



**Lani Chang** (Position 3 - Natural Resource Agency or University) • **Maeve Gillis** (Position 10 – Get Engaged) • **Melanie Ocasio** (Position 11 – Environmental Justice) • **Lia Hall** (Position 13 – Community/Neighborhood)

### **Commissioners Absent**

### **Facilitators**

**Aaron Clark** (Position 1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **Drue Epping** (Position 5 – Arborist) • **Andrea Starbird** (Position 12 – Public Health) • UFC staff

### **Briefings**

Tim Lehman: Land Use, Indigenous and Tribal Perspectives

*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*

## **Minutes**

**May 13, 2026, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m**

- 1. The meeting was called to order at 3:04, the Chair conducted roll call, and the agenda was reviewed.**
- 2. The Chair facilitated Public Comment and provided a guideline to the public for engaging in this period.**

### **Steve Z made the following comments:**

- Thanks OSE on the efforts to fill the vacant positions on the UFC. However, he notes that he did not see this news promoted through other channels (email blast to public, on UFC webpage, etc.). He encourages to explore these options as soon and potentially extend the deadline if needed to gather as many applications as possible.
- Appreciates that OSE has updated the website but notes that there are some items that are still missing from last year. He emphasizes the value of those records for tracking UFC business.
- Re: Procedure – Notes that the UFC is conducting a vote on the Comprehensive Plan comments, but that it is difficult for the public to follow along with comments being

put forward on it if the draft is not available. Compared this to how the Seattle City Council handles their process and how the UFC used to do this similar process.

**Susan F. made the following comments:**

- Expressed concern about the UFC being excluded from “Taller, Faster, Denser” closed door meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, and how this meeting is focused on building more/increasing density. Is unsure why environmental or scientific perspectives, and conversations surrounding ecological health were not included in this meeting.
- Provided some information about her background notes some concerns about how climate discussions do not include certain considerations such as degradation of the Earth’s natural system.
- Provided context about the loss of tree canopy leading to an imbalanced ecological system that leads to intensifying rainstorms and flooding. She related this to King County’s requirement to maintain one event per year regardless of the state/federal regulations and is seeking answers on this.
- Wonders when the City will prioritize environmental health and balance to ensure long-term sustainability. Encourages folks to share insights on this.

**3. Vote: Approve Meeting Notes from 10/08/2025 and 04/08/2026**

- Maeve motions to approve, Melanie and Lani seconded.
- UFC unanimously approved both set of notes.

**4. Updates & Announcements**

- Lia: Provided an updated about the public safety and space activation efforts in the Rainier Beach Corridor. Shared that they had a meeting with various organizations/stakeholders. (Seattle Parks (SPR), school/community center folks, SPD, local food banks, etc.). Notes that it’s a great exercise to bring the community together. Happy to share more if folks are interested.
  - Drue asked for clarification on one of the participants (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and Lia provided more background.
- Drue: Mentioned Portland’s tree equity efforts on taking back management of right of way trees and thought that it was a cool/interesting initiative to share for everyone’s awareness. Can also share information with Commissioners.
- Andrea: Provided an update to the UFC about the meeting she, Aaron, and Maeve had with Councilmember Foster’s staff. Mentioned what was discussed such as the primary goals for the year, the main priorities of the workplan, and the questions CM Foster’s team asked, and establishing a relationship for future engagement.
  - Aaron supported this summary and added that it was a collegial meeting with a lot of curiosity, and a great way to establish these doors of communications to be an effective advisory body.
  - Drue: Added that this was awesome and voiced how appreciative she is for excited to get quorum up so that more folks can participate in things like this.

- Hannah:
  - Reminded folks about recruitment for vacant or soon-to-be vacant positions ending over the weekend on 05/17 - encouraged everyone to keep sharing.
  - Flagged that OSE is conducting a Climate Action Plan (CAP) survey to get community input until 06/30, provided context on the CAP and encouraged everyone to complete/share.

## 5. Discussion: Governance Subcommittee Recommendations

- Aaron provided a high-level overview of what the Governance Subcommittee has been working on while Hannah shared the draft of the first round of recommendations on the screen.
  - First round of recommendations (out of three) formalized and clarify best practices for lot of the UFC communication protocols
  - Goal is to ensure everyone is on the same page when it comes to communication protocols and referring to the same resource.
- Aaron and Lauren discussed next steps of conducting a *contingent* approval of on this document/set of recommendations and clarified what that would mean for the next rounds.
  - Drue noted that this is a similar process to what they've done with letters to expedite the process and agrees that this is a reasonable process.
- Sean: Foreshadowed what next steps/subjects will look like in the round II and II, and notes that additional clarification on previous rounds can be expanded in this process.
- Discussion/Comments:
  - Drue thanked everyone for their time and noted that this is a great reference document to utilize to organize and take action more effectively. Reflects on how this would've been a great resource as a new Commissioner.
  - Aaron/Andrea/Maeve: Gave shoutouts to Sean for his hard work and expertise on guiding this process. Appreciated everyone's participation.
  - Maeve: Encouraged folks to reach out if something needs further clarification.
  - Lia: Thanks everyone for their hard work on putting this together and hopes that this will help the UFC be more productive moving forward. Asked more clarification on the external communications piece located in the reference table – does presenting before a committee or making a public comment fall under this? Would like to also consider if there is a protocol around speaking out as a unified voice in these situations as well.
    - Aaron: Yes, and there are examples to refer to where you can state your individual/Commissioner capacity when you do so to make that distinction.
    - Sean: Agrees that a section in the table can be clarified further on what the examples are to avoid confusion.
  - Lia: Asks about social media and what guidelines will be available for navigating that – refers to the Instagram she started some time ago.

- Sean: Refers to a section in the document that does touch on social media engagement, and notes that they can go back and see how that can be clarified further.
- Drue adds that it's important to be mindful on making that distinction between speaking as a Commissioner vs. Individual and to be aware of what context/space the information being communicated is being made in. Thinks it would be a good idea to collate some concepts/statements that the UFC has built on in the past to ensure that there can be clear opinions folks can draw from.
- Aaron conducted the contingent voting process to adopt the first round of protocols (note that this was pushed towards the end of the meeting after the Comprehensive Plan letter discussion/vote).
  - Drue makes a motion to adopt. Melanie seconds.
  - UFC unanimously approves the contingent adoption.

## 6. Briefing: Land Use, Indigenous and Tribal Perspectives

- Tim introduced himself, his background, and role at OPCD.
  - Shared OPCD Organization Chart and discussed who he reports to
- Comprehensive Planning in the City/Region
  - Started in this position by working on the Comprehensive Plan work and regional center planning.
  - At the time, it was evident that the Comprehensive Plan needed more inclusive language and policies to help communities specifically
- Indigenizing the Comprehensive Plan
  - Outreach to indigenous communities, policy and narrative creation base on local indigenous community needs
  - Received feedback from the tribes that were reached out to
- Regional Centers Planning
  - Regional centers planning is still current - final edits are going into Downtown and Northgate regional centers.
    - Northgate is focused on community analysis and what community exists, such as creating a planting indigenous planting guide for public and private properties.
    - Downtown is focused on native businesses and organizations, creating an indigenous inclusivity guide that will come later – more to come.
  - Ballard and University District centers planning is starting, along with the Uptown and South Lake Union centers.
    - University District focusing more on college students, incorporating the importance of generationality in native culture and indigenize the workflow – benefits all cultures in the end.
    - Ballard focuses on the cultural significance of salmon in this area and the connectivity/accessibility to water.

- Currently having hand in this to provide an urban native voice and explaining different narratives where these communities sit, and how to plan for that in these centers.
- Native Neighborhoods
  - Concept to increase multiple nodes throughout Seattle, focusing on Seattle's Native and Indigenous populations.
    - Nodes would provide housing, servicing, programming, etc. that are more suited for native communities.
    - Create places of healing or belonging
    - Provides background of the Indian Relocation Act of 1956 to Seattle history and how this work addresses the ramifications of that.
- Station Area Planning
  - Notes that this work is very collaborative with indigenous native population and other offices to find solutions in lieu of a budget. Adds the collaborative aspect important as this work needs to come from the community.
- Indigenizing ST3
  - Tim is focusing on developing cultural narratives, community storytelling, and creating a design toolkit for the neighborhoods in these stations. Currently dealing with uncertainty due to budgeting statewide.
  - Developing a process to research, developing, and sharing native and indigenous tribal narratives that can be used to inform the planning and outcomes to reflect the cultural art of these communities.
- Equitable Development Initiative Background
  - \$7.2 Million has been awarded to go to an indigenous Duwamish Valley Youth Center.
  - Taking some time to clean it up (litigation concerns) and will hopefully start soon.
- OED Indigenous Economic Development Center
  - Finalizing a report in collaboration with OED and making sure that folks are aware of the issues the native community deals with
  - Resources to help with these issues such as with college applications, GED applications, computer use, and mini store.
- Fort Lawton Housing Project
  - Office of Housing is working on up to 500 affordable housing units, and three developers have been awarded for that
  - About land swap right now – final stages of EIS to be released publicly and have public comments so land can be purchased.
  - Started in 2008 and finally getting near finish line.
- Native Food Forest
  - Working collaborative with other offices to do a Native Food Forest in Barton Woods @ North Seattle College

- Has some reservations due to previous engagements with the school but is excited for this to take off if it works out.
- Additional 2026 OPCD Native Communities
  - Tim is usually in community engagement and meetings to make sure the information being shared gets back to OPCD
  - Ideal to make connections across City office government and break down barriers to be more collaborative.
- Comments/Questions:
  - Drue: Appreciates Tim for his presentation and recognizes the breadth of projects and work that he does by himself. Mentions interest in the planting guide.
    - Tim: Can provide the planting guide and would love UFC to give it a review/input– gave some context about the work being put into it by a UW Bothell student but notes that it can use some polishing.
  - Tim: Mentioned that Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs) are coming back. Provides some context to what work was done on this before and also mentioned that he would like to engage and keep the UFC updated in this as well.
    - Drue: Agrees that would be great and happy to share and look for more resources to support.
    - Tim: Adds that Redmond is doing a lot of good work when it comes CMTs and how they handle their process.
  - Lia: Thanks Tim for his presentation and an important piece of the City and to know what is happening in Seattle. Is curious what the work with Seattle Parks is like and what the guidance would be for native plantings.
    - Tim: Mentioned that he has a relationship with Green Seattle Partnership colleagues and stays connected with what SPR is doing.
      - Acknowledges time is spent to determine who should be taking what work given that there is some ambiguity in certain spaces. Notes that there have been a lot of talks about people needing to connect with tribes and consideration what that means.
      - Hope is to try to mend relationships and move forward together to collaborate on working with indigenous relevant nature species.
  - Drue: Did you have anything else to share from a community engagement when it comes to the Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood areas?
    - Tim: Happy to share the inclusivity guide and downtown report with additional materials indicating what the local community is expecting and showcasing what has been done up to this point.

- Aaron: Appreciates Tim for the knowledge he shared. Reflects on what the UFC does and can do and wonders how to be more intentional with their engagement (operationalize with check-ins, etc.), and seeks feedback on how the UFC can think about this more thoroughly and what to watch out for.
  - Tim: Encourages the UFC to engage him as much as they'd like to support their efforts and provide feedback and guidance as necessary. Notes the dynamics to be cognizant of when it comes to interacting with Tribes and communities for general consideration as well.
- Melanie: Mentioned the UFC's previous work on creating a land acknowledgement, and inquires if Tim would be a good contact to get some feedback and assistance with it.
  - Tim: Yes, though notes that the City doesn't really do land acknowledgements anymore but would be happy to give some feedback to help with the process.

#### **7. Vote: Comp Plan 2026 Recommendations**

- Drue gave overview of the letter structure and content.
  - Framing of heat dome issue in WA state in 2021 and how urban areas have more heat impacts.
  - Show size of the Comprehensive Plan but encourages Council to mindfulness of canopy in areas that are densifying during the Comprehensive Plan.
  - Provided data to support the need to address these impacts and what information they can consider - calls trees out as critical green infrastructure.
- Agree to a vote to approve with suggested minor edits made during discussion.
  - Aaron motions to approve this letter with suggested minor edits. Melanie and Andrea second accordingly.
  - UFC unanimously approve the letter with minor edits.
- Questions/Comments:
  - Lia: Appreciates the inclusion of the map and notes how the visual aids like this is helpful to convey information and keep the audience's attention.
  - Maeve: Appreciates the letter and what its recommendations are. Suggests adding Councilmember districts to the map to provide context for how they can consider their constituents.
    - Multiple Commissioners agree with this with the consideration that the maps don't become too complicated with any additional information.
  - Andrea/Maeve: Both add feedback that referring to the map earlier in the letter would be a great way to support the recommendations as a data driven point.

- Lia: Wonders what other layers we can also edit/include.
  - Lani: Yes, confirms there can be more information if folks are interested in adding.
- Melanie: Suggests including an environmental justice perspective – to reframe for a broader equity lens and not just referring to tree canopy equity.
  - Lia: Adds that the equity priority areas is something that can be referenced to support this, and a side by side of with this information would be helpful.
- Aaron: Expressed how proud he is of the UFC for the work they're doing for this and believes that this is a great product to show the value of their work and experience. Highlights how referencing other cities work would be helpful (cool corridors) and sees this as a great resource.

## **8. Second Public Comment (if time allows)**

### **Steve Z. made the following comments:**

- Provided feedback that he thought the UFC is doing a great job working together and doing good comment on the Comprehensive plan.
- Advises the UFC to keep people they know in mind to help fill in vacant positions and provide additional perspectives/expertise to help with this work.
- Notes his previous concerns about the loophole in the Canopy Studies – specifically about how removed trees are not counted as a loss during development. Urges the UFC to take this seriously and hopes the City will take a note of this.
  - Refers to two studies done – one by the City and the other by University of Vermont - about the impact of development on tree loss.

## **9. The meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.**

## Meeting Chat:

### **Drue Epping Arborist #5, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 3:05 PM**

To ensure a respectful and productive meeting for everyone, please keep the following guidelines in mind while using the chat box: Refrain from Disrupting Presentations & Business Items: Please refrain from using the chat box during presentations or business proceedings to respect our presenters' time and keep focus on the task at hand. Public comments should only be made during the designated public comment periods. Be Respectful: We ask that all comments remain kind, and respectful of all participants, including presenters, volunteer commissioners, staff, and fellow attendees. Disrespectful or off-topic messages may lead to changes for chat accessibility in meetings. Stay On Topic: Please keep your comments focused on the agenda items and topics being discussed during the meeting. We accept email submissions of other items and topics that can be distributed to UFC commissioners between meetings. By participating, you agree to follow these guidelines so we can maintain a respectful and effective meeting environment for everyone. Thank you for your cooperation!

### **Susan Fedore, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 3:05 PM**

I'd like to offer comment today. Trying to start video, but it's not cooperating for some reason.

### **Pascual, Hannah, 05/13/2026, 3:25 PM**

Survey Link: 10-minute survey

Webpage: [Seattle's Climate Action Plan](#)

Related social media posts:

- [OSE Blog](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [X](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

### **Drue Epping Arborist #5, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 3:34 PM**

Love a table!! this rocks

### **Lani Chang #3, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 3:52 PM**

Second Drue! Thanks for all of y'all's work on this!

### **SM Watts Consulting, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 3:59 PM**

Hey Tim!!

**SM Watts Consulting, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:02 PM**

@Lia Hall #13: FYI: social media is addressed in footnote #3 at the top of page 5: "A public record is defined as any writing that is prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local government agency, and which contains information that relates to the conduct of government, or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function. The term "writing" is broadly defined to include not only traditional written records, but also photos, maps, videos, voicemails, webpages, emails, text messages, and social media content. "

**Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:05 PM**

Thanks Sean. It may be helpful for whoever is "driving" to have more guidance there especially when it comes to reposting or liking? Also, I'm not sure how it was missed, but I was hoping to be involved in this subgroup work, so I'll be sure to reach out through the proper communication channels.

**Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:21 PM**

Thanks Lia, I think this is covered under general guidelines for external correspondence (2b on page 2), but I pulled language from the footnote to emphasize this. And yes, let Lauren and Hannah know re: Subcomm participation (I think we will be switching out folks in the summer?).

**Drue Epping Arborist #5, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:03 PM**

OIR = Office of Intergovernmental Relations

**Drue Epping Arborist #5, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:15 PM**

Edited

CMTs = culturally modified trees

**Andrea Starbird (#12), Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:30 PM**

Thank you!!

**Maeve Gillis (Position 10), Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:30 PM**

Tim, thank you so much for the presentation

**Lia Hall #13, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:51 PM**

Edited

RSJI? Race and Social Justice Index

**Lani Chang #3, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:51 PM**

[https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/WA/Seattle/area\\_descriptions/A3#loc=11/47.5936/-122.3411](https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/WA/Seattle/area_descriptions/A3#loc=11/47.5936/-122.3411)

^ redlining map that Lia was talking about

**Lia Hall #13, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:53 PM**

RSJI <https://data-seattlecitygis.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/SeattleCityGIS::racial-and-social-equity-composite-index-current/explore?location=47.617105%2C-122.298849%2C11>

**Lia Hall #13, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:54 PM**

Tree Equity [https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OSE/UrbanForestry/Tree\\_Equity\\_Plan\\_Priority\\_Locations\\_For\\_web.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OSE/UrbanForestry/Tree_Equity_Plan_Priority_Locations_For_web.pdf)

**Lani Chang #3, Unverified, 05/13/2026, 4:55 PM**

Just updated the online map so y'all should be able to see the districts now. I don't think it looks too distracting