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*

December 14, 2016
DRAFT Meeting Notes
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners
Tom Early – chair
Steve Zemke – vice-chair
Weston Brinkley
Leif Fixen
Reid Haefer
Erik Rundell
Andrew Zellers

Staff
Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Shane DeWald – SDOT
Deb Heiden - SPU
Brent Schmidt - SCL

Public
Michael Oxman
Lance Young

Absent- Excused
Donna Kostka
Richard Martin
Joanna Nelson de Flores

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
Michael Oxman – He was looking at the last few agendas and progress report and work plan and noticed that the UFC has not yet moved forward a tree ordinance. Things are backwards and he would encourage the UFC to not delay this. He heard the Parks performance report which says that they have enough funding, staff, and equipment but the work is not getting done. He noticed metal pegs on trees at Parks and he has been asking what trees will be removed and which will be pruned. He has not received information back. Parks staff responded that they are not ready to provide the information. He will be making a public records request. He went to the South Seattle College and saw the presentation that will be shared today.

Lance Young – He would like to talk about the tree preservation issue he has been talking to the UFC before. This is the single most damaging issue affecting Seattle's trees. He has support from different groups.

Provided documents that SCL is taking more canopy than other utilities. Instead of providing Lance with a forum to express his issues. He feels like this is a trial without allowing any cross-examination. It doesn't feel like an equitable and fair exchange of ideas. People would be very disappointed if they don't get support from the UFC.

Trees: Stormwater Infrastructure… from the Roots Up! – Shane Dewald (SDOT)/Deb Heiden (SPU)
Shane and Deb provided a presentation about work that SDOT and SPU have done together. And showed photos of projects that have incorporated trees as part of green stormwater infrastructure. 275 of the land in Seattle is designated as public right-of-way (regulated by SDOT); 20% of the land is parks/open space or publicly owned lands.

The City has been looking at a combination of three methods to manage stormwater: preserved mature trees and open space, new trees and bioretention, and detention & underground infrastructure. The Good Neighbor Policy dictates unique, variable, multi-cultural, and multi-disciplinary approaches.

Shane and Deb showed a series of projects that have improved neighborhoods and stormwater retention functions. Projects include: The Ave (U. District), Vine Street, SPU natural drainage projects, SeaStreets, Broadview/Pinehurst Green Grid, Thornton Creek Confluence and Knickerbocker Floodplain; Midvale Detention Pond; Venema Creek; Ballard & Delridge; Mercer Corridor; Amazon/South Lake Union; and in the future, the Central Waterfront and 520.

Trees are the common denominator. The City has new ordinances to prioritize and protect street trees, and is working to protect trees on new construction projects. SDOT is planting conifers wherever and whenever possible.

Thornton Creek Restoration Film: https://vimeo.com/128652416

Preparedness Strategy letter of recommendation – discussion and possible vote
The Commission briefly talked about this last week. Now there is a draft recommendation on the table for input. Commissioners provided input and adopted the letter as amended.
> **ACTION: A motion to approve the letter of recommendation as amended was made, seconded, and approved.**

SCL pruning practices letter – initial discussion
Last week the Commission discussed a letter that would stem out of the conversations around SCL pruning policies. The idea is to look at efficiencies that could be gained from issues SCL shared with the UFC during the past SCL tour. There are different departments trying to do their work but the entities that do the work are finding hiccups. Maybe a call to action to look at ways to make pruning crews more efficient and maybe point out the fact that there are electrical hazards out there and acknowledge that SCL and SDOT have different baskets of money to do this work. Tom wonders if the benefits will outweigh the challenges.

Look at comprehensively addressing this and maybe recommend an independent study. Can cost be decreased and efficiencies increased? And maybe find a way to reduce loss of tree canopy resulting from longer pruning cycles. Can cycle times be reduced?

There is a loss of efficiency when you change pruning cycle, even if you shorten it. Might recommend efficiencies before recommending what a pruning cycle should be.

Commission discussed the issue.

Might want to consider changing things to increase efficiencies between crews (SDOT, SCL, and Parks). Exploration of potential efficiencies for SDOT and SCL to go out to prune same areas of town. Brent clarified that SCL can only do utility related work (due to being funded by rate payers). It's not just an issue of SDOT getting their tree trimmers certified to do line clearance work, it's also a union issue.

UW Urban Forestry Management Plan – letter of recommendation discussion
Sandra shared with the Commission. Produce draft for discussion at January 4 meeting.

DRAFT 2016 Annual Report and 2017 Work Plan - initial discussion
Commissioners will review and provide input at the next meeting.

Public comment
None.

New Business
None.

Adjourn

Public input:
None