



City of Seattle
Urban Forestry Commission

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

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

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

Laura Keil (Position #10 – Get Engaged), Co-Chair

Julia Michalak (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **Falisha Kurji** (Position #3 – Natural Resource Agency)

Stuart Niven (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA) • **Hao Liang** (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA)

David Baker (Position # 8 – Development) • **Jessica Hernandez** (Position #11 – Environmental Justice)

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

July 12, 2023, 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: 2484 474 4224

Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners

Becca Neumann – Co-Chair

Laura Keil – Co-Chair

Falisha Kurji

Hao Liang

David Baker

Lia Hall

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Toby Thaler

Absent- Excused

Josh Morris – Co-Chair

Stuart Niven

Jessica Hernandez

Jessica Jones

Public

Kathleen Kirkoff

Steve Zemke

David Moehring

Tina Cohen

Sandy Shettler

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

Public comment:

Kathleen Kirkoff recommended a book on urban and planet heating for Commissioners to read, *The Heat Will Kill You First*, noting that trees are a crucial part of making sure our city is survivable in the future. Also, UW has a program called the Livable City, to partner with cities and communities to address problems. We don't have good data, and insufficient funds is cited as the reason for not having good data. Partnering with this program could provide more data. Other cities in the area, including Bellevue and Auburn, have worked on projects with the program, but Seattle hasn't yet.

Steve Zemke commented on the Director's Rules (DR). The DR on Tier 2 trees doesn't mention tree groves; the UFC should recommend that the DR explain what happens with tree groves when one tree is removed, etc. There should also be a DR for Heritage Trees because they are included in the ordinance and there are areas to clarify around these trees. The fees in the DR on in lieu fees have been increased. The UFC should recommend that the 12-24" fees should be increased to \$4,000. Also, regarding the budget, now is the time to be submitting recommendations because they are starting to put the budget together now.

David Moehring encouraged the UFC to connect with the Seattle chapter of the American Institute of Architects, to review some of the past good examples of where there was multi-family development that retained exceptional trees. Regarding budget recommendations, David noted his recommendations on what investments are needed within the next 15 years to reach the 30% canopy cover the city has committed to: 1,000 acres of canopy are needed, which means planting 60-80,000 trees. At \$2,833 trees, multiplied by the number of trees needed, that would require \$170M. At the \$4,000 cost, that would be closer to \$240M for 60,000 trees. The trees to be planted with the expected in-lieu fees received would be a drop in the bucket in this need. UFC guidance is needed to advise the city on these investments needed.

Tina Cohen followed up on her comments from the previous meeting regarding how hard the UFC works and what the UFC can do to get the City Council to pay attention to the resulting recommendations.

Sandy Shettler noted that it is no longer possible to get Arborist reports on development sites, and requested follow up on that and how to make the reports more easily accessible again.

Michael Oxman with the Seattle Green Spaces Coalition suggested requesting an add of \$50,000 for a natural capital assessment to the budget recommendations. This is an environmental and equity issue. The funding would support a consultant to help departments incorporate the dollar value of ecosystem benefits into their systems. A growing body of economics and experience points to not just counting these assets, but assessing and supporting the critical ecosystems. We need to value these assets in the same way we do the gray infrastructure.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Patti noted, regarding the UFC appointments, there are three positions we've been working to fill on the UFC – Positions 1, 2 and 9, which are Council, Mayor and Commission-appointed positions, respectively. All positions need to be confirmed by Council – first the Land Use Committee and then the full Council. Council has been extremely busy and there is a backlog of appointments to process because of their schedule. The Land Use Committee was able to process the Mayor-appointed positions on Boards and Commissions last week, so that included UFC's position 2, to which Alicia Kellogg has been appointed. Those appointments were approved by the full Council yesterday, so Alicia is now official as a Commissioner. The Land Use Committee does not meet again now until September and they're expected to take up the remaining appointments then. Also, the recruitment process for the next cohort of Get Engaged members is moving along well. Interviews have been conducted and the GE program staff are now moving appointments forward, with the expectation of having them confirmed in early September. Laura's term will end at the end of August and the new GE member will start in September.

Patti also provided other several updates:

- City Urban Forester position – OSE leadership has been working on developing this new position so that recruitment for it can start and we can get that position filled. That process is almost complete and the announcement for it is expected to be posted very soon.
- Canopy assessment GIS layers – city IT staff have been working to process and review the GIS layers and data provided by the canopy assessment consultant, so that they can be published and available online. That process has now been done, and the layers are available through ArcGIS Online: [2021 Tree Canopy layer gallery](#).
- SDCI has posted information on the upcoming changes in tree regulations on their Building Connections page: [New Tree Regulations Coming Soon! \(seattle.gov\)](#)

City budget recommendations

Commissioners reviewed the status of the draft UFC budget recommendations, as discussed at the last meeting. A recommendation was added to provide funding for the Natural Capital Assessment that was taken out of the 2020 budget. Commissioners reviewed and edited most of the remaining recommendations, with the exception of the last item on monitoring and evaluation, and noted that this discussion on budget recommendations will continue at next week's meeting.

Tree protection ordinance Director's Rules

Patti reviewed the process for these Director's Rules (DR), as they were published last week, and public comment is open through July 21. She walked through the content of both DRs – DR 7-2023 on designation of Tier 2 Trees, and DR 8-2023 – Payment in lieu payment amounts. Commissioners discussed initial thoughts and potential feedback on the DRs. Becca volunteered to draft a set of recommendations based on the initial feedback discussed today, to be discussed and adopted at next week's meeting.

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:

Steve Zemke noted that trees are natural capital providing ecological and economic benefits. Tree replacement takes decades, while the impacts of removal are felt now. The UFC is raising good questions about what it takes to replace trees. He agreed with the comment about requiring trees in affordable housing projects.

Michael Oxman noted that in Director's Rule (DR) 8-2023, the amounts are not based on industry standards. The Guide to Plant Appraisal is referred to, but they aren't using the content of it. The DR doesn't reflect differences in trees and differences in their values. Position of the tree on the lot should be included in the DR (e.g., a front door tree is more valuable than a back yard tree.)

Kathleen Kirkoff again suggested looking at the Livable City program at UW, especially in regard to the UFC's community communications and coordination. She suggested reviewing some of the projects that they've worked on for other cities where they use students to go out into the community to gather information the city doesn't have funding to do.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 PM.

Meeting chat:

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:08 PM

I would like to make a quick comment

from Lia Hall to everyone: 3:09 PM

I was listening about that on fresh air today

from D Moehring to everyone: 3:13 PM

Encourage meeting with Seattle AIA new chapter chair, Matt. Look at GOOD multifamily design with trees saved but would not be saved with the new 2023 code (SMC 25.11.070 and SMC.11.080):

- a- 827 NE 98th St
- b- 625 and 629 W Emerson St
- c- 1211 NE 104th St
- d- 2030 NW 62nd
- e - 2042 NW 62nd
- f - 3509 W Thurman
- g - 6406 14th Ave NW
- h - 2002 NW 60th St
- i - 6105 20th Ave NW
- j - 3601 12th Ave W
- k -12051 20th Ave NE
- l - 848 NW 53rd St

m - 2630 Shoreland Dr S Thank you!

from D Moehring to everyone: 3:21 PM

Recap of public comment on budget: 1000 acres of trees needed to achieve 30% equitable citywide canopy cover by 2037. 1000 acres is roughly 60,000 to 80,000 trees. The budget for the City of Seattle to plant that many trees to reach the Comprehensive Plan objective may range from \$170-Million to \$240-million (if roughly at least \$2833 to \$4000 for each tree). Thank you!

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:25 PM

Given the workload expected of the UFC volunteer commissioners, it is concerning that the LUC can't take the extremely small amount of time to confirm candidates and fill each post.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 3:26 PM

Natural Capital Assessment article. <https://www.theurbanist.org/2020/06/23/seattle-should-count-its-ecological-assets/>

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:28 PM

<https://seattlecitygis.maps.arcgis.com/home/gallery.html?sortField=relevance&sortOrder=desc&searchTerm=tree+canopy+2021&categories=%2FCategories%2FCommon+Data+Layers>

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:28 PM

I think the UFC could write a letter about this to the Council with a special request!

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 3:30 PM

The Building Connections Newsletter makes the following erroneous statement: "trees under 6 inches DSH are not regulated by SMC 25.11".

Of course, any tree required to be planted by a permit (usually 1.5" caliper) must be kept alive indefinitely.

Am I wrong on this?

Ox

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:30 PM

Good point Michael.

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:32 PM

<https://buildingconnections.seattle.gov/2023/07/06/new-tree-regulations-coming-soon/>

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 3:32 PM

We are urging you to consider adding \$50,000 minimum to the 2024 budget for a natural capital consultant (see attached letter).

The City Council included money in the 2020 budget for a natural capital consultant, but the city did not spend it. The vetting process for this appropriation began with strong advocacy from the SGSC that yielded a 2016 SLI, responses in 2017 from FAS and Council Staff, and a 2019 support letter co-signed by more than two dozen organizations and individuals -- including REI, PCC Natural Markets, Tilth Alliance, the Duwamish Tribe, and many others.

This is both an environmental and equity issue. CM Herbold took the lead on getting the 2020 appropriation, and we hope you will again favor it. The minimum \$50,000 appropriation would fund a consultant who can help city departments and offices incorporate the dollar values of ecosystem benefits and savings into Seattle's accounting, financial and C-B analysis structures. Seattle and King County have both

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:32 PM

If the LUC had confirmed all the applicants there would be a quorum:)

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:45 PM

The Planning Commission has 2 full time staff people. Patti's job is only half time for UFC.

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 3:45 PM

When will City Forester position be announced?

from Falisha to everyone: 3:48 PM

Seattle Parks Foundation would be interested in sponsoring the UFC and I'm happy to facilitate that when we're ready

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:52 PM

Thank you Falisha!

from Falisha to everyone: 3:52 PM

I know the Dept of Ecology uses the State's community compensation guidelines. I can try to find it

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 3:55 PM

Posted Today!:

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 3:55 PM

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/seattle/jobs/4118909/senior-urban-forestry-advisor?keywords=tree&pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:58 PM

Should be urging people have urban forestry background not just an arborist.

from Falisha to everyone: 4:02 PM

Compensation guidelines - They don't provide suggested amounts here

<https://equity.wa.gov/people/community-compensation-guidelines>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:03 PM

Should require that in-lieu fees be updated every budget cycle like Portland does. Add to in-lieu Director's Rule.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:08 PM

eb

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:08 PM

very few years is vague update annually or every budget cycle

from Laura Keil she/her to everyone: 4:09 PM

good point thanks Steve

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:17 PM

Seems like the urban forester position is changing from an urban forest expert to a communications person.

The senior urban forester advisor position does not require the person to even have a degree in urban forestry. according to the job description just released

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:22 PM

Should include language stating that Tier 3 trees are also known as exceptional trees. Why are they trying to remove commonly used terminology to define these trees.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:22 PM

Need to include tree grove

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:23 PM

Need to include tree groves that are also Tier 2.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:24 PM

Red alders are the predominant species in a number of Seattle Parks, such as along Green Lake., where they are valued as a quintessential first-succession tree.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:25 PM

Horse chestnuts form a large part of Seattle's urban canopy. For example, 17th Ave NE for several blocks is shaded by a cathedral of horse chestnuts, as is Olmstead-designed Ravenna Blvd.

from Laura Keil she/her to everyone: 4:25 PM

Thanks Sandy - helpful insight

from Tina Cohen to everyone: 4:26 PM

Alders are abundant trees. Many municipalities exempt them.

Cottonwoods are badly behaved in urban sites, tend to drop large branches

from Tina Cohen to everyone: 4:27 PM

Indeed !

But short lived and tend towards becoming high risk ;urban settings

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:27 PM

In-lieu fees in this proposal are not based on industry standards. This Directors Rule assumes all species have the same value. It uses a base value that is not tied to the Consumer Price Index, not tied to the good, fair, or poor condition of the tree, nor the position of the tree location in the landscape.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:28 PM

They still need to be replaced id removed and pay an in lieu fee.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:28 PM

eagle like cotton wood trees.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:29 PM

Add tree grob

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:30 PM

Add tree groves in this Director's Rule as their are Tier two trees.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:31 PM

Bitter cherries hybridize with other kinds of cherries and can form beautiful trees, which are excluded from protection because they have bitter cherry in them. Maybe one of the arborists can speak to this. Two huge cherries are being cut down in Beacon Hill because they are partly bitter cherry.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:32 PM

Thanks everyone for your hard work, I have to leave early.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:32 PM

Please see my 3 minute video primer about tree appraisal. <https://youtu.be/A2IBR0ITnKk>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:35 PM

Should increase Tier 3 trees in lieu to cover cost of planting and maintenance, otherwise tayers are paying to replace them.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:36 PM

Need to add update fees yearly or every 2 year budget cycle.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:37 PM

12" DBH tree cost is same as 23" DBH trees Fee should increase with size of tree.

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:37 PM

Unfortunately fee in lieu won't help people paying increased cooling costs when their shade is gone

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:38 PM

Cost was not passed in ordinance. It is done in Director's Rules.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:39 PM

Suggest consider 12 - 24" DNH should be \$4000 or start \$12

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:39 PM

start at \$17.87 at 12" diameter.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:43 PM

Tier 4 trees should include new trees planted as a permit requirement.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:43 PM

Thanks David -agree should include names people have used for many years like Tier 1 or Heritage Trees, Tier 2 - Exceptional trees. if not in Director's Rule where do people find

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:44 PM

where do people find the common definition?

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:45 PM

Confusing to me too

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:45 PM

\$17.87 is square inch of tree diameter at 4.5 feet high.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:45 PM

The science of tree appraisal has been stripped out of this Directors Rule. Science has been replaced by sticker shock that could lead to backlash & reversal during legal appeal.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:49 PM

The industry standard is published in the guide for plant appraisal, authored by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers, & published by the ISA.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:51 PM

[https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=718597cb775f4128JmltdHM9MTY4OTEyMDAwMCZpZ3VpZD0wZDZhYjE1Mi1lNjE1LTU0NTgtMjEwMS1hMjU5ZTdhZjY1N2EmaW5zaWQ9NTE3NA&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=0d2ab152-e615-6458-2101-](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=718597cb775f4128JmltdHM9MTY4OTEyMDAwMCZpZ3VpZD0wZDZhYjE1Mi1lNjE1LTU0NTgtMjEwMS1hMjU5ZTdhZjY1N2EmaW5zaWQ9NTE3NA&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=0d2ab152-e615-6458-2101-a259e7af657a&psq=guide+for+plant+appraisal+ctla&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3YuaXNhLWFyYm9yLmNvbS9zdG9yZS9wcm9kdWN0LzQzOTAv&ntb=1)

[a259e7af657a&psq=guide+for+plant+appraisal+ctla&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3YuaXNhLWFyYm9yLmNvbS9zdG9yZS9wcm9kdWN0LzQzOTAv&ntb=1](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=718597cb775f4128JmltdHM9MTY4OTEyMDAwMCZpZ3VpZD0wZDZhYjE1Mi1lNjE1LTU0NTgtMjEwMS1hMjU5ZTdhZjY1N2EmaW5zaWQ9NTE3NA&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=0d2ab152-e615-6458-2101-a259e7af657a&psq=guide+for+plant+appraisal+ctla&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3YuaXNhLWFyYm9yLmNvbS9zdG9yZS9wcm9kdWN0LzQzOTAv&ntb=1)

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:52 PM

If the tree is replanted on property it was removed from, there is no in lieu fee. this encourages trees removed to be replaced on property rather than elsewhere.

from Michael Oxman to everyone: 4:54 PM

Here's the worksheet for appraisal. It does not resemble this Directors Rule. Does it? https://www.isa-arbor.com/store/productfiles/GuideforPlantAppraisal10thEditionRevised-2181-03_GPA.pdf

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:54 PM

Just round up to \$25/sq in

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:55 PM

And community development projects

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:56 PM

Low income housing residents deserve high quality urban forest resources. We are facing huge negative climate impacts that impact low income communities more than any other.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:57 PM

Allow Director to adjust in lieu fee for low income homeowners that can not afford. They are required to pay for hazard trees removed or replace them on lot.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 5:02 PM

Their next meeting is next week.

Public input (additional comments received):