



URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2023

9:30am – 11:30am

Hybrid Meeting: Online and in person at The Portland Building

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

Commission Members absent: Anjeanette Brown

Urban Forestry staff present: Jenn Cairo (City Forester), Brian Landoe (Analyst III), Belinda Judelman (Analyst II), Ashley Reese (Administrative Specialist II)

City staff present: Commissioner-in-Charge Dan Ryan, Jill Souede (Commissioner’s Executive Assistant), Gena Gastaldi (PBOT Pedestrian Coordinator III)

Minutes Approval

1. December and January minutes were emailed to the Commissioners for review.
2. Bruce moved to adopt December 2022 minutes with Roberta’s suggested edits. Adrienne seconded the motion.
 - a. (9) Yeas; (0) Abstentions; (0) Nays.
 - b. The December 2022 minutes were approved with the suggested edits.
3. Daniel moved to adopt the January 2023 minutes as presented. Bruce seconded the motion.
 - a. (8) Yeas; (1) Abstention [Ivory]; (0) Nays.
 - b. The January 2023 minutes were approved.

Bylaws Update

1. Brian reminded the Commissioner’s that during the June UFC workshop, Vivek suggested adopting a Co-Chair model. There was broad support for that shift and requires updating the Bylaws. Brian sent the draft update to the Commissioners for review, which changed the existing language, removing Vice Chair and relegating Chair to two Co-Chairs.
2. Vivek explained that the logistics of the facilitation process would be open to the Co-Chairs to determine. He added that as Chair, the responsibility of timekeeper can at times make it difficult to concentrate on the content and participate in the discussion.
3. Leah asked for clarification regarding if the Bylaws allowed for flexibility in attendance by a Co-Chair or if the Bylaws would have to be rewritten.
 - a. Brian and Vivek noted that the Bylaws do not have written specifications for this instance, allowing for flexibility for either the role of Co-Chair to be absent or vacant at times.
4. Megan noted that the updated draft still included a reference to Vice Chair.
5. Vivek called a vote in favor of adopting the presented Co-Chair model with an additional amendment to strike the Vice Chair language from the Bylaws.
 - a. (8) Yeas; (0) Abstentions; (0) Nays.
 - b. The motion to pass the Co-Chair model and remove the language of Vice Chair passed.

Forester’s Report – Jenn Cairo, City Forester

1. February is Black History Month. Urban Forestry’s Community Stewardship team, comprised of UF Botanic Specialists Marissa Richerson and Daniel Moya, facilitated and hosted an event at the June Key Delta Community Center in partnership with the Portland Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. The event highlighted and celebrated the historic and current environmental efforts of Black People in Portland. Over 100 participants gathered at the Community Center to hear a history presentation by Marissa. The event highlighted partners from the Blueprint Foundation, Camp ELSO, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, featured catered lunch by Erica’s Soul Food, and included tree crafts, tree stories, and a tree walk led by UF Community Service Aide Biz Miller.

Urban Forestry Commission

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2. Invitations to participate in PP&R's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training will continue to be sent to Urban Forestry Commissioners; part of the role of the UFC is to dismantle institutional racism and othering while fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion.
3. Led by UF Botanic Specialist, Molly Wilson, the [Learning Landscapes](#) 21st tree planting season began with a planting at Woodstock Elementary. Molly provided classroom instruction to second graders regarding the difference between evergreen and deciduous, why trees need to be planted at the correct depth, and many of the services that trees provide. Thirteen trees were planted, mulched, and watered at the event.
4. Due to the Parks' Operations' Levy, funding for UF's first proactive Park Tree Maintenance Program was made available. Hiring for that work continues, and since October, UF staff have proactively cared for over 70 park trees in the North Park Blocks, John Luby Park, George Himes Park, and Pettygrove Park. Prior to the start of this program, park tree maintenance has been largely reactive to reported tree emergencies. Proactive maintenance allows for a routine, prescriptive, and ongoing plan that prioritizes public safety and outcomes. The program will continue to be developed and a more comprehensive program is expected to rollout in the coming months.
5. The [Large Tree Stop Gap Amendment](#), which requires preservation and/or mitigation of trees 20 inches DBH or greater in Private Property Development situations, is set to expire in 2024. Urban Forestry staff have reached out to Bureau of Development staff to collaborate on making these provisions permanent. If this amendment sunsets, there will be significantly less incentive for the retention of large trees during private property development.
6. City Hall has been working on a process to speed up permitting for development of private property. An executive manager, Kurt Krueger, position has been assigned to spearhead that effort. Private property development usually includes impacts to adjacent rights-of-way, including street trees, sidewalks, utilities, and sewer and water projects. The project team, named the Permitting Improvement Task (PIT) Team might include relocating the Infrastructure Bureau's Development Committee staff under Kurt; this might include Urban Forestry Tree Inspectors and some UF supervisors that work on tree-related development impacts during the private property development process. A survey requesting input about what regulatory changes would make the most difference in the development of middle- and multi-dwelling housing projects will be distributed to organizations such as the Homebuilder's Association, the Development Advisory Committee, Portland Housing Proper, Prosper Portland, and City staff involved in private property development. Speeding up permitting processes in the past has frequently included addressing incomplete and incorrect applications materials, and the sequence and structure of the permitting process.
7. Recent focus of the Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) has included engagement with stakeholders and the public to inform the development of a draft program model for the Equitable Tree Canopy program. The draft program model will be released to the public this month for public comment. The PCEF Advisory Committee will be reviewing that draft; there will also be a public virtual listening session on February 23rd, with comments submitted until March 2nd. Thank you to Roberta for attending one of the recent stakeholder roundtables about the program model.
 - a. Roberta noted the roundtable was comprised of many thoughtful people that represent a lot of different interests and fields relating to trees in the urban forest, including Urban Forestry staff Brian Landoe and Angie DiSalvo. Roberta noted that there were discussions about the distribution of \$40 million over five years with a focus on tree planting and the ratio of trees to be planted on private property versus street or public trees, explaining that the proposal advocates for increased private property tree planting. Roberta noted that investment in public tree assets such as street trees might be easier to preserve and manage. Additionally, she noted the roundtable discussed the lack of public maintenance of street trees is a barrier to planting them and the issue of asset management needs to be addressed in order to equitably plant thousands of trees in the next five years. Roberta noted the discussion points of potentially exploring a pilot street tree maintenance program; that the magnitude of planting thousands of trees will require volunteers in some capacity; and that an integral focus of PCEF is workforce development to train people for these job opportunities, with several tree-planting businesses potentially able to scale up quickly.
8. The federal passage of the Inflation Reduction Act last year offered \$1.5 billion for community and urban forestry. The City of Portland submitted a proposal that includes funding for a pilot street tree maintenance program and for other types of tree maintenance and planting. If the funding is granted, the funds would last up to ten years. This was a Citywide effort, which included involvement from both the Government Affairs Office and the Mayor's Office.
 - a. Daniel noted that if the City Code doesn't change, pilot street tree maintenance programs will transfer the responsibility back to the adjacent property owner. Daniel asked if the proposal included a request for the City to amend the existing City Code in this regard. He also noted that there is existing funding available with PCEF, although existing agreements between the PCEF Committee and the Bureau of Sustainability would need amendments.
 - i. Jenn explained that securing funding needed to precede code amendments. The Mayor has noted that a pilot needs to demonstrate success in order to secure a Citywide investment. She added that the Sustainable Future Project is actively pursuing ongoing, not pilot funding.
 - b. Jenn clarified that the City submitted a package to the State (Oregon Department of Forestry), as ultimately the State considers all proposals across Oregon and has the responsibility of submitting a proposal to the federal government

under this Act. Jenn added the City of Portland coordinated with representatives from ODF and with other cities in Oregon while drafting the City's proposal.

- c. Megan added that ODF's final statewide proposal is expected to be very succinct (approximately five pages).
 - d. Brian noted that this represents initial funding allocations to the states. Significantly more funding is expected to be made available in the next few months.
9. Today is Daniel Newberry and Vivek Shandas' final meeting as Urban Forestry Commissioners. From the Urban Forestry staff, thank you for your years of dedication, time, wisdom, and active and constructive engagement that benefited the trees, people, and governance in the City of Portland.

Public Comment

1. Victoria Burton, the property owner of HT#26, an English Elm Tree, provided a public comment. Victoria explained to the Commissioners the effects of the costly elm leaf beetle infestation that has prevented the use of the house as a rental property and source of income. The property is intended as an investment property for the Burtons to leave to their heirs. Since July 2022, the Burtons have had to utilize their retirement account to pay the mortgage payments while it has been unoccupied. Victoria explained the difficulty of having to navigate the permitting process, delisting process, and the frustration of having to talk with several individual UF and BDS staff about this issue, rather than just one assigned staff person.
 - a. Jenn noted that a free tree inspection was planned in order to better assess any damage caused by the tree, and that a permit was recently issued to treat the infestation. She also explained the process for applying to [remove the Heritage Tree designation](#). Per City Code, the Urban Forestry Commission must make a recommendation to City Council in order for the tree to be delisted. The Tree Inspector assigned will walk Victoria through the next steps of the process after the inspection takes place. She clarified that Tree Inspectors cannot assess for structural integrity to the house, however.

City Commissioner Dan Ryan Introduction

1. Recently assigned by the Mayor to head the Bureau of Portland Parks & Recreation, City Commissioner Dan Ryan and his Executive Assistant Jill Souede met with the UFC to introduce themselves and better understand the backgrounds of Urban Forestry Commissioners. Commissioner Ryan and each attending Urban Forestry Commissioner provided background regarding their relationship to Urban Forestry. Some of Commissioner Ryan's concerns as City Councilor include: equity in tree care, allowing residents to age in place, and managing the competing interests of the entire city, such as houselessness, transportation equity, and the urban forest infrastructure.
2. Commissioner Ryan noted that Karen Guillén-Chapman serves as the Commissioner's Parks' liaison and would be the best point of contact for the Commissioner's Office.

PBOT/PP&R Trees in the Curb Zone Pilot Project – Gena Gastaldi, (PBOT); Belinda Judelman, (UF)

1. Gena Gastaldi, Pedestrian Coordinator for PBOT and UF Planning & Policy Analyst Belinda Judelman presented updates about the Trees in the Curb Zone Pilot Project.
2. Gena explained that BES awarded PBOT a \$500,000 grant through the [“Percent for Green” program](#), with a 10% match, totaling \$550,000. The program utilizes system development charges (SDCs) to fund large-scale green infrastructure projects that provide services for watershed and community health. Through the pilot project, PBOT is working with staff from Urban Forestry, Bureau of Environmental Services, and Portland Water Bureau to construct trees in the curb zone/parking zone, with the explicit goals to increase the services that trees in rights-of-way provide, such as: stormwater management, mitigation of the urban heat island effect, traffic calming, and extending pavement longevity.
3. Utilizing policies adopted by City Council, the City's Pedestrian Master Plan PedPDX, and the recently updated Pedestrian Design Guide, the pilot program seeks to extend furnishing zones into the curb zone. Existing examples included SE Hawthorne & SE 46th Ave and the Director's Block. Proof-of-concept from other cities are in Seattle, WA, Frenchtown, NJ, New York City, Oakland, Reno, Las Vegas, NV, and Wilsonville, OR.
4. Planning for the construction of new curb zones incorporates consideration for future planned rights-of way projects, Urban Forestry's tree planting standards, underground and overhead utilities such as water and power lines, parking utilization of existing street parking, and strategically considering the equity impacts, largely informed by Vivek Shandas' research at PSU surrounding urban heat indices.
5. The first furnishing zone in this project is planned for SE Duke St & SE 75th Ave. An ongoing transportation and land use study in this area provided the opportunity to engage with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability in outreach efforts. Additionally, the project team have partnered with Portland Audubon to provide outreach materials about the Backyard Habitat Program and Native Planting Program. Due to the existing waterline on the south side of the street, approximately 44 potential planting spaces have been identified on the north side. Free yard trees will be offered to residents on the south side of the street.
6. Assisted by the City Attorney regarding necessary Code Amendments, Belinda and Gena are working together to draft an updated Standard Operating Procedure and an MOU between PBOT and Urban Forestry, in order that the trees planted in this pilot project

Audio recordings of Urban Forestry Commission meetings are available upon request.

remain the responsibility of the City even after establishment, as opposed to becoming the responsibility of the adjacent property owner as currently written in City Code.

7. Gena further clarified that the project has finished its first phase, which involved site selection, refinement, and internal stakeholder coordination. The second phase is focused on technical design refinement. Brandon Namm is the Tree Inspector assigned to the project and has been researching drought-tolerant tree species, soil mixes, and tree typologies (single tree planters, double tree planters, and triple tree planters).
8. Belinda added that this pilot project is a great opportunity for PBOT, Urban Forestry, and PWB to discuss increasing opportunities for planting large form trees, especially as the evaluation and monitoring continue.
9. More information can be found at the project website: [Trees in the Curb Zone Pilot Project | Portland.gov](#).

Public Comment cont.

1. Megan noted that the Heritage Tree delisting process is burdensome and unclear, and from a resident's perspective navigating the City systems and the financial aspects of Heritage Tree delisting and maintenance is challenging.
2. Jenn and Brian noted that per City Code, a tree designated as a Heritage Tree that is not dead, dying, or dangerous follows a process for delisting and subsequent removal permitting; it will require the UFC to vote to recommend removal and delisting of its Heritage Tree status, City Council to vote and accept the delisting, and then a new permit application for removal submitted and approved.
3. Ivory asked if this process is available in layman's terms for homeowners, and if not, can it be easily created.
4. Vivek suggested tabling this item for the March meeting.

Co-Chair Appointments

1. Vivek opened the discussion by announcing that Roberta and Adrienne have stepped forward as candidates for UFC Co-Chairs. Roberta and Adrienne confirmed their candidacies.
2. Daniel asked about term limits for elected Chairs or Co-Chairs.
 - a. Roberta agreed that term limits were important, in order that Co-Chairs and other Commissioners could have reasonable expectations of the commitment. She acknowledged that one year seemed like too short of a time and proposed tabling this discussion for a later date.
 - b. Brian noted the current Bylaws do not have a term limit on the Chair.
 - c. Jenn added that updating the Bylaws could be a potential project for future Chairs.
3. Leah called a motion to appoint Adrienne and Roberta as Co-Chairs. Megan seconded the motion.
 - a. (7) Yeas; (2) Abstentions [Roberta & Adrienne]; (0) Nays.
 - b. The motion passed, and Adrienne Feldstein and Roberta Jortner will begin serving as Co-Chairs of the UFC beginning in the March 2023 meeting.
4. Megan expressed deep gratitude to Daniel Newberry and Vivek Shandas for their contributions and capacity they brought to the UFC.
5. Daniel noted that at the previous Policy Subcommittee meeting, it was decided that Bruce and Roberta would be the new Co-Chairs of the Policy Subcommittee.

Meeting adjourned.