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*

**Draft meeting notes**

October 13, 2021, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Via Webex call  
(206) 207-1700  
Meeting number: 2486 741 2716  
Meeting password: 1234

*In-person meeting are not being held at this time due to the pandemic. Meeting participation is limited to access by joining the meeting through a computer or telephone conference line.*

**Attending**

Commissioners

Weston Brinkley - Chair  
Julia Michalak - Vice Chair  
David Moehring  
Josh Morris  
Stuart Niven  
Michael Walton  
Jessica Hernandez  
Jessica Jones

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Chanda Emery, SDCI

Public

Steve Zemke

Absent- Excused

Blake Voorhees  
Shari Selch  
Elby Jones

**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:** Weston called the meeting to order at 3:06 and provided a land acknowledgement.

**Public comment:**

Steve Zemke commented regarding the city's 30% canopy cover goal; recommends shifting from goal for overall percentage the city, to goals that address equity and where trees should be increased. Also, regarding the tree ordinance update, is SDCI looking at what Portland is doing for tree inventory (having developers report rather than staff having to do it)? Also, regarding the outreach process – recommends the Commission ask what questions were asked of the focus group participants.

**Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:**

Patti reported that the City is starting a process to update the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan goes through a full update every eight years; this next update is due to finish in 2024. OPCD staff has offered a briefing to the Commission as part of the first phase of the update effort, which is community engagement and includes specific outreach to boards and commissions. We will schedule that for November or December.

Patti also reported on updated guidance regarding public meetings. Under the new guidelines, it is now allowable to have an in-person option if that can be provided safely. The option for folks to participate remotely is required to continue indefinitely. So we can pursue a hybrid model if the Commission desires to do so. Given that we still need to determine logistics for providing safe in-person options while managing and accommodating the remote options (shared screen in the conference room, recording meetings, etc.), the group felt that the November meetings should continue as remote-only, and see whether providing the in-person option in December is feasible.

Patti provided updates on recruitment processes for the Get Engaged position and for Positions 4 and 6.

Weston reported on committee work related to community engagement work plan items. The group hopes to have a full proposal to run by the Commission at the next meeting. The group aims to incorporate community engagement considerations more fully into the work of the Commission.

**2021 Work Plan**

Patti recapped previous discussion on the work plan, and introduced a draft survey that David put together that can be used to gather Commissioner input on priority focus areas and tasks for the Commission. The survey is meant to tie back to and summarize those focus areas, issues and tasks in the table in the current work plan, to make it easier for Commissioners to weigh in on priorities. Patti will share a link to the survey for that feedback to be gathered prior to the next meeting.

**Canopy Cover Assessment**

Patti provided a recap on the city's canopy cover assessment efforts. The last assessment was performed in 2016 and we are now looking to have the next assessment performed utilizing 2021 data. The city is preparing to enter into the contract with the consultant for this work, so there is a need to develop and finalize the scope of work for it. Patti introduced the 2016 scope of work and invited Commissioners to provide any feedback or input they have on research questions to be included.

Weston mentioned that he and Josh are looking at the Mayor's budget and expect to have information on what is in the budget and preliminary ideas on Commission input on it, to provide the Commission at the first November meeting.

**Tree Protections Work Update**

Chanda Emery from SDCI provided a briefing on tree protections updates, including the community outreach processes and the efforts to develop proposals. Chanda referenced the work and input done previously on this by the Commission, and noted that that input has been considered by staff as the work proceeds to update the protections. She referenced the Commission committee work, ensuing recommendations, technical conversations and feedback as strategies were being considered. Those things that were weighed in on before are now being developed as proposals.

The two outreach processes implemented for this effort included listening sessions with focus groups, as well as engagement with BIPOC and other marginalized communities through Department of Neighborhoods Community Liaisons. Those processes are wrapping up and staff is working to synthesize the feedback received and incorporate it into the proposal development. The outreach efforts focused on four topic areas: protecting exceptional trees, significant trees and permitting systems, a voluntary payment-in-lieu process and tree service provider registration options.

SDCI has hired additional staff to work on the effort to track data related to tree actions (from one staff member to five). This has greatly increased the rate at which data is being gathered. Code compliance has also increased, with a proportionately higher amount of funds received to date in 2021 from violations.

Chanda provided a timeline for next steps in this work, including finalizing community engagement and racial equity data analyses, and developing the initial SEPA recommendations and the IT (i.e. – Accela permit system) and business needs that go along with them.

Questions from Commissioners included clarifications on community outreach and the racial equity toolkit, and which proposals are expected to be included in the SEPA analysis. Discussion on the proposals also included the potential voluntary payment-in-lieu program, and when the proposals will be available for review. SDCI is working on a dashboard so that the tree tracking data will be publicly available; they will share with the Commission as soon as they can.

#### **Commission Debrief on Presentation**

The debrief discussion centered on a follow-up letter on this topic, which Jessica Hernandez volunteered to draft. In addition to appreciation for the presentation, items to incorporate into the letter include some of items the Commission likes: the new-hires to work on the data project, work being done on funding implementation and enforcement, working with the other internal groups so that they are ready to do this, thorough community outreach.

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#### **Public comment:**

Steve Zemke regarding state legislation to track, check out House Bill 1099 regarding climate resilience to Comprehensive Plan. TreePAC is following and making recommendations on it. Regarding tree protections update and SEPA, he pointed out Ordinance 123052 that authorized the Commission. The Commission should be allowed to review the proposed legislation before it goes out to the public, rather than functioning as a member of the public offering comment during public comment period.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 PM.

#### **Meeting Chat:**

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 3:02 PM

Hello Room, I am here as you may see. I have ben unmuted but no one can hear me so need to work out what the problem is at my end.

from Michael W to everyone: 3:05 PM

r4BgfrExf34

from Weston to everyone: 3:05 PM

r4BgfrExf34

from Michael W to everyone: 3:05 PM

This is the webex pw I see in my meeting invite

from Julia Michalak to everyone: 3:06 PM

I don't enter a password at all... I just click on the link and join as "guest"...

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 3:39 PM

Gentle Ask: Can people calling from phones mute themselves there is echo.

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:08 PM

Sorry, I keep losing connectivity so am missing sections of the meeting. Likely my end and not the 'system'.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:26 PM

Can the comission get those materials so we can use them for our community outreach? :) Thank you!

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:38 PM

Not sure why I am having the same issue again with my microphone as when the meeting started but I have some questions for Chanda based on my attendance in the listening session for 'tree service providers' which was basically me and three other arborists, as well as related to the SEPA review so will type them here and hope I can get them out in time before the meeting ends and/or she leaves!

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:39 PM

1. Will there be any official summary of the answers to the various questions and discussion points in the listening sessions?

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:45 PM

Thanks. Can the attendees and/or public respond to these in a way that can be considered by SDCI during the ongoing decision making process? I left the listening session with more questions and comments but feel that I have no way of vocalising them nor having them answered, which is deeply frustrating as it makes me feel my voice as a tree care expert working out in the field and seeing what is happening on a day to day basis, is not being heard. I presume the listening sessions should be part of the public record so it would be great for all interested parties to know what is being said, whether people are for or against improved tree protection?!

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:46 PM

+1 Great question David!

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:48 PM

Great, thanks

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:50 PM

Thank you Chanda, I appreciate the response.

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:50 PM

Thank you Patti also, for being my voice today!

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:51 PM

Thanks, Chanda!

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:52 PM

Thank you for the overview + presentation!

from David Moehring #8 to everyone: 4:52 PM

Thank you, Chanda

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 5:02 PM

Have a great weekend! Happy belated Indigenous peoples day!

**Public input: (see next page and posted notes):**