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June 29, 2023

RE: Urban Forestry Commission's Response to Allen Taylor's Presentation on ANSI standards

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) would like to thank Allen Taylor, a member of the Seattle Arborist Association, for the presentation he gave on arboriculture ANSI standards at the UFC's meeting on May 25, 2023. The presentation was informative and highly relevant for the work undertaken by the UFC. We appreciate the time Allen Taylor put into creating and delivering the presentation and for the opportunity to build connections with the Seattle Arborist Association.

From the presentation, we learned that the arboriculture standards (ANSI Z133-2017 and ANSI A300):

- deal with safety, tree pruning, tree risk assessment, tree support systems, and managing trees during construction;
- are developed by knowledgeable groups of practitioners, academics and government representatives and are updated regularly;
- support Best management Practices (BMPs) that are developed by the International Society for Arboriculture; and
- are used to inform arborists' discretionary work, to protect arborists from liability, and for practitioners to learn how to do things correctly.

It was clear from the presentation that a lot of work and careful thought by many highly qualified individuals goes into developing the standards, and that they are seen as continually evolving and improving over time. Thus, it makes sense that these standards should be deferred to and followed in as many contexts as possible.

The UFC invited the Seattle Arborist Association to present on the arboriculture ANSI standards due to their relevance and connection to Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance, which was under revision during Allen Taylor's presentation (an updated ordinance recently passed). Given this context, most of the questions raised by the UFC in response to Allen Taylor's presentation were related to the Tree Protection Ordinance. Namely, we are interested to know if there are parts of the Tree Protection Ordinance that could be improved by referring to the arboriculture ANSI standards or BMPs? Similarly, are there particular standards that the UFC should become familiar with to ensure our recommendations align with the standards and BMPs? Finally, we noted that, based on what was presented, ANSI standards are updated more frequently than the city's tree code. This raises the need for the city's code to keep up with the updated standards. We envisioned that adding wording, such as "or successor," whenever ANSI standards the BMPs are referenced in the code might be a way to ensure the city's code remain relevant.

The UFC is excited to continue collaborating with the Seattle Arborist Association and greatly appreciates the knowledge provided and gained by Allen Taylor's presentation. We have a greater understanding of the arboriculture ANSI standards that we will carry forward into our future efforts.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,