



Aaron Clark (Position 1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **Alicia Kellogg** (Position 2 – Urban Ecologist) • **Drue Epping** (Position 5 – Arborist) • **Maeve Gillis** (Position 10 – Get Engaged) • **Andrea Starbird** (Position 12 – Public Health) **Lia Hall** (Position 13 – Community/Neighborhood)

Commissioners Absent

Lani Chang (Position 3 - Natural Resource Agency or University) • **Melanie Ocasio** (Position 11 – Environmental Justice)

Facilitators

Andrea Starbird (Position 12 – Public Health) and UFC staff

Briefings

Weston Brinkley, Trees for Seattle Data Dashboard and Website

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

March 11, 2026, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m

- 1. The meeting was called to order at 3:13pm, the Chair conducted roll call, and the agenda was reviewed.**
- 2. Vote: Approve Meeting Notes from 02/11/26**
 - Lia and Aaron abstained from voting as they were absent at previous meeting.
 - Alicia motions to approve, and Andrea Maeve seconded.
 - UFC unanimously voted to approved minutes.
- 3. The Chair facilitated Public Comment and provided a guideline to the public for engaging in this period.**

No comments were made at this time.

Note that due to technical difficulties with the meeting link, this Public Comment section was delayed to later in the agenda to allow time for additional members of the public to join.

4. Updates & Announcements

- Lia shared details about the show she recently closed:
 - Panel discussion at the Rainier Arts Center – event was recorded and link will be shared.
 - Discussion focused on place-keeping and placemaking
 - Attendees included: Four (4) indigenous folks from Chief Seattle Club, Yehaw Indigenous Creative Collective, a local artist, and Poet Laureate of Auburn
- Aaron highlighted two (2) upcoming events he's seen of different platforms for tomorrow and Friday. He encouraged folks to reach out to him for more information:
 - Tomorrow: Webinar on low tech solutions for salmon habitat recovery
 - Friday: Annual Salish Sea Green Infrastructure Summit at the Cascadia College/UW Bothell shared campus.
- Hannah reminded Commissioners to provide feedback about the 2025 Boards and Commissions Appreciation Reception event. She reiterated that the link that was previously sent to them will expire at the end of the month and that they reach out to her or Lauren if anyone has any questions about it.
- Drue brought up the state funding situation for the Urban Forestry and Community Forestry Dept. at the WA state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) (Note: This update was discussed during in the "Review: Welcome letter" section)
 - Recent version of the budget that was put forth by the House took out funding for this department – impacting seven (7) positions and did not have any pass-through funding, essentially wiping out this department.
 - Session closes tomorrow, and decisions are being made today - there has been a big advocacy push in this space
 - Given the short timeline, Drue questioned what the process would be in situations like this if the Commission wanted to take action to support (ex. Co-sign on another letter). Asked the Commission their thoughts on this.
 - Lia: Comfortable to take a proxy vote through Drue/Executive Committee (if allowable by Bylaws). Or utilize the off-Wednesday that used to be a meeting time for the UFC to be able to reach vote.
 - Lia: What are the downstream impacts for this Urban and Community Forestry without this funding?
 - Drue: Explained how the lack of funding will remove many resources and support for various partners across the state, including grant facilitation, project support, and aiding regions that are underserved and low-capacity areas that may not have the staff to support these efforts. This will slow down the momentum of what is being worked on statewide for urban forestry.

5. Briefing: Trees for Seattle Data Dashboard and Website

- Weston introduced himself and then briefly discussed what his presentation entails.
 - Providing an update to what is happening with the Trees for Seattle story map. Currently in the process of updating the tool to:
 - Bring together a wider range of maps and data that is now available
 - Build the platform to one that helps with reporting
 - Purpose of presentation: Introduce this process to provide visibility on what is in the works and how they are presented on the web.
- Project Goals
 - Take a holistic approach with this tool: Goals are wide-ranging – meeting different goals with one product
 - Compile and align different maps that represent the City’s tree work
 - Vision: Make this resource more user friendly and gain a holistic view of the City’s efforts in a single location
 - Improve Data Collection: Initiatives to improve how to collect and report data
 - Ongoing work to update webpage overall:
 - Work in the past year: Urban Forestry teams across the City have been working with each other and consultants to develop a new framework for communications
 - Next step: Implementing revisions to the architecture of the Trees for Seattle webpage and other Urban Forestry pages associated with different departments
 - Goal: Improve and clarify how the City talks about this work
 - Meet requirements associated with the Executive on Forestry Data requirements - Orders (2023-03): Entails specific new direction around data and data reporting
 - Accessibility: Making maps and data accessible to an audience with a wide diversity of needs and preferences on engaging with this content.
- Maps and Data Overview
 - Weston referred to a couple of graphics on the screen that summarizes the broader initiatives that leads to the revised Trees for Seattle Maps and Data Hub
 - Vision for what this Hub will do:
 - Bring together maps and data and present them on this new dashboard, including making maps accessible by piloting non-visual interfaces for spatial maps.
 - An opportunity for new reporting in a formalized and structured way – data dashboard and annual reports.
 - Aligns communications and messaging for clarity

- What it will not do:
 - Develop new platforms or data sets
 - Create new data workflows
- Web Map Walk-through
 - Contents – Maps Overview: Weston provided an overview of what maps have been identified to be incorporated into this tool and how they're being used:
 - How they were initially utilized in the current story map and how usage of this data may have been modified over time
 - Bringing this information together to showcase a more unified and cohesive view of what's happening
 - Current Story Map – Combined Tree Inventory: Weston provided a refresher about the data being shown in the inventory
 - Represents subset of the trees that the City manages on public property – continuing to enroll more into the data set
 - Well-known challenge: Incomplete, as not all City managed trees are in inventory
 - Reflect information we do have
 - Updated nightly – frequently changing and is a real time understanding of current trees
 - Weston delved deeper into specific data sets: what the data is about, when they'll be updated, where they're currently hosted, how it would be linked/incorporated with the Tree Story map, and under what context they would be used.
 - Timeline and Next Steps
 - Contents – Annual Data Dashboard: Weston provided a chart detailing specific data they wanted to bring into the dashboard and delved deeper into what this content consists of.
 - Following Executive Order 2023-03: City departments determined what works best for the information that is available in this new format – this chart represents a high-level summary of what that might look like in the upcoming rollout
 - Next steps: Looking to roll out something live for this new tool in the next few months; updating and improving after implementation.
- Questions/Comments:
 - Drue: Commented that the last Executive Order was interesting and acknowledges that it can be a challenge to navigate the different fields required; applauds the hard work that was done to support this. Re: Primary cause of death on trees – how is that being categorized? Is interested in following up with the Commissioners to talk about this more at a later time.

- Weston: Appreciates the kudos and gives credit to the many staff members who have been working on this big lift. Re: Primary death of trees – There are about five (5) or six (6) buckets, and he described what he had off the top of his head.
 - Lauren: Pulled up the information and provided it in the chat, noted it was similar to what SDOT was using and is being utilized universally across departments as part of this reporting.
- Lia: What efforts are being made to make the interface more mobile friendly? Or different devices? Noted that it can be tricky with maps.
 - Weston: Noted there is considerable work being done for mobile and tablet compatibility – to his knowledge, there's three versions of the platform that will exist for each mode connecting with it.
- Lia: Expressed interest in the Heritage Tree program and learning more about it. Who is overseeing the program for new applications, given that Plant Amnesty is no longer overseeing it?
 - Weston: Reiterated that this program has always been housed with SDOT – while some heritage trees have been managed by other departments, SDOT manages them the most.
 - Lauren: Added that this was a partnership with PlantAmnesty and the City of Seattle. Initially utilized as a celebration of the City's remarkable trees before being codified (25.11). The City is working to see how to handle this evolution and continue this program as Heritage Trees are now considered Tier 1 trees. Can bring this back as a topic to the UFC on another day.
- Lia: Wanted to confirm her understanding that while the maps will be centralized, you would still utilize specific maps/tools on other websites for specific requests (e.g. SDCI's portal to look up a parcel for records on a tree that is getting cut down)
 - Weston: Correct – we are not recreating the host sites functionality of these maps; the Tree Story map will utilize basic map functions. Links will be provided to other sites and cross referenced at various points for individuals to access information and other functions.
- Aaron: Asked several questions re: functionality of these maps:
 - As these data sets are integrated, will there be layers you can click on depending on what type of data is available?
 - Weston: In some cases, they will try to do that where possible but largely won't be applicable. The different data are formatted and structured in different ways makes this task difficult for compatibility reasons. May utilize a split screen or another way to create a comparison if an overlay option is not feasible.
 - Presented a hypothetical scenario where he would like to utilize this tool to generate a map at a single parcel/block level that

would include canopy coverage, details about where the trees are at, etc. With this information in one place, he would be able to share with his neighbors to collaborate on increasing canopy cover. Is this a possible scenario?

- Weston: Might be possible – current canopy data is probably not super accurate at a single parcel scale but ideally would like to move towards that level of resolution and level of accuracy. There are different components that is available at the City, that could help with that aspiration to support these conversations.
 - Drue: Added that the local analyzer for tree equity score for WA state does go down to parcel level for canopy and can provide a guide for where things are at – though it uses a different methodology, so it will not line up exactly for what is provided by the City; emphasizes that the City will likely be more accurate details and should rely on the information the City provides but that it is a good resource to use.
- Drue: Expressed excitement on the Trees for Neighborhood data layer and canopy analysis. Where does the program reside? In SPU?
 - Yes, in SPU.
 - Andrea commented that she is also excited for this info and data.

6. Review: Welcome Letter

- Drue provided an overview of current version of the letters – one for Mayor Wilson and the other for the Councilmembers. Key points include:
 - Mayor’s letter is tailored to connect to what her priorities are
 - Emphasizes how intersectional urban forestry is and touches on a lot of different sectors
 - Noted that trees and forests are essential public infrastructure and should be treating them as such
 - Restate who we are and what our current 2026 priorities are
 - Provides an invite to collaborate and discuss further together with the goal of relationship building with these offices.
- Andrea expressed pride and excitement in how this letter speaks to the intersectionality of urban forestry and how it impacts the City and its residents as a whole. Thanked Drue for her work on tightening up the language.
- Andrea opened the floor for comments/feedback:
 - Aaron: Thinks the letter is great and acknowledges how great the team is for putting it together. Recognizes that communication is important to build a relationship with these offices, and by doing so builds a case for why they in turn should listen to the Commission. This will help the UFC move along to be an effective body.
 - Lia: Acknowledges Aaron’s statement and agrees with him.

- Lia: Is this solely going to Mayor's office or are we copying Councilmembers? All of them?
 - Drue: Confirmed that Councilmembers will be receiving letters.
- Approval of letter
 - Aaron moves to approve letter, and Andrea seconded.
 - UFC unanimously voted to approve letter.
- Next steps: Drue clarified that approved letter will be delivered and provide updates on if feedback is provided on scheduling meetings with these offices. Attendance will be opened up to Commissioners as long as it is under quorum.
- Note: The remainder of this section discussed the WA DNR de-funding situation – see notes under “Updates and Announcements”)

7. Debrief: 02/11 Meeting

- Time was allocated to give the Commissioner's time to debrief/reflect on last month's 02/11 presentation. Hannah shared information that Christy Carr provided to answer some questions that came up during the Tree Code 101 presentation for the Commissioner's to consider:
 - Statistics on how often payment in-lieu is utilized instead of replanting requirements
 - Confirmed what the standard practice is when considering co-dom trees, or trees with multiple trunks, in a protection area and dropped formula in chat.
- Andrea opened the floor for comments:
 - Andrea: Acknowledges that 11 permits aren't many for payment in-lieu and believes this is higher than what Christy had expected initially during the 02/11 meeting.

8. Second Public Comment (if time allows)

Tina C made the following comments:

- She is a retired certified Arborist that was on the Committee for approximately 15 years.
- Emphasized that she would be supportive to get the Heritage Tree Committee to be re-upped or somehow redefined.
- Emphasized that this is in the code as a status, and there is currently no way to add more heritage trees.

Steve Z made the following comments:

- Noted issues with the meeting link and that he couldn't join earlier. Expressed that this should have been addressed quickly/followed up on such as utilizing the mailing list to send an update about the broken link.
- Shared some good news re: WA State DNR funding situation: Conference Committee dealing with the 2026 supplemental operating budget released

compromised position as of 10:00am that day. Revised language shows the Urban and Community Forestry program receiving funding now as well as a number of other issues in the DNR. This will now go to the floor for a vote in both the House and the Senate with a cutoff of tomorrow for the legislature.

- Shared that he reached out to various OSE staff, including the new Acting Director, on the need to update the Meeting Agendas and Materials page. However, he has not yet received a response. Reiterates that this needs to be followed up on to allow the public to review and engage appropriately on topics that are of concern.

Dave G. made the following comments:

- Is curious if the Commissioner's notice about the English Ivy that's growing in the trees all over the City to see if there is something that the Commission can do about it, such as talking to the City Arborist or Councilmembers. Concerned as English Ivy harms trees, which can lead to loss, and it seems like no one really is aware of this issue and would like this addressed.
- In response to Weston's presentation: Highlighted that SDCI's perimetry tracking database website claims a number of protected trees, but that actual numbers are much smaller. He hopes that the UFC can push back on this website to ensure that the data being provided is accurate and not misleading.

Additional comments by the Commissioner's before closing:

- Andrea and Drue will out of state, so Aaron will be facilitating the April meeting.
- Drue encouraged folks to provide input on meeting agendas and suggestions for things the Commission could discuss (ex. Lia's suggestion to have Tim Lehman from OPCD to join a future meeting)
 - Lia: What's the best way to make suggestions?
 - Lauren: Suggested emailing the Co-Chairs for direct communication. However, if a message should be sent to all Commissioners, then it should be sent to OSE Liaison email for OSE staff to distribute to all Commissioners to stay under quorum.
 - Lia shared how she learned about Tim Lehman's work and that she thought that the Commissioners would be interested to see what they're doing at OPCD.

9. The meeting adjourned at 4:47pm.

Meeting Chat:

Tina Cohen (Unverified), 03/11/2026, 3:19 PM

Nice to be here however it took 20 minutes to enter the meeting, until I wrote Lauren who sent me a new link.

Dave Gloger (Unverified), 03/11/2026, 3:45 PM

If you do include the SDCI - Tree Tracking Database (website), will you provide a better clarification as to what SDCI calls "Protected Trees"?

Tina Cohen, Unverified, 03/11/2026, 3:46 PM

Please define story map

Andrea Starbird - Position 12 (Unverified), 03/11/2026, 3:48 PM

Hello all - my apologies for not including this at the start of our meeting.

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!

Urgenson, Lauren, 03/11/2026, 4:03 PM Edited

For dead trees removed, primary cause of death used in reporting:

- 1 – Construction impact
- 2 – Vehicle strike
- 3 – Insect/Disease
- 4 – Storm Damage
- 5 - Development
- 6– Illegal removal

Unverified, 03/11/2026, 4:17 PM

Thanks for pulling these out for us, Lauren!

Pascual, Hannah, 03/11/2026, 4:38 PM

DSH = square root [(trunk 1)² + (trunk 2)² + (trunk 3)²]

Drue Epping Arborist #5 deleted their own message. 03/11/2026, 4:40 PM

Drue Epping Arborist #5, Unverified, 03/11/2026, 4:42 PM

public comment info: We're glad you're here. 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 and business, be respectful, and stay on topic. Each speaker will be limited to 3 minutes. We also want to remind the public that while we have a public comment period the UFC does not hold public hearings and the Commission is an advisory body. We are here to use our lived experiences and expertise to provide informed recommendations to elected leaders (officials) that make the decisions. We encourage individuals and organizations to reach out to their elected officials.

Sandy Shettler, Unverified, 03/11/2026, 4:44 PM

I don't need to make a live comment, but can the facilitator please ensure that the digital recording is posted in a timely manner so the public can view it? Thank you!

Sandy Shettler, Unverified, 03/11/2026, 4:45 PM

Apologies--didn't realize this is already being brought up by Steve Zemke.

Sandy Shettler, Unverified, 03/11/2026, 4:47 PM

Thank you for running a great meeting!