URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
August 21st, 2025
9:30am – 11:30am
Hybrid Meeting: Online and in-person at the Portland Building

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Commission Members present:	Co-Chair Adrianne Feldstein, Co-Chair Leah Plack, Bruce Nelson, Matt Sanchez, Melinda McMillan, J.R. Lilly, Derily Bechtold
Commission Members absent:	Megan Van de Mark, Vesla Lee, Casey Clapp
Urban Forestry staff present:	Jenn Cairo (City Forester), Brian Landoe (Analyst III), Belinda Judelman (Analyst II), Alissa Fuchs (Coordinator II),
City staff present:	Maja Haium (Senior Deputy City Attorney)

Public Comments

1. Ellen Mendoza, who is part of the Forest Defense Team of 350 PDX and a long-term crew leader for Friends of Trees (FOT), offered her support and the support of 350 PDX for the latest version of the Urban Forest Plan (UFP). 350 PDX agrees with and supports the first four goals of the plan.
2. Willie Levenson expressed general support of the UFP on behalf of the Human Access Project (HAP), of which he is the Director. HAP would like to see more attention to planting in the riparian zone, with the goal of shading all riverfronts and riverbanks.
3. Casimira Tadewalt, a certified arborist, Portland resident who lives in the river coordinator, and volunteer board member for the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group voiced support for the UFP and the goal of expanding the tree canopy but suggests that the 20% canopy target for the river corridor is far too low. She noted that the Portland Harbor Superfund site was acknowledged in the 2004 UFP but has been left out of the current version. since 2000. She stated that this omission matters, and the City has an obligation to help restore the Superfund properties. She provided written testimony to the Commissioners.
4. Noelle Studer-Spivak, member of the Cully Neighborhood Tree Team and part of the Shade Equity Coalition. She expressed support for the UFP but feels the timeline should be shortened to reflect the urgency of current issues, such as the need for permanent funding for street tree maintenance. She also expressed concern about appropriate trees being listed on the tree planting list.

Meeting Minutes

This was skipped

City Forester's Report – Jenn Cairo, City Forester

1. Jenn Cairo shared that the due date to submit nominations for this year's Bill Naito Community Trees Awards is September 1st. Go to the Urban Forestry (UF) website to nominate a community or group doing great work to support the forest through education, advocacy, or stewardship. Next month, the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) will select recipients from the applicants and the awards will be bestowed on the annual Arbor Day celebration on October 18th.
2. Jenn Cairo gave an update on the status of the reduction of the Urban Forestry Permitting & Regulation group (UF P&R) and move of the remainder of that group to another bureau, Portland Permitting & Development (PP&D). 10 positions in UF P&R have been eliminated effective 9/1, and the remainder of that team are to move to PP&D on 10/1. Additionally, some staff have chosen to leave their positions. With this reduction in capacity, coupled with a high workload, service times have had to be extended and UF P&R has been reorganized to an adaptive structure until it moves to PP&D. Concurrently, the City Budget Office and the two bureaus are continuing to work on the financial aspect of the move, and there is the potential for more reductions to UF P&R staff. UF leadership is working to identify and prioritize service gaps that will be created by UF P&R

moving to another bureau. Jenn Cairo recognized staff for doing their best to continuing to work to provide good services and look for opportunities through the process.

a. Commissioner Nelson recounted that he passed a development site where there was no street trees planted, presumably because there four separate water meters for the type of development that occurred there, but there was potentially room for a tree. He inquired who he should talk to about that.
    i. Jenn Cairo responded that, currently, he could call 823-TREE and they will route him to the correct person. She reminded the commission that a little over a year ago, all aspects of private property development were consolidated into Portland Permitting & Development (PP&D), so they are the lead for those issues. Jenn Cairo also suggested looking at Streets PDX, the design plan led by Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), among other bureaus, with the idea of consolidating utilities to make space for new trees.
b. Commissioner Sanchez inquired about the progress to allow more self-issued permits for private residential tree removals and pruning.
    i. Jenn Cairo responded that UF has some self-issue programs that have been up and running for some time now, but at present are not developing new implementation or policies. UF is focused on the transition to PP&D and that will be PP&D's role. She stated that UF has talked for years about having a "Local Tree Care Provider 2.0 Program," an annual training that would create an eligibility list of qualified arboriculture companies for people to refer to.
    ii. Belinda Judelman added that there is also a directive in the UFP for the program that Jenn Cairo just mentioned.
c. Commissioner Nelson asked if Rick Faber's job is gone, effective September 1st.
    i. Jenn Cairo responded that yes, it is gone, effective September 1st, but he has already moved on and is on leave currently. Leave was offered City-wide for staff who had been laid off in order for them to transition and find work, while others have had leave they are using.
    ii. Commissioner Nelson asked who he should call with any questions about the Tree Code after October 1st.
    iii. Jenn Cairo responded that it is yet to be determined. She presumed that if PP&D is taking on that role, they would be housing 823-TREE or some other version of getting that information.

3. Jenn Cairo spoke to Commissioner Sanchez's agenda request that Commissioners participate in some tree planting this winter and aim to cover all the City Districts. She stated that there are numerous opportunities to do that, including Arbor Day on 10/18 at Sacagawea Head Start on NE 74th Ave., and 16 other tree planting events from September through March that are focused on priority (low-canopy, low-income) neighborhoods. Partners for the planting events are listed on the "Get Involved" page of the UF website. She asked that the Commissioners sign up if they want to attend.
4. Jenn Cairo gave an update on PCEF initiatives. She stated that arborist training, integration of BES planting to UF planting, and eliminating or reducing permit application fees are all well underway. UF is planning early street tree maintenance rollout initiatives. These are currently in draft form undergoing internal review. She added that UF has an early private property tree care pilot plan under internal development and review that will come to the Commission for advice in the coming months. Jenn Cairo stipulated that PCEF funded services budget and program structures built to deliver the services were created based on current UF capacity and organization, so with the reduction of UF Permitting & Regulation (UF P&R) and move to Portland Permitting & Development (PP&D), revisions are being made.

City Attorney Training on Political Activity – Maja Haium, Senior Deputy City Attorney

1. Restrictions on Political Campaigning by Public Officials: ORS 260.432
2. When Does ORS 260.432 Apply?
3. ORS 260.432 Basic Rule
4. Official Capacity (on the job)
    a. Commissioner Nelson asked if, when a commissioner is in a meeting and says "I'm not speaking on behalf of the Urban Forestry Commission" they would not violate the statute.
    b. Maja Haium responded affirmatively and added that one would also want to say, "I'm speaking today in my personal capacity." She also stressed the importance of not wearing any logos or apparel that indicates affiliation with the Urban Forestry Commission at that meeting.
    c. Brian Landoe asked Commissioner Nelson to clarify if he meant at an Urban Forestry Meeting or a community meeting.
    d. Commissioner Nelson clarified that he meant meetings outside of the UFC meetings.
    e. Commissioner Bechtold asked about posting on social media.
    f. Maja Haium stated that while in a UFC meeting Commissioners are on the job and should not be posting, but when they are outside of the meeting and not working on duties assigned by the committee they can post on social media.
5. Use of Title – Caution
6. Public Officials: Prohibited Activities
    a. Maja Haium stressed that the City must not just present neutral and impartial information, it is required to be balanced.

   b. Commissioner Nelson inquired if this requirement applies even if a commissioner is speaking on their own time.
   c. Maja Haium clarified that it is only a requirement for the City and commissioners may advocate and say whatever they want on their personal time. Commissioners are public officials when acting on behalf of the UFC, but not in their personal capacity. When acting as a public official they have to be neutral and balanced and may not produce or distribute a news release or letter announcing an elected official's political position. Electeds are exempt from the statute and may talk about how they feel on political subjects but cannot command public officials and staff to do the political work.
7. Public Officials: Allowable Activities
8. Public Officials: Personal Expression of Political Views
9. Resolutions by City Councils
10. Determining Document Impartiality
11. Impartiality Requirements
12. Enforcement: Complaints
13. Enforcement: Remedies
14. Additional Statutes: Personal Liability
15. Questions
   a. Co-Chair Feldstein inquired if commissioners wanted to get together as individuals, as a subgroup of the Parks Board of Urban Forestry to strategize on ways to support the level, what are the safe ways to do that? Not having a quorum?
   b. Maja Haium stated that they could do it as individuals, but the Parks Board cannot support the levy.
   c. Commissioner Nelson asked if Portland Parks is separate from the government.
   d. Jenn Cairo stated that it is a government entity, as are the commissioners.
   e. Maja Haium clarified that if it's a commission or board of the City, then it may not support or advocate on behalf of the Parks levy. It must remain neutral.
   f. Co-Chair Feldstein asked if people are meeting as individuals, and they comprise a sub-group of UF or the Parks Board, what is a safe way to do that?
   g. Maja Haium advised to keep a log or diary where each individual states that they are meeting individually in a personal capacity. She advised against a meeting with a composition of individuals that could be a quorum of a public body of the City.
   h. Commissioner Lilly asked what would happen if they weren't planning to meet, but a quorum showed up at an event supporting the levy.
   i. Maja Haium clarified that there is a difference between a group meeting to strategize at a coffee house vs. showing up at a rally. The meeting at the coffee house would be a concern, the rally is not a concern. In both situations, she recommends that individuals keep a diary of their activities.

Portland Urban Forest Plan Recommendation – Belinda Judelman, Analyst II

1. Changes to the Public Draft
2. Questions or Comments
   a. Belinda Judelman informed the Commission that on July 31st, the Mayor issued an executive order calling for review of programs and policies to ensure compliance with the President's recent statements about anti-discrimination law. The City Attorney will do a review and check for compliance. They are making changes that have yet to be finalized, so the changes are not reflected in the draft the UFC will be voting on.
      i. Commissioner Nelson asked if the Mayor is asking us if we need to be in compliance with federal guidelines coming down from the President.
      ii. Belinda Judelman stated that intent is still there, they will just be changing a few words to be in compliance.
   b. Commissioner McMillan acknowledged the arguments about riparian areas and the Portland Harbor and inquired if the plan helps to fulfill those goals even if it's not all UF doing the restoration.
   c. Belinda Judelman stated that the additions they made help emphasize that it's not just the Urban Forest Plan (UFP) that can help the City improve planting and shade for streams and rivers. The Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) has targets and the UFP's targets don't supersede those. There are also other city efforts to work on the Portland Harbor Superfund site specifically and those are being handled separately outside of the UFP. Additionally, the UFP has actions specifically calling for increasing canopy in riparian areas.
   d. Brian Landoe added that UF met with Cassie (Casimira Tadewalt) and their Superfund Harbor Advisory Group and talked through this. After that meeting, they touched base with BES, the lead on superfund work for the City and incorporated into the plan their recommendation for how to address those topics. The superfund site specifically is a multi-party, multi-decade legal negotiation and UF did not feel like the UFP was the right place to direct that work.
   e. Co-Chair Feldstein thanked the team for the incredible piece of work and added that it is never going to be perfect because everyone wants different things.

f. Commissioner Lilly returned to the Mayor's guidance on DEI policy and structure. He suggested that if there is a need for involving tribal consultation or working with a tribal liaison, he could help facilitate some of those conversations.

3. UFC Responsibilities for the Plan
   a. Belinda Judelman stated that the draft is ready to move forward, and the rest of the time would be for facilitating a vote and discussion.
   b. Brian Landoe stated that Commissioner McMillan needs to leave the meeting at 11, and it would be great to recommend a vote before 11 am given the role she's had in the Plan.
   c. Commissioner Nelson asked if it would be possible to make a specific reference to the tribal community in the document so that would open that door as a possibility.
   d. Belinda clarified that he is looking for an opportunity for more relationship and strength.
   e. Brian Landoe stated that they have talked with the Office of Government Relations (OGR) about the liaison program, which is undergoing some transition phases that are outside of his full understanding of the issues, but they could circle back with OGR about that, because it is a government-to-government relationship. He could see if there's something appropriate that could be placed there given the state of inter-governmental work that's happening.
   f. Commissioner Nelson moved that the Urban Forestry Commission recommend that Portland City Council adopt the Portland Urban Forest Plan proposed draft.
   g. McMillan asked if that included suggested revisions, including the tribal revisions and revisions Belinda outlined in the updates.
   h. Commissioner Nelson affirmed inclusion of the tribal update, if it can be worked in.
   i. Brian Landoe affirmed that the revisions Belinda outlines were already included.
   j. Commissioner McMillan seconded the motion.
   k. Co-Chair Plack asked if all were in favor.
   l. Co-Chair Plack, Co-Chair Feldstein, Commissioner McMillan, Commissioner Lilly, Commissioner Bechtold, Commissioner Nelson, and Commissioner Chavez all voted in favor. No one was opposed.
   m. Co-Chair Plack expressed that she was very impressed with the document and described it as beautiful, very readable, and educational.
   n. Commissioner Bechtold echoed Co-Chair Plack's statements, saying that the document was easy to understand, accessible, and visually pleasing.
   o. Co-Chair Plack asked if the document was going to be translated and, if so, into which languages.
   p. Belinda Judelman responded that the executive summary was translated, before the last revisions, into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Russian. If there is funding, they may translate the updated summary. They do have some of the goals already translated, so they can add those to the website.
   q. Co-Chair Plack said she would advocate for as much translating as possible.
   r. Commissioner Nelson asked for confirmation that the document would go to the Climate Resilience and Land Use Committee of City Council on September 11th, where the City Commissioners will make comments, suggestions, or be quiet, and based on that input, there may be a need for revisions to the draft. He asked if that revised draft goes directly to City Council or if it goes back to the Climate Resilience and Land Use Committee.
   s. Brian affirmed that the meeting is on September 11th and stated that the committee could either vote to send it to the full City Council or could require some changes before they do that. What is most likely to happen is that they make changes in the meeting and then vote to adopt their amended version of the plan. He does not think they would go back to the committee a third time.
   t. Commissioner Nelson asked who is on that committee in addition to [Councilors] Morillo and Novick.
   u. Brian Landoe added Councilors Kanal, Avalos, and Ryan.
   v. Belinda Judelman stated that the meeting is scheduled for September 11th, but that is subject to change. They will be keeping the website updated with that meeting and with the full Council meeting date when that is confirmed.
   w. Commissioner Nelson stated he believes there will be public testimony accepted at that meeting.
   x. Brian Landoe stated that it is likely, but it is at their discretion. UF will let everyone know what they choose. At the full City Council meeting, they are required to have public comment.
   y. Commissioner Nelson stated that the morning is a morning meeting and people are able to participate live.
   z. Brian Landoe confirmed that the meeting starts at 9:30 am. He added that they don't have a full council date yet, it could be the following Wednesday, the 17th. They expect that if they vote on the 11th, they would then forward it to the full City Council by the end of that month.
   aa. Commissioner Nelson added that he hopes people will convey their thoughts to the City Council members.

Adopting the Plan Statement – Brian Landoe, Analyst III

1. Brian Landoe expressed that the next item was to adopt the statement that the UFC would be submitted as part of the plan. This will be submitted with the plan, so it is just as much public record as the plan itself. He invited edits and comments, as it should reflect how the commission wants to convey this to City Council. The draft was sent a week and a half ago.
    a. Commissioner Nelson requested that the first paragraph state that the UFC is supportive of the plan and they are encouraging Council to endorse the plan.
    b. Jenn Cairo clarified that the language would be "recommends Council to adopt."
    c. Co-Chair Plack asked if this is different from endorsing a ballot measure because it's not something voters are voting on.
    d. Brian Landoe affirmed and added that commissioners can be as forceful as they want with the language.
    e. Jenn Cairo added that it is the UFC's code-designated duty to advise Council.
    f. Brian Landoe added that the Council President's name is misspelled and that will be corrected before it's sent.
    g. Co-Chair Feldstein commented on the section that specifically says the loss of canopy is due to climate change, noting that in previous conversations it was concluded that the reason for loss of canopy was unknown and there was speculation that development could have been a big part of it. She wondered if there was new data to account for that change.
    h. Brian Landoe explained that they included that section because there were some questions at the Climate Committee around it and UF followed up with a briefing memo. The consultants looked into this and they suspected climate change was the leading driver because natural areas saw the biggest canopy loss, as opposed to development or private property choices and also the greater region saw very similar canopy decline as Portland. Other factors play a still play a role, such as development and Title 11 allowing healthy trees to be removed.
    i. Commissioner Sanchez asked if the plan could capture everything and not blame it strictly on climate change.
    j. Brian Landoe affirmed that they could expand it to note other factors. They had heard a lot of comments from some organizations, especially Trees for Life Oregon, about making sure that City Council is hearing the urgency around climate change and felt like the UFP was a good vehicle to respond to that.
    k. Jenn Cairo noted that when she and Belinda Judelman presented the plan to the committee in July, in spite of their best efforts, there was still confusion about this being the plan and not code amendments. They will continue to express that when they're next on Council. She expressed that they need to keep that distinction as clear as they can for Council. If they mention removal of trees in development or private property tree regulations, she believes that might make councilors think again about code amendments rather than focusing on the plan, which informs the amendments, and may cause friction.
    l. Brian Landoe stated that he thinks he can incorporate it in a way that acknowledges that code and policy drive these things, just like climate change.
    m. Co-Chair Feldstein moved to accept the transmittal letter with the changes as described.
    n. Commissioner Sanchez seconded.
    o. Co-Chair Adrianne Feldstein, Co-Chair Leah Plack, Commissioner Nelson, Commissioner Sanchez, Commissioner Lilly and Commissioner Bechtold were all in favor. None opposed. The motion passed.
    p. Co-Chair Plack asked if there were any other thoughts or topics for a future meeting from commissioners.
    q. Co-Chair Feldstein had a follow up question from the City Forester's report. She asked if UF, as they get into budget discussions and potentially transmitting funds from PCEF to the permitting division, is considering using these dollars to be transmitted as leverage around expected outcomes with the transfer of this staff.
    r. Brian Landoe stated that the funding that will be going to PP&D was directed by City Council through the budget process and that movement of funds has already happened. He asked if she meant that they might be able to place conditions those funds.
    s. Co-Chair Feldstein confirmed that is what she was asking.
    t. Commissioner Nelson asked if it was General Fund dollars or PCEF dollars.
    u. Brian explained that it is PCEF money that is treated as General Fund at this point. It is different than the 5 year allocations for Equitable Tree Canopy and Tree Protection and Care. It's money that a year ago the previous council took 7 million General Fund from Forestry and replaced it with PCEF intended as ongoing support. A portion of that is what will be moving to PP&D. This is what they're working on, trying to figure out that amount.
    v. Co-Chair Feldstein reiterated that she wonders about leverage from PCEF to push for the outcomes and oversight they're looking for with this change.
    w. Brian Landoe noted that he understood and explained that all PCEF funding is approved through PCEF's Climate Investment Plan, which is adopted by City Council. What is expected to happen now that PP&D is receiving part of that money, the Climate Investment Plan will need to be updated to account for the money going to them. What was expected of UF is that the money was sustaining their ongoing operation, so there should be no reduction in service

and there was reporting attached to that. The expectation would likely be that PP&D would have to provide that same reporting.

x. Co-Chair Feldstein asked about the outcomes of the permits.
y. Brian Landoe responded that the outcomes really should be driven by Title 11; permits should be issued against the standards established by code. The idea is that there should not be much individual discretion, because they should be following code. If there was an issue there, it would not be a PCEF role to hold them accountable, it would be through the appeals process or the Code Hearings Office when appropriate. There is opportunity for Forestry to stay engaged with them and understand how the transition is going.
z. Commissioner Nelson asked if the UFC would still have the ability to obtain information from UF P&R staff after they move to PP&D, despite the fact that they will be in a different Bureau.
aa. Jenn Cairo responded that yes, they would be able to obtain information from that group after they move to PP&D. Though the UFC is technically housed in the UF program, it is advisory to the City, so they are able to hear from other bureaus on tree-related matters.
bb. Commissioner Lilly inquired about plans for a tour.
cc. Brian Landoe stated that they are working on a plan for a tour in September and are considering having it replace the September meeting.
dd. Co-Chair Feldstein asked UF to consider scheduling the tour for the last week of September.
ee. Brian Landoe stated that he would send a poll with a few potential dates.
ff. Co-Chair Plack asked if the tour would be considered a public meeting if they are not conducting official business.
gg. Brian Landoe stated that he would check with the City Attorney.

Meeting adjourned.