

TO: Neighborhood Tree Team members and Portland tree advocates
FROM: Bruce Nelson, Cully Tree Team 5 December 2022
RE: Portland Urban Forestry Commission Meeting November 17, 2022:
Summary and Comments

NOTE: This document is not an official document of the Urban Forestry Commission. I am a private citizen who is a volunteer member of the Urban Forestry Commission. I write this document as a private citizen.

Conflict of Interest Policy –

“Members of City advisory bodies are public officials, based on State law ORS 244.020(15), and as such are required to disclose conflicts of interest. Under the Oregon Revised Statute 244.020(3), an appointee has a conflict of interest when participating in an official action which could or would result in a financial benefit or avoidance of detriment to the public official, a relative of the public official, or a business with which either is associated.”

These meetings usually occur on a monthly basis, on the third Thursday of the month. Official minutes of the meetings are available at the website for the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC), once they are approved by the Commissioners (usually 1-3 months after the meeting). You can see and listen to You-tube recordings of the meetings. Go to the link at the UFC website <https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc> or to the You Tube site <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1ToXf0RSV44U3FpC0nwIUqtFOmFulxMY>

The decisions made at these meetings may affect volunteer tree advocacy and influence Portland Parks and Recreation Urban Forestry (PP&R UF) processes and actions. If you do not wish to receive this commentary on monthly meetings, let me know.

Italicized text indicates my own point of view and/or items not necessarily expressed during the meeting. Red bold text is used for my required statement that this is not an official or adopted statement from the Urban Forestry Commission, as well as the Conflict of Interest policy for the City of Portland. Bold black text is used for subject headings, lead presenters for a specific agenda item and occasionally either to identify who is saying what or for emphasis.

The monthly Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting was held Thursday, November 17, 2022, 9:30 am – 11:35 am. It was held as a Zoom meeting, due to COVID-19 demands.

UFC Members Present - Vivek Shandas (chair), Adrienne Feldstein, Ivory Iheanacho, Roberta Jortner, Bruce Nelson, Daniel Newberry, Leah Plack, Melinda McMillan, Megan Van de Mark

UFC Commissioners Absent - Anjeanette Brown, 1 vacancy

PP&R UF Staff Present - Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Nik Desai, UF Heritage Tree Program Coordinator & Botanic Specialist III; Belinda Judelman, Planning and Policy Analyst; Brian Landoe, Analyst II

City Attorney's Office - No one was present.

Other City Staff - None

Other presenters - Gregg Everhart (Chair of Heritage Tree Committee)

9:32 a.m. Public Testimony None

9:38 a.m. Minutes review and approval

Minutes, with proposed amendments, were reviewed and accepted for two previous meetings—the October 12, 2022 special meeting on support for the Portland Clean Energy Fund and the October 20, 2022 regular UFC meeting.

9:43 a.m. - City Forester's Report, Jenn Cairo

1. Extreme wind/weather events on November 4-6 generated some 90 requests for emergency tree work, performed by UF staff. The tree emergency hotline is 503.823.TREE.
2. The new Tree Maintenance Operations Manager is Paul Anderson. He joined UF in late September/early October. He manages the Tree Emergency Response Team, Parks Trees Maintenance, the Dutch Elm Disease program, Development and Management of UF Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts, and he is responsible for developing UF's first pro-active Tree Maintenance for Portland Park Trees Program. His predecessor was Larry Maginnis. Paul has several supervisors working under him; Larry had none.

3. Portland City Council accepted the PP&R Levy report on the accomplishments of the first full year of spending of levy funds. One item at its early stages is UF's request for software for tree asset and workload management. After a prolonged personnel search, someone was hired in September to work on this item. UF has not yet begun its systematic maintenance pruning of park trees. Paul Anderson will be working on developing this program. Many levy funds were spent on hiring new staff and purchasing needed equipment for UF.
4. City Commissioner Rubio has proposed structural changes to the Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) to speed up getting collected funds to needed projects, to broaden the potential recipients of PCEF Funds and to provide more direction in where funds will be going. Part of these efforts include allocating \$40 million over 5 years for tree maintenance (*planting, pruning, removal, watering, outreach, I assume*). It is not yet clear exactly how and to what entities this money will be allocated. One proposed modification is allowing PCEF dollars to be awarded to education institutions, commercial enterprises, and government entities. Another important modification is developing a 5-year Climate Investment Plan (CIP) that will help focus where money is to be spent. CIP development will be an open process involving community engagement. A major desire on the part of PCEF staff and City Commissioner Rubio is to allow more of the collected PCEF money to be allocated faster than is currently possible. *The Portland City Council approved these amendments to the original PCEF code language on October 26, 2022.*

<https://www.portland.gov/bps/cleanenergy/faq-changes-pcef-structure>

5. Thanks to PP&R levy funds, UF continues to have a number of job openings in the Arborist I category (entry-level arborists in tree maintenance), Stewardship Coordinator (part of UF Science and Education team), and Tree Inspectors (processing permit applications and doing field work). For more details see:

<https://www.indeed.com/q-Urban-Forestry-I-Portland,-OR-jobs.html?vjk=53dda30d21a6077e>

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/portlandor?keywords=urban%20forestry>

6. Vivek and Roberta assisted in interviewing recent applicants for the current UFC vacancies and those soon to be created. Recommendations have been sent to City Commissioner Carmen Rubio's office for review. She sends her recommendations to Mayor Wheeler. The Mayor brings nominees to City Council for approval.

Questions and Comments

Bruce asked what progress has been made on UF's levy-funded work to begin routine maintenance of trees in Portland parks. Jenn responded that this is still in the planning stages and part of Paul Anderson's responsibility. There was some time this fall to do pruning in parts of the North Park blocks and in John Luby Park at NE 128th and NE Brazee.

In response to a question from Roberta, Jenn said that the expectation is that 4 new UFC Commissioners will be available to attend the March 2023 UFC meeting.

Urban Forestry Management Plan Update & Discussion, Belinda Judelman, Planning and Policy Analyst (PP&R UF); Brian Landoe, Analyst II, (PP&R UF)

Vivek introduced the topic by reminding UFC members that it has been 18 years since Portland's last 10-year Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP) was adopted. In his conversations with knowledgeable individuals throughout the country, he found it is common for there to be considerable delays in adopting revised forest management plans. In developing this document there are many different possible roles for UFC members.

Brian stated that this is the first of several discussions that will occur at UFC about the UFMP. UF staff person Belinda Judelman will be leading the project.

The UFMP provides long-term guidance for UF. Title 11 is one tool used to help implement the UFMP. *Title 11 was implemented in 2015, while the current UFMP was adopted in 2004.*

UFMP is intended as a 10-year plan. UF issues a publicly available annual report (fiscal year July 1 – June 30) on efforts taken and progress made as part of the UFMP.

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/urban-forest-management-plan>

Belinda Judelman belinda.judelman@portlandoregon.gov presented the specifics of the current plan:

- a. Robust community-driven vision and goals
- b. Analysis of the state of Portland’s urban forest
- c. Assessment of strengths, challenges, and opportunities
- d. Prioritized actions and recommendations
- e. Identification of key stakeholders
- f. Clear monitoring and reporting protocols

It is not clear yet what format and topics will be included in the updated document. Looking at the current UFMP may provide guidance. But it also seems possible that a completely different type of document may emerge. Some of the reasons include the:

- a) need to develop a new set of visions and goals based on current conditions and priorities, which are likely different from those nearly 20 years ago;
- b) need for PP&R and the City to center equity and environmental justice in all planning documents;
- c) need to help the City better adapt and be more resilient in the face of climate change now and in the future;
- d) need to understand and reflect community input in the decision-making process.

The pre-planning process for the next UFMP:

- Determine the scope of the Request for Proposal (RFP), which will be seeking consultants to assist in the UFMP: includes looking at the scope of other cities’ UFMP and asking for UFC’s input (September 2022 – January 2023)
- Select Consultants and Sign Contracts (April 2023-July 2023)
- Launch Project (July 2023)
- Develop UFMP (Fall 2023-early 2025)

Community and stakeholder engagement is important for developing the UFMP. Consultants will assist with this component. Questions that may be considered as part of community engagement include:

- Who is responsible for maintaining the Portland urban forest?
- Who is impacted by management of the urban forest?
- Who is likely to be most concerned about urban forest management decisions?
- Who is heavily impacted but unlikely to be heard or at the table of decision makers?
- How are all of these groups engaged?

At this point Belinda outlined anticipated UF stakeholder outreach activity as occurring in 3 phases:

Phase 1: Assessments, Vision, Goals

Phase 2: Develop and Prioritize Recommendations

Phase 3: Draft and Finalize Urban Forest Management Plan

The identified stakeholders currently are:

—Technical advisory committee – includes individuals from other city bureaus

—UF and PP&R staff – internal group

—UFC

—Community Advisory Committee

—Focused community listening sessions

—Environmental/tree interest groups

Belinda's current assumption is that most of these groups will be involved in all phases.

Questions and Comments

Responding to questions from Bruce, Brian said he is not sure what the consultants will cost, as the RFPs have not gone out yet. The total set aside for consultants is \$300,000. That is based on what has occurred with other cities' RFPs for similar work. Brian said it is considered good practice to use consultants who have a breadth of experiences with this type of work. There will be an RFP for a technical support consultant and a separate RFP for an outreach consultant.

Roberta strongly recommends community engagement, as that helps develop ownership of the process and outcomes. The timeline outlined seems realistic. She thought it was good having UFC involved in helping develop the scope of the project. She also thought it would be beneficial to have people from different groups in the same room for discussions. Let the technical people meet with community groups. Cross-pollination of ideas and concerns can be very positive.

Megan agrees that engaging community is vital yet challenging. How will UF center what is said by community members?

Daniel appreciated the plan that Brian and Belinda presented. It is very frustrating when community members feel that major decisions have been made before they are even asked for input. He hopes that community groups will be involved in developing the scope of the project. Maybe public meetings could be held that are focused on developing the project scope.

Adrienne wants the UFC to be involved in all phases of the project. The plan is excellent. She hoped for some sort of quantitative data gathering. Surveys are good but there needs to be other types of quantitative information assembled.

Belinda specifically asked the UFC how they see their involvement in the UFMP process. Three options she is aware of are: a) form a UFC subcommittee, b) do nothing different and allow UF to bring information to regular UFC meetings for discussion, and c) set up blocks of time at scheduled UFC meetings to devote to UFMP. If a subcommittee were formed, she doesn't think it would need to meet as often as monthly. However, there may be times when more work is necessary.

Responses from UFC to Belinda's Question

Bruce supported the idea of forming a subcommittee.

Roberta liked the idea of forming a subcommittee. It would also be good for UFC members to attend other group sessions to listen to others.

Megan supported the idea of forming a subcommittee. Any subcommittee formed must work closely with the UFC, sharing information in a timely manner.

Adrienne is enthusiastic about forming a subcommittee. She thinks that the UFC may be able to play a role in keeping the UFMP on the minds of City Commissioners (*and the public*).

Roberta noted that it will be several years from start to conclusion, so ongoing public relations efforts will be very important.

Brian closed the discussion by asking for UFC members to send feedback to Belinda. There will likely be more discussion of this matter at the December UFC meeting.

Heritage Tree Program Presentation 2022 Nik Desai, UF Heritage Tree Program Coordinator & Botanic Specialist III (PP&R UF); Gregg Everhart, Chair of Heritage Tree Committee

Nik reviewed what the Portland Heritage Tree Program is, the different roles performed by different entities, the Title 11 code language guiding the program, and the specific asks of UFC at this meeting.

To date, 389 trees have been given Portland Heritage Tree status. Currently 328 of these are still alive and retain that status (~ 85%). Heritage Tree status gives the highest level of tree protection possible under Title 11. Trees are considered because of their size, age, historical association, and horticultural value. *The vast majority of Portland Heritage Trees are large-form trees, having mature heights of*

50' or more. Two of the current Heritage Trees were designated Historic Landmark Trees in the 1970s and then were carried into the Portland Heritage Tree Program when it began in 1993.

As part of the Science and Education team at PP&R UF, Nik coordinates the program. UF operations staff may prune Heritage Trees on publicly owned property. Tree inspectors from UF's Regulations and Permitting team provide inspections as needed. Several UF staff members serve on the Heritage Tree Committee (*presumably as part of their UF work responsibilities*).

The Heritage Tree Committee, chaired by Gregg Everhart, is composed of commercial arborists, tree advocates, and various PP&R staff. In 2022 the members are: Gregg Everhart (chair), Nik Desai (Heritage Program Coordinator, PP&R UF), John Mills (community volunteer and Forest Service researcher, Ginger Edwards (community volunteer and member of Arbor Lodge Tree Team), Damon Schrosk (commercial arborist and former member of UFC), Martin Nicholson (Curator at Hoyt Arboretum, PP&R), Frank Krawczyk (PP&R UF), Stephen Peacock (commercial arborist and former UFC member), Daniel Gleason (PP&R UF) and Dave Hedberg (community volunteer and public historian). The committee reviews submissions and decides on trees that are most worthy of consideration for Portland Heritage Tree status. That list is brought to UFC for review. UFC then sends the accepted list on to the commissioner in charge of PP&R to bring to City Council for their consideration. City Council is the entity that designates a specific tree as having heritage status. It is hoped that at least one current UFC member will join the committee; currently no UFC members are on this committee.

The owner of one existing heritage tree has asked for a permit to remove heritage status due to the tree's poor health. This is a fruiting cherry at 15512 SE Powell Boulevard, Heritage Tree # 211. Tree inspectors from UF and the Heritage Tree Committee both thought this tree was unhealthy and posed sufficient risk to the adjacent property to merit removing its status and approving a permit to remove the tree. There was no public comment on this request. UFC approved the request to remove the tree and to send to City Council the recommendation to remove its heritage status.

Nik put forward four other Portland Heritage Trees as needing a UFC approval to remove their heritage status. These are #51 *Paulownia tomentosa*, #157 *Quercus garryana*, #182 *Castanea x ?*, #332 *Quercus rubra*. All of these trees have experienced significant failure in the past year and have already been removed or

are slated for removal for safety reasons. UFC approved the request to forward to City Council the recommendation to remove these trees' heritage status.

The Heritage Tree Committee received 41 new submissions for consideration for heritage status. After review, that committee is bringing forward to UFC a final list of six trees. Four of the trees are in parks, two are on private property. One of the two on private property is a right-of-way tree. Two of the nominations are of tree species not currently on the Portland Heritage Tree list. Three of the trees are in neighborhoods that currently have one or no heritage trees. *The challenge is that there is a desire to have heritage trees throughout the city, but how to get them in lower income neighborhoods, which are often sites subject to redevelopment? Redevelopment is challenging for long-lived, mature specimen trees. It is also true that smaller properties present challenges for trees. Then there is the question about allocation of staff and volunteer time in an equitable manner. If the City wants Portland Heritage Trees to be accessible to all interested individuals, does access mean geographic proximity? The Portland Heritage Tree Committee is trying hard to find significant trees for consideration from parts of the City that currently have few heritage trees. This had been especially difficult during COVID-19 restrictions, when site visits to find new trees were less feasible.*

UFC approved all six trees brought to it to pass on to Portland City Council. They are:

1. *Corylus colurna* (Turkish filbert), Knott Park, first of this species
dbh 24.5", 54' height x 55' wide
2. *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (Port Orford-cedar), Rose City neighborhood,
dbh 35.9", 70' x 23.6'
3. *Platanus x acerifolia* (London planetree), Cully neighborhood, undeveloped
right of way, dbh 71", 57' x 93'
4. *Styphnolobium japonicum* (Japanese pagoda tree), Argay Park, dbh 35.5"
75' x 70'
5. *Fagus sylvatica* (copper beech), private tree in Hosford-Abernathy
neighborhood, dbh 58.9", 71' x 86'
6. *Cedrus libani* ssp. *atlantica* (blue Atlas cedar), Multnomah Arts Center,
dbh 57", 90' x 85'

UFC member comments and questions:

Megan wondered if there was any discernible pattern with the effects of climate change on Portland Heritage Trees.

Gregg shared this concern. This year there were more heritage trees lost than added. This year is the 30th anniversary of the program and she expects to see the loss of more heritage trees.

Bruce wondered if there is any cumulative review of why these trees are failing. Knowing that would be useful to Portlanders.

Gregg was not sure she could do this. She believes that these trees in general receive a high level of care, likely higher than is common for most Portland trees.

Leah wondered if some measure could have been taken to prevent the failure of the Oregon white oak.

Nik hoped that in future, routine preventative maintenance will be more common for all park trees, including heritage trees.

Jenn shared that when looking at the full cycle of a tree it is important to look at its form in youth. This is something UF is thinking about. *This could include addressing co-dominant leaders in very young trees, eliminating girdling roots before planting, spacing branches for better weight distribution on the main trunk when doing structural pruning in the early years, and not accepting tree stock with defects not easily corrected.*

Gregg informed the UFC that the next round of nominations for consideration for Portland Heritage Tree status is May 1, 2023. The nomination application is available online at:

<https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/heritagetreenominationform.pdf>

UFC Comments and Questions

Adrienne wondered if it was possible to see the list of trees that were nominated but did not receive Portland Heritage Tree status in the past. Gregg: No.

Megan thought it would be nice to create a memorial for no longer standing heritage trees or some other means to acknowledge those trees.

Daniel would like to know the fine for removing a Portland Heritage Tree. In Washington, D.C., some developers remove heritage trees and pay whatever fine is attached, whenever they view it as economically advantageous. Daniel would not like to see that happen in Portland.

Jenn said she would get this information to UFC members.

In Title 11, Tree Fee Schedule adopted July 1, 2022, the penalty for removing a Portland Heritage Tree without a permit is \$900 per diameter inch. As an example,

the penalty fee for removing the 24.5” dbh Turkish filbert once it is given Portland Heritage Tree status would be \$22,050, while the penalty fee for removing the copper beech that will soon gain Portland Heritage Tree status is \$53,010.

Roberta would like to know more about the protections extended to a Portland Heritage Tree. What if the tree is in the middle of a property that is being redeveloped?

Gregg: For Portland Heritage Trees that are on private property, the status goes with the property, regardless of change of ownership. *Now the City Forester has the authority to get this status recorded on the deed.* Gregg does not believe that penalties in place for removing a Portland Heritage Tree are a sufficient deterrent. She reminded UFC members that City bureaus do get notification about Portland Heritage Trees in public spaces and in undeveloped rights-of-way space (*like the London planetree in Cully in this year’s list going to City Council for inclusion*).

Vivek reminded all UFC members to send any agenda suggestions to Brian, Jenn, and him. At our Zoom December meeting, perhaps we can remotely share a meal together. In the past, a common practice was to have breakfast together with various UF staff prior to our December meeting. That last occurred in December 2019.

Next Urban Forestry Commission Meeting: The next UFC meeting will be 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., December 15, 2022 as a Zoom meeting. Check the link below prior to the meeting for the agenda, meeting materials, and how you can gain access to this Zoom meeting.

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc/events/2022/12/15/urban-forestry-commission-meeting>