



URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

August 18, 2022

9:30 – 11:30am

Online Meeting

Commission Members present: Chair Vivek Shandas, Ivory Iheanacho, Roberta Jortner, Melinda McMillan, Bruce Nelson, Daniel Newberry, Leah Plack, Megan Van de Mark

Commission Members absent: Anjeanette Brown, Adrienne Feldstein

Urban Forestry staff present: Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Brian Landoe, Analyst III; Ashley Reese, Admin Specialist II; Nik Desai, Botanic Specialist II,

City staff present: Tim Collier, PP&R Community Relations Manager

Public Comments

1. Albert Kaufman provided a public comment concerning tree planting in Portland. He has volunteered with Friends of Trees as a neighborhood tree coordinator, provided financial support, and provided social media consulting. He expressed that he is disappointed to see the Bureau of Environmental Services’ contract with Friends of Tree end as he saw Friends of Trees as the primary tree planter in the city. He also asked what the plan is to replace the community engagement and tree planting that was performed under that contract.
2. Meryl Redisch, former Urban Forestry Commission Chair, thanked the UFC for their volunteer service and City Forester Jenn Cairo and her staff for their accomplishments in professionally managing Portland’s urban forest. She stated her comments are in response to the recent OPB coverage that portrayed Urban Forestry and specifically City Forester Cairo in a negative light. She found the press coverage disheartening, one sided, and shortsighted and wanted to offer a different perspective. It is the City Forester’s responsibility to manage Portland’s canopy utilizing best practices and innovative approaches. She has observed that there are detractors from other bureaus and from community groups who don’t want to see the Urban Forestry division add capacity for improved management and tree-code compliance. While she appreciates the predicament Friends of Trees is in, they have received nearly one million dollars a year for over a decade and received sufficient notice that the contract would be ending. She believes it is time to move on and away from this topic to focus on higher level and more pressing challenges.
3. Benjamin Ayer noted his prior experience working in government and the non-profit sector and emphasized the importance of tree cover. He asked what is being done to renew the contract or what the UFC is going to do to replace the trees planted by FOT.
4. Rachel Morris said she is a non-profit founder and expressed the value of projects which incorporate community members. She noted that Friends of Trees’ work involved youth, education, and the empowerment of marginalized communities. She hopes this community engagement and tree planting work will continue.

Minutes Approval

1. The June 2022 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

Forestry Report – Jenn Cairo, City Forester

1. Heritage Tree #332 was approved for emergency removal after suffering a significant failure. This tree will be discussed further at a future meeting.
2. The Streets 2035 project is continuing but there are no updates at this time.
3. PP&R staff will provide a brief update on the Sustainable Future effort at the September meeting. This project is identifying long term funding options for Parks and includes options to fund street tree maintenance. Urban Forestry also plans to brief the Commission on budget development for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Urban Forestry Commission

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4. PP&R and BES plan to bring an approved memo-of-understanding on tree planting coordination to the UFC at the September meeting. This is the culmination of several years of work to improve coordination, efficiency, and outcomes of the City's tree planting programs.
5. Urban Forestry is looking for an interim software solution to improve emergency response to tree failure. The current system largely relies on paper-based work orders.
6. Urban Forestry's new Operations Manager, Paul Anderson, will begin his new role in September. UF's new Planning & Policy Analyst, Belinda Judelman, started earlier this month. Belinda will be leading the update of the Urban Forest Management Plan along with other projects.
7. Portland General Electric has been seeking changes to rules governing vegetation management in Oregon. The City Attorney's Office, the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, and Urban Forestry have been involved as this pertains to proposed changes to tree management around power lines.

UFC Retreat Recap Discussion

1. Vivek led a discussion on the results of the Commission's workshop several months earlier.
2. At the working retreat, the UFC identified five priorities:
 - 1) Increase engagement with the community
 - 2) Identify high priority changes to Title 11 and advocate for the project to begin as soon as possible
 - 3) Participate in updating the Urban Forest Management Plan
 - 4) Advocate for City maintenance of street trees
 - 5) Review and update the structure of the UFC
3. The Commission confirmed these were the priorities that emerged from their discussions.
4. There was broad agreement that the UFC needs time on future agendas to determine how to make progress on these priorities.

Heritage Tree Program Overview

1. Nik Desai provided an overview of the Heritage Tree Program including the responsibilities delegated to the Urban Forestry Commission in Title 11.
2. The Heritage Tree program is managed by the Science, Outreach, and Planting work group within Urban Forestry in close coordination with the Urban Forestry Commission.
3. The UFC is responsible for making recommendations to City Council on the listing and delisting of Heritage Trees. UFC approval is also required in order to remove a Heritage Tree in non-emergency situations.
4. The Heritage Tree Committee is the lead on this work for the UFC. The HTC committee reviews new Heritage Tree nominations and makes recommendations to the full UFC.

Heritage Tree #265 Removal Request – Public Hearing

1. The property owner of Heritage Tree #265 at 4014 NE Laurelhurst Pl. requested that the UFC approve the removal of the tree.
2. Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and documented significant decline over the last few years. Urban Forestry supports the removal request.
3. Removal of the tree must be supported by at least six members of the UFC per Title 11.
4. Bruce made a motion to approve the removal of Heritage Tree #265 and recommend delisting to City Council
 - a. Leah seconded the motion.
 - b. All in favor

Heritage Tree #206 Delisting Consideration

1. The property owner of Heritage Tree #206 at 3415 SE Kelly St. is requesting that the UFC recommend to City Council that the tree be delisted as a Heritage Tree.
2. Urban Forestry staff note the tree is in the late stage of its life and is experiencing a decline in volume of the crown and root system.
3. The property owner has conducted significant pruning over the years and has received appropriate permits for this work. The owner's intention is to maintain and preserve the tree as long as possible. She is requesting delisting to reduce the need for permits for the extensive pruning and cabling needed to ensure the safety and prolong the life of the tree.
4. Daniel made a motion to recommend delisting the tree to City Council

- a. Bruce seconded the motion.
- b. All in favor

UFC Statement on Climate Emergency Resolution & Action Plan

1. The policy committee presented a written statement on the City's Climate Emergency Workplan which will be considered by City Council on August 25th. The plan describes the actions Portland will make to eliminate carbon emission by 2050 and improve resiliency to climate change.
2. The policy committee's statement detailed several concerns about the workplan including a lack of details of the actions being presented, lack of identified funding, insufficient community engagement, and multiple requested changes related to the urban forest and other green infrastructure.
3. Leah seconded the need for the plan to address depaving efforts with a particular emphasis on how this would benefit students at public schools. Many schoolyards are over paved making it unsafe to go outside during heat waves.
4. Megan added that the plan does not sufficiently cover trees and wildlife habitat corridors
5. Bruce made a motion to approve the statement with additional language provided by Megan to address wildlife habitat corridors.
 - a. Megan seconded the motion.
 - b. All in favor.

Continue Tree Planting Discussion

1. Jenn asked that the Commission send her any additional questions concerning tree planting. She added that the [2021 Tree Planting Report](#) is available online.
2. Megan had previously asked when the UFC will hear from all of the community groups involved in tree planting.
 - a. Jenn responded that the UFC is advisory to the City of Portland the City Forester, and the City Forester is responsible for urban forest management. The UFC is advisory on city policies related to trees and the urban forest. Parks and Urban Forestry are growing partnerships using levy funds including adding additional staff capacity for this work. The request to hear from community partners is timely. Going forward, she would like to work with the UFC to determine the goals for community partners presenting, what the desired outcomes would be, and how it would be structured to support the UFC's advisory role.
3. Daniel had asked when the work between BES and PP&R to improve tree planting coordination would be concluded and reported back to the UFC. He also asked when the new tree planting request for proposal (RFP) would be issued.
 - a. Jenn reported that the new RFP is expected to be issued in 2023 and will be structured to reduce barriers to participation for organizations which have not previously benefited from City funding. Jenn also previously noted that the BES/PP&R MOU will be presented at the September meeting.