



SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Becca Neumann (Position 4 – Hydrologist), Co-chair

Joshua Morris (Position 7 – NGO), Co-Chair

Hao Liang (Position 6 – Landscape Architect – ISA), Co-Chair

Alicia Kellogg (Position 2 – Urban Ecologist) • **David Baker** (Position 8 – Development)

Nathan Collins (Position 9 – Financial Analyst) • **Logan Woodyard** (Position 10 – Get Engaged)

Jessica Jones (Position 12 – Public Health) • **Lia Hall** (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

June 12, 2024, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Via Webex call and in-person at the
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1872 (18th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

(206) 207-1700

Meeting number: 2492 129 3719

Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair

Hao Liang, Co-Chair

Alicia Kellogg

David Baker

Logan Woodyard

Jessica Jones

Lia Hall

Absent- Excused

Becca Neumann – Co-Chair

Nathan Collins

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Public

Steve Zemke

Martha Baskin

Michael Oxman

NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:
<https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocuments>

Call to order: Josh called the meeting to order and offered a land acknowledgement.

Public comment:

Steve Zemke noted that he appreciates the work being done around the chat function and noted its value. He urged the UFC to review the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners' presentation on forestry in Parks that is available online; it could be helpful in UFC work moving forward. He recommends taking a close look at SDCI's Omnibus bill, particularly the provisions and updates around Tree Protection Areas.

Martha Baskin noted that the chat function is critical for people to be able to use. She expressed concern that the UFC was not updated on the SDCI Omnibus bill earlier. She questioned why the vacant UFC positions have not been filled.

Michael Oxman expressed appreciation for the UFC's volunteer work and noted the importance of filling the vacant positions. Regarding the Omnibus bill, he expressed the opinion that the Tree Protection Area is a critical topic. The tree ordinance currently is too rigid in this regard; more flexibility could retain more trees.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Patti covered several topics:

- Chat function – the chat function will be available for this meeting. OSE received advice from the City Attorney's Office about its use and compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act that will be covered in the presentation later today. Any messages put into the chat will need to be read out to be in compliance with OPMA, if those messages are incorporated into UFC work. There will also be a bike rack developed for topics that come up in comment to make sure they are recorded in a place that can be followed up on for those things that Commissioners are interested in.
- Recruitments – OSE is very interested in beginning recruitment for the vacant UFC positions, and is working through the steps internal to the City that need to be done in order to begin the recruitment process. The UFC is not the only Board with vacant positions and delays in recruitments. The need to fill the UFC positions is a high priority and OSE is working hard to get the recruitment process initiated.
- Retreat – OSE is working to plan for and schedule a UFC retreat for this fall. This retreat will focus on grounding in the UFC values and goals, evaluation of UFC processes and procedures, and updating the work planning process. There will be more information on that as plans advance for it.
- Washington Community Forestry Council seeking members – The Washington Community Forestry Council is recruiting for up to five positions to start in January. There is a wide range of interests represented on the Council and professionals with non-traditional experience in urban forestry or natural resource management are encouraged to apply. The council is seeking to diversify its membership and welcomes new perspectives. They expect this recruitment to be open for about three months to give time for people to apply and to attract a robust pool of potential applicants to select from. Final recommendations for new members will be forwarded to the Commissioner of Public Lands later this fall.
- Climate Resilience Strategy – the WA Department of Ecology just released its Climate Resilience Strategy with opportunity for public comment. There are numerous references to forests and adaptation (community forestry, tree equity collaborative, watershed resilience program, beaver dam analogs, seedling supply, fire management and more) as well as an appendix from the Climate Impacts Group about measuring and evaluating resilience.

Hao provided the update that he will need to step down from his position on the UFC due to family needs. He expressed his appreciation for his experience on the UFC and noted that the July meeting will be his last meeting.

Adoption of May 8 meeting notes

Action: A motion to approve the May 8 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and approved.

Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections updates – Christy Carr, SDCI

Christy provided background information on SDCI's process for updating legislation through their Omnibus legislation process, and she walked through the items included in the Omnibus legislation. She provided information on SDCI's outreach materials, including the updates to their informational TIP sheets and new Director's Rules. She also introduced SDCI's new tree tracking data map and walked through how that works.

Questions and comments from Commissioners included:

- The tree protection area topic is confusing as to when it can or can't be modified; can clarity be provided on this?
- It was disappointing that the public comment period for the Omnibus legislation was at the same time as the Comp Plan comment period.
- Confirmation that Director's Rule 11-23, which addresses some unintended consequences related to tree protection area stemming from the new tree ordinance, is not moving forward to be finalized.
- Regarding the new tree tracking map, the symbol for "protected tree" includes trees that were not part of a project decision, so shouldn't be captured under that category; can the map be amended so that those trees have a different symbol?
- Can the map be used to note illegal tree removals (e.g. a tree that is supposed to be there is no longer there)?

Presentation debrief

Commissioners discussed bike rack items to revisit in the future:

- Spend more time on the two definitions of Tree Protection Area and when they are used.
- Updating the map to clarify the definition of "protected trees" and how the tree tracking data is visualized.

Boards and Commissions protocols and practices – OSE

Patti provided an overview of Seattle's Boards and Commissions, and reviewed OSE's work with three of these groups, including the Green New Deal Oversight Board, the Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board, and the UFC. Patti noted that there are many aspects to how the city's Boards and Commissions do their work, and there will be more discussion on a broader range of protocols and practices at the UFC retreat later in the year. This presentation included one aspect of Boards and Commissions work and support, which is public participation and input. OSE has been doing research with other Boards and Commissions liaisons and with the City Attorney's Office and Patti shared some results of that research.

Comments from Commissioners included:

- Lia wondered what the impetus was for looking into the chat function issues; she noted that it seemed like it was an intent to overhaul how the UFC does its work and functions.
- Josh noted that he appreciates what is gained from the chat, but understands the challenge and the need to figure out how to do it legally.
- Lia noted that it is important to retain the ability of the public to weigh in and to add their expertise. She noted she would like to see a more diverse array of members of the public able to comment and participate.
- One suggestion is to include a public comment period for each agenda item.
- Logan noted that there are a lot of community voices and special interest groups providing their input and concerns, and Commissioners don't have the context to understand the priorities of each group weighing in. This can make it confusing, and she wonders if it can skew the thinking of the Commission to be hearing from the interest groups.

- Hao expressed appreciation for the robust conversation on this topic, given where he comes from. The UFC does encourage active participation of the public and advocating for their rights.

Subgroup reports

- **Diversity and Equity**

The group met since the last meeting; they continue to evaluate UFC actions and challenges and how they might be updated and addressed.

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>

Public comment:

Michael Oxman noted that he submitted a code compliance complaint and was told there is a 65-day waiting list for the investigator to look into the complaints. He wonders how much money has come in from payments-in-lieu and in fines. Regarding the tree protection area: arborist reports can only be done by certified arborists because it's complicated. He noted that the chat is multi-media.

Steve Zemke emphasized Sandy's note that the residential small lot zoning is not part of the Neighborhood Residential zone according to the maps; it is listed as a separate zone when you look at the maps. He noted that the tree protection information in different parts of the tree ordinance are inconsistent with each other. He noted that there are parts of the Director's Rule for Exceptional trees that are in conflict with the ordinance. He noted that the UFC subgroup meetings originally were open to public, and he urged folks to use discretion in using the chat as the UFC is deliberating.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 PM.

Meeting chat:

from Lia Hall UFC13 to everyone: 3:17 PM

we'll miss you Hao! I understand the 2 small kid struggle though!

from David Gloger to everyone: 3:24 PM

How do you decide which issues brought up by residents are addressed in the amendments.

from David Gloger to everyone: 3:29 PM

Disappointing that the comment period for the omnibus legislation was during the same time as the comprehensive plan.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:31 PM

A note on the Tree Protection Area: Bellevue is poised to adopt a new tree code. They define this area in the same way, i.e. 1" radius to 1-ft area. However, they add a sentence that "it may instead be determined by a Qualified Tree Professional." This allows for site-specific and tree-specific design.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:31 PM

Question: why are there two definitions of TPA? What is the function?

from steve zemke to everyone: 3:33 PM

25.11.060 and 25.11.070 are in direct conflict

from steve zemke to everyone: 3:35 PM

25.11.070 applies during tree development which then allows no modification of TPA

from David Gloger to everyone: 3:35 PM

The 1 inch to 1 foot tree protection area determination seems to make it easier for a developer to cut down a tree; rather than using the dripline.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:36 PM

Agree with Steve. The public was hoping that statements which contradict each other in the code would be corrected in a clean-up bill. Otherwise, what is the point of "clean-up" if the contradiction remains?

from Hao Liang to everyone: 3:36 PM

<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/UrbanForestryCommission/2023/2023Docs/DDR112023082423.pdf>

from Martha Baskin to everyone: 3:39 PM

Please clarify the impetus for the Omnibus bill.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:45 PM

I have a question about illegal tree removals in ECAs. I understand this is now capped--under the new ordinance, as a fine of \$5k max. Whereas the old ordinance allowed the fine to include the value of the tree--exponentially more.

from Hao Liang to everyone: 3:50 PM

need to hop off for 20 mins, brb

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:54 PM

On the zoning map, RSL is completely different--listed as separate from Neighborhood Residential, not contained within it.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:56 PM

Please look at this zoning map. South Park is zones industrial. Within South Park there is no Neighborhood Residential. All of their residential is RSL:

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:56 PM

<https://seattle.gov/dpd/research/GIS/webplots/Smallzonemap.pdf>

from James Davis to everyone: 3:58 PM

Perhaps a schemata on how a green dot on map becomes a red x might be informative.

from Alicia Kellogg to everyone: 4:00 PM

I need to take off early today. Thanks Christy!

from steve zemke to everyone: 4:01 PM

Again smc 25.11.060 is in direct conflict with 25.11.070 in saving trees

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:06 PM

I'm back

from steve zemke to everyone: 4:10 PM

Public comment on draft Director's Rule on Designation of Tier 2 trees is due on June 24th.

from steve zemke to everyone: 4:12 PM

Director's Rule on Tier 2 trees is Director's Rules 7-24 <https://web.seattle.gov/dpd/dirrulesviewer/>

from David Gloger to everyone: 4:19 PM

I think that the Tier 2 DR is 7-2023

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 4:25 PM

What values and interests around public comment do you want to make sure are upheld and uplifted?

How can the UFC achieve those values while complying with OPMA and using best practices?

What other alternatives might there be?

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:29 PM

There is a name for Chat. It is called multi-media. Hope this helps.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:31 PM

I agree that the public chat is valuable. Many of the commissioners offer expertise in backgrounds other than urban forestry and can use the references and links in the chat are a way to resolve questions that come up.

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:32 PM

I'd like to see a formal opinion from City Law Dpt explaining how OPMA requires reading of all comments.

This is an instance where waiver of attorney-client privilege is warranted. IMHO.

from Martha Baskin to everyone: 4:33 PM

The UFC's role is to both represent and inform the public, to deny the public a role in the course of deliberations, negates that.

from David Gloger to everyone: 4:35 PM

Earlier presentations talked about the value of public input so don't deter it now.

from steve zemke to everyone: 4:37 PM

People can click on chat and have it available for those on line to see.

from Barbara to everyone: 4:42 PM

I appreciate the chat and feels it truly allows public participation. It also seems to work for clarification when needed, without interrupting the meeting as a whole.

Public input (additional comments received):