



## PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION<sup>SM</sup>

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

### URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2021

9:30 – 11:30am

Online Meeting

**Commission Members present:**

Chair Vivek Shandas, Vice Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Anjeanette Brown, Gregg Everhart, Bruce Nelson, Daniel Newberry, Megan Van de Mark

**Commission Members absent:**

Lorena Nascimento, Damon Schrosk

**Urban Forestry staff present:**

Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Brian Landoe, Analyst II; Angie DiSalvo, Manger I

**City staff present:**

Tony Garcia, City Attorney; Claudio Campuzano, PP&R

**No public comments were made.**

**Forestry Report** – Jenn Cairo, City Forester

- Jenn provided a follow up to a public comment provided last month regarding a development on 82<sup>nd</sup> Ave. which did not include street trees. Staff looked into it and identified an error in the permit process by both PBOT and Urban Forestry. Street trees are required and a notice of correction has been issued. The trees will be planted within 180 days.
- BES has communicated that due to recent bureau reorganization and management hiring, they are unable to focus on the tree planting realignment work at this time. The current programmatic permit expires in May, BES has not applied for a new permit, and no new permit is planned. PP&R will reach out again in the summer to continue discussions of an inter-agency agreement to enable PP&R to plant trees on BES' behalf.
- PP&R is continuing to address Portland Water Bureau's (PWB) new requirement that street trees cannot be planted within 10' of transmission pipes. Urban Forestry has demonstrated that thousands of mature trees currently exist within 10' feet of these pipes with no identified issues to date. Implementation of this rule would significantly reduce future street tree planting and could lead to removal of healthy trees. It is expected that PWB should bring the proposed administrative role to the Urban Forestry Commission prior to adoption as is consistent with Title 11 and City policy.
- There are no updates on the street tree maintenance policy project. Funding for street tree maintenance was not included in the Operations Levy due to lack of support shown in public polling. PP&R continues to explore other funding options.
- The two proposed new UFC members are being reviewed by Commissioner Rubio's office.

**Urban Forestry Commission**

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- PP&R will be hiring dozens of new staff in the next few months funded by the Operations Levy. All UF work groups will have new positions including tree inspectors, arborists, an analyst, a GIS tech, botanic specialists, and more. Please spread the word to anyone in your networks who may be interested in these opportunities.
- Bruce asked if BES intends to no longer support tree planting or tree pruning in the right-of-way
  - BES is continuing to work on their reorganization to determine how the tree planting program fits into their organization. The current permit expires at the end of May 2021.
- Gregg asked how much BES has been investing in tree planting.
  - The value of the contracts is believed to be about \$1.3 million per year, and that does not include staff and overhead costs.
  - Jenn clarified that BES has not indicated they will cease to support tree planting.
- Matt Glazewski, Policy Advisor to Commissioner Mapps, asked why the programmatic permit was not extended to the end of the calendar year.
  - The programmatic permit has always ended in May to coincide with the planting season.
  - The permit was extended month-by-month while BES and PP&R continued to look at realigning the program in PP&R UF.
- Matt also asked for clarification on PWB's new administrative rule and if discussions for a compromise agreement have happened.
  - Jenn noted that this issue has been a point of discussion between PP&R and PWB for five years. The current rule is no trees within five feet, which is a standard that other cities like Seattle have adopted.
- Daniel commented that regardless of BES' decision on its tree planting program both bureaus will continue to have a significant role in planting trees in the city. He recommended the City take a wholistic look at tree planting across bureaus to develop a more strategic approach.
- Megan noted that the Commission has not had dedicated agenda time to discuss this issue more fully. She appreciates the reports but time on a future agenda is needed to fully discuss.

**Meeting minutes from prior meetings were not reviewed.**

**UFC Onboarding – Vivek Shandas, UFC Chair**

- The UFC will be adding two new members soon. The impact of COVID is making the onboard process more challenging.
- Vivek asked the Commission for ideas on how to support the new members as they transition onto the UFC.
- Daniel shared that senior board members of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council often work closely with new members.
- Megan and Barbara emphasized the important of meeting one-on-one however possible to build relationships.

**FY20 Title 11 Fund Report – Angie DiSalvo, Manager I**

- Angie began by introducing Mari Aviles, new Botanic Specialist II with Urban Forestry. Mari will be working on UF's street tree planting program.
- Title 11 requires Urban Forestry report annually on the revenue, expense, and use of the Tree Planting & Preservation Fund and the Urban Forestry Fund.
- The TPPF enables UF to mitigate for lost tree canopy, primarily through unmet preservation or planting requirements in development.
- In fiscal year 2019-20, the TPPF received \$905,497 in revenue against \$316,825 in expenses. The fund supported the planting of 5,386 trees.
  - Learning Landscapes – 94 trees: UF partners with schools and community organization to plant trees at public schools.

- Developed Parks – 48: These trees are planted as new trees to expand the canopy in developed parks. These trees are in addition to planting to replace removed trees in parks.
  - Natural Areas – 4,484: These native trees are planted in partnership with PP&R Land Stewardship and partner organizations to plant in natural areas across the city.
  - Yard Tree Giveaway – 760: This program is continuing to increase each year and included multiple events in East Portland. Community members receive up to two trees, mulch, a watering bucket, and instructions on how to plant and maintain the tree. The program prioritizes large, native, and evergreen species.
- UF increased the Yard Tree Giveaway Program to 1,200 trees in the current year and will grow to 2,000 trees next year.
- The new street tree planting program is in its pilot year with 250 trees planted. A little over half of the property owners opted out of The program utilized an opt-out model where UF identifies the locations and provides property owners with multiple opportunities to decline to have a tree planted adjacent to their property.
  - UF plans to increase to 750 trees next year then maintain a pace of 1,200/yr.
- The Urban Forestry Fund is a smaller fund with more broad allowable uses. The revenue comes primarily from penalties paid for unpermitted tree removal or for damage to city trees.
- In FY 20, the fund supported Urban Forestry's park tree inventory project. Staff and volunteers collected data on more than 25,000 trees during the course of the effort.
- In the current fiscal year, the Urban Forestry Fund will be used to address revenue shortfalls resulting from the COVID crisis. This will be a one-time measure as the fund is not large enough to be used as an ongoing source of revenue.
- Megan asked for additional information on the priority neighborhoods for tree planting and what information is being gathered about property owners who opt out of tree planting
  - Hazelwood and Mill Park are the current focus and UF identifies large planting strips without overhead wires. About 30,000 residents live in these two neighborhoods and they are both low-income and low-canopy with a large percentage of black, indigenous, and people of color living in the community.
  - Urban Forestry does have demographic information by census block but is not collecting information on individual property owners.
    - In general, those who are not opting out are relatively indifferent to having a street tree. Many who do want trees are already participating in opt-in programs like Friends of Trees or the Yard Tree Giveaway. This model expands canopy by working with those who do not typically opt-in.
- Megan also asked how non-profits been engaged as part of this program.
  - Friends of Trees is one of the three contractors engaged in this effort. Two other private contracts, Treecology and Cascadian Landscapers, are also involved.
- Both Megan and Bruce emphasized a preference for including volunteers in the program as way to reduce cost and increase community engagement.
- Gregg noted that conservation easements is an allowable use of the TPPF. She asked if this could be a priority given the pressure that development continues to place on existing trees.
  - UF's concern is given the land value in Portland this approach would quickly deplete the fund. It could be an appropriate role for non-profit to step into though.
- Commissioners also asked for future reports to include information on what funds have been already committed to use in future fiscal years. Staff agreed this is valuable information and this will be included on future reports.
  - For example, UF expects annual expenses from the TPPF to increase by about \$600,000 on average over the next five years.

**UFC Bylaws Update – Vivek Shandas, UFC Chair**

- The Commission continued to discuss the new bylaws with specific focus on requirements for committee membership.
- The bylaws template developed by the Office of Community and Civic Life only permits full Commission members to serve and vote on committees.
- The Commission was undecided on this issue and committed to discussing further and resolving at a future meeting.