



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 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

January 3, 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: 2487 869 6713

Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair
Becca Neumann – Co-Chair
Hao Liang – Co-Chair
Alicia Kellogg
David Baker
Nathan Collins
Lia Hall

Absent- Excused

Logan Woodyard
Jessica Hernandez
Jessica Jones

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Public

Steve Zemke
Richard Ellison
Sandy Shettler
David Moehring

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 SDCI released TIP 242A, for which public comment is open through Friday. He urged requesting that the public comment period be extended. He noted that in recent reports of canopy information, only trees to be planted have been noted, not the size or type of trees to be planted. That information is important in evaluating canopy goals in the future and whether the city can meet the 30% goal by 2037.

Richard Ellison encouraged the UFC to invite new Councilmembers to come to UFC meetings. He also discussed TIP 242A; it aims to educate homeowners on what's allowed with trees. He noted that it's written as if the city is protecting trees, but the 85% lot coverage will actually end up being 100% coverage. He expressed that it's important for the UFC to educate the City Council on how the ordinance handles development requirements/allowances, and that there's a discrepancy between what homeowners are allowed to do and what developers are allowed to do.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Patti noted that City Council committee assignments have been made and were approved by Council yesterday. Councilmember Morales will be the new Chair for the Land Use Committee, and they have set the LUC meeting schedule as the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 2:00 p.m. So there is again a conflict in the timing of those meetings and the UFC's first Wednesdays meetings, and the UFC may want to amend the meeting schedule. An amendment to the Bylaws can be prepared to change the meeting schedule to the second Wednesdays, to be considered and potentially adopted at the February meeting. The February meeting can be moved to the second Wednesday to avoid conflict with the LUC meeting in the meantime.

Josh noted that the first workshop for developing the Seattle Tree Canopy Network happened recently. It was well attended and facilitated well. Invitations can be extended to additional folks interested in being part of the network.

Adoption of November 1 and December 6 meeting notes

Action: A motion to adopt the November 1, 2023 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and adopted.

Action: A motion to adopt the December 6, 2023 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and adopted.

Subgroup reports**- Tree Protection Ordinance**

Lia discussed SDCI's TIP 242A, and provided some highlights from the subgroup's recent meeting with Christy Carr from SDCI:

- Folks are noticing that within the ordinance, there are some areas that are having some unexpected backlash, including helping to remove trees rather than protect them. The tree protection area is meant to be the formula of one foot of TPA to one inch of trunk diameter. If that means that the TPA encroaches into the 85% hardscape allowance of a lot, the tree can be removed. It's been discussed how to amend that protection area to allow for retention of more trees. SDCI attempted to provide greater clarity on the protection areas in a Director's Rule, but they ended up not publishing it.
- The SDCI team is looking at ways to standardize their work and streamline the review process.
- SDCI is also working on tree tracking. There's a map they're working on to reflect trees documented in development permits, and also replacement trees.

- Budget

Nathan and Josh have started this group. They will be meeting on January 11, and will work to set goals for the group. The first task will be to review the SLI report on the city's investments prepared last year, and the next task will be to meet with someone from the budget office. They will aim to develop a more strategic way to tackle understanding the budget and developing recommendations.

- **Diversity and Equity**

This subgroup had their initial meeting and has started to set goals, to include considering what voices are here, whether the UFC is accessible, the group's culture and protocol, how policy intersects with urban forest equity, and how to incorporate resources from the race and social justice initiative and the racial equity toolkit into the UFC's work. They would like to consider whether there could be a stipended UFC position because the current membership of all volunteers means that not everyone is able to join and means that only some perspectives are present in the group. The group is meeting on the third Wednesdays of each month at 3:00.

There was a recommendation to make a master calendar for these subgroups. Patti will start that calendar and share it with Commissioners to add to as more groups and meetings get scheduled.

- **Climate**

Becca shared slides with information pulled from the city's Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

Questions and comments from Commissioners included:

- Is there anything in the report different from or that changes how we should talk about the urban forest and its vulnerability? An important aspect of all of this information is that climate change impacts exacerbate the issues and needs around tree protection – we need to protect trees as they are also being impacted by climate change. Would like to understand more detail on species specific impacts, such as why conifers are particularly important/impacted.
- Was there anything coming out of COP28 that impacts how we think about and do urban forestry here? It was one of the first COPs to include nature and trees as a tool for combatting climate change.
- Re: planting in vulnerable areas, what are some ways we can increase greening?
- Is it time for the UFC to take a position on lawns?
- This information should be incorporated into how and where we plant trees.
- Wildfire risk is a big issue for nature-based organizations and activities due to the impacts of smoke on air quality affecting activities they can do outside. Also, there are preliminary studies out on the impact of smoke on plants.

Areas related to climate change that UFC members are interested in diving into/researching include: species diversity, lawns, depaving, smoke/wildlife, temperature over soil/lawn/turf-artificial lawn surfaces, native plant component.

2023 Annual Report

Patti reviewed the process for drafting and finalizing the 2023 Annual Report, and reviewed the draft language to be included in it. Commissioners discussed the report and the content, and made edits to the content. Commissioners are asked to submit any additional input to Patti by January 24. Patti will then incorporate the content into a final draft report to be reviewed at the February meeting.

Returning council members letters

Josh reviewed the draft letter he had prepared for returning council members. Commissioners discussed the additional language that was suggested to be added to the letter for Councilmember Morales, and added that language to that letter.

Action: A motion to adopt the letter for Councilmember Morales as amended was made, seconded and approved.

Action: A motion to adopt the letter for Councilmember Strauss as written was made, seconded and approved.

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 suggested that the subgroups prepare reports for Council on the work they're doing. The UFC should help Council understand what issues should be addressed around the ordinance. Many of the issues can be/are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. There will be three alternatives included in the draft Comp Plan; the UFC should be ready to review and comment on them.

David Moehring discussed some details of the TIP 242A document, and shared some diagrams illustrating examples of trees and protection areas on lots. He also noted that the annual report shouldn't be taken lightly given the concerns of the last year.

Sandy Shettler expressed the opinion that Seattle is in a tree emergency. She noted that Dr. Phil Levin, Director of the National Nature Assessment at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy will be speaking on trees, nature and climate change on January 17; she will share the invitation with Patti to share with the group.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM.

Meeting chat:

from Kevin Brown to everyone: 3:04 PM

Hi- just sitting in from Saanich BC - always interested to hear what you folks are doing with Seattle urban forest

from Lia Hall UFC13 to everyone: 3:06 PM

<https://www.seattle.gov/DPD/Publications/CAM/Tip242A.pdf>

from Lia Hall UFC13 to everyone: 3:06 PM

I shared with subgroup a week ago

from Nathan Collins to everyone: 3:24 PM

Hi all, I have to drop out. Apologies. Will try and join later for our following vote on councilmember letters

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:25 PM

Thanks, Nathan!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:35 PM

Need to have an inspector on call like doctors and others do outside regular call SDCI call hours

to Nathan Collins (privately): 3:40 PM

Hi Nathan - I just realized I gave you the wrong time for the letters agenda item - that is actually scheduled for 4:40.

from Nathan Collins (privately): 3:41 PM

Understood, thank you!

from Lia Hall UFC13 to everyone: 3:42 PM

Thank you Alicia and Josh! Excited about this work

from Hao Liang to everyone: 3:42 PM

<https://seattle.gov/documents/departments/opcd/seattleplan/seattleclimatevulnerabilityassessmentjuly2023.pdf>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:43 PM

Here is link to how to comment on Tip242A deadline Fri Jan 5th, Urge extend comment period based on Tip being released over holiday season.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:46 PM

Also need trees where people live, not just in parks

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:51 PM

https://buildingconnections.seattle.gov/2023/12/27/comment-opportunity-for-updated-tree-requirements-tip/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery Link to how to comment on tip 242A

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:58 PM

relevant article on climate impact on forests <https://mynorthwest.com/3939575/climate-change-is-hastening-the-demise-of-pacific-northwest-forests/>

from Richard Ellison to everyone: 4:01 PM

An article looking at air quality problems and mortality in Seattle <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/those-breathing-poorer-air-in-wa-live-sicker-die-younger-report-says/>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:04 PM

Another interesting article on climate change and tree survivability <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/as-northwest-tree-species-decline-assisted-migration-gains-popularity/>

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:09 PM

SDOT has hired a new cement engineer who will be looking at optimizing plantable space in infrastructure projects!

from Lia Hall UFC13 to everyone: 4:09 PM

would be cool to create an alternative "zoning map" showing plantings that would thrive in different zones showing for best/highest use--eg. on steep slopes and flood prone zones etc.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:10 PM

But, the elephant in the room is the newly expanded lot coverage minimums. We'll just be transferring pavement from public to private property if we don't address this.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:11 PM

Lawn-B-Gone--yay Josh!

from Dave Moehring to everyone: 4:13 PM

The Urban Forestry Commission has been talking about the City reaching 30% canopy cover by 2037 - a Comprehensive Plan goal established in 2007. Good urban forestry tree retention, tree planting, tree budgets and development plans have been developed NYC, Cambridge, and most recently by Mithun (Seattle firm) for the City of Tacoma. The commission is encouraged to look also at Philadelphia. The City staff have found the 'Philly Tree Plan' a 10-year plan for the equitable growth and care of Philadelphia's urban forest. February 23, 2023. The Philly report Page 77 and 94 indicate roughly material and install labor cost of \$268,000,000 is needed for Philadelphia to reach equitable 30% canopy cover by 2050. Seattle's funding of are just 10% of that amount. Here is the link <https://www.phila.gov/media/20230223005617/Philly-Tree-Plan.pdf>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:15 PM

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBWhaTbe_x0 Douglas Tallamy on converting lawns video among other things

from Richard Ellison to everyone: 4:18 PM

page 146 shows how wildfires added to air pollution levels in south Seattle

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/UIPages/documents/2302115.pdf>

from Richard Ellison to everyone: 4:19 PM

https://www.fs.usda.gov/nrs/pubs/jrnl/2020/nrs_2020_nowak_004.pdf

from Richard Ellison to everyone: 4:20 PM

URBAN TREES, AIR QUALITY

AND HUMAN HEALTH

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:26 PM

Need to investigate impacts of new ordinance and possible amendments to strengthen it

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:28 PM

as well as clean up and clarify conflicting language in the ordinance

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:30 PM

eg missing Harrell's One Seattle Tree Fund missing in ordinance draft

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:37 PM

Land Use Committee actually cancelled at least 4 meetins last year after Tree Orinance adopted

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:42 PM

Morales is the new Land Use Committee Chair

from Richard Ellison to everyone: 4:43 PM

All the new Land Use committie members should be invited ASAP

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:43 PM

Do you want to say anything about the UFC needing to be fully staffed? What about the wildlife biologist position, empty for almost a year?

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:45 PM

With a waiting candidate, who already completed the application process & interviews, and was congratulated on their appointment?

from Alicia Kellogg she/her to everyone: 4:46 PM

"The history of racially restrictive covenants in Seattle have resulted in present day inequitable access to the benefits of tree canopy."

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:46 PM

Agree all Land Use Committee members should be invited to a UFC meeting, especially since 3 of the members are new to the City Council.

from Alicia Kellogg she/her to everyone: 4:46 PM

has* resulted

from Richard Ellison to everyone: 4:49 PM

With 100% lot coverage in MF and 85% lot coverage in LR, and no space available to grow large trees, almost all communities will lose out on the benefits of neighborhood trees

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:52 PM

Agree with Sandy that UFC candidates should be appointed much quicker - absurd a position is not filled for a year after a candiate to fill it was selected - need to raise this to Land Use Committee Committee as a concern.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:53 PM

I understand. Hopefully this can be addressed soon.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:55 PM

Sorry I have a comment--couldn't find my icon:)

from David Baker - UFC 8 (privately): 5:00 PM

I have to log off. Thank you for a great meeting

from Alicia Kellogg she/her to everyone: 5:01 PM

I need to take off to pick up my kid from daycare. Thanks everyone!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 5:01 PM

Tree Protection area and how it is measured is obviosly an issue UFC should look at and address to the City Council

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 5:01 PM

Tree Protection area and how it is measured is obviosly an issue UFC should look at and address to the City Council

from Dave Moehring to everyone: 5:05 PM

Thank you!

Public input (additional comments received):