

TO: Neighborhood Tree Team members and tree advocates  
FROM: Bruce Nelson, Cully Tree Team 3.01.20  
RE: Portland Urban Forestry Commission Meeting 2.20.20:  
Summary and Comments

These two-hour meetings occur on a monthly basis, on the third Thursday of the month at City Hall, usually in the Lovejoy Room. Official minutes of the meetings are available at the website for the Urban Forestry Commission, once they are approved by the Commissioners (usually 1-3 months after the meeting).

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/60405>

The decisions made at these meetings often affect the volunteer tree advocacy work we are doing. I will send you timely commentary on these monthly meetings. If you do not wish to receive this, let me know.

*Italicized text indicates my own point of view and/or items not necessarily expressed during the meeting.*

The monthly Urban Forestry Commission meeting was held Thursday February 20, 2020 in the Lovejoy Room in City Hall, 9:30 am – noon.

**Urban Forestry Commissioners Present** - Vivek Shandas (Chair), Anjeanette Brown, Gregg Everhart, Brian French, Barbara Hollenbeck, Bruce Nelson, Daniel Newberry, Damon Schrosk, Megan van de Mark

**Urban Forestry Commissioners Absent** - Lorena Nascimento, Thuy Tu

**Urban Forestry Staff Present** - Jenn Cairo (City of Portland Forester), Brian Landoe (Budget and Programs Analyst)

**Deputy City Attorney-** Tony Garcia

**Visitor Presenters** – Matt Berkow (Portland Bureau of Transportation)

### **Public Comments**

- Doug Klotz expressed his concern about a residential land division that occurred at 232 NE 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This particular property was subdivided by the new owner. It is now two different properties, one of which is under 5,000 square feet and therefore no longer subject to Title 11 Tree Code regulations pertaining to trees on the property. Before division of this property, the cluster of large Douglas-fir trees was primarily located on the

southern portion of the property that was later part of the land division that resulted in one lot being smaller than 5,000 square feet but with abundant Douglas-fir trees. Doug Klotz suggested this may be a clear example of a shortcoming of the current language in Title 11 Tree Code that exempts from Tree Preservation Standards of Title 11 (Chapter 11.50 Trees in Development Situations) all sites that are less than 5,000 square feet. (*The developer of the 232 NE 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue is Greenwood Homes LLC of Canby, Oregon. <http://greenwoodhomespdx.com/> There is a new house at 232 NE 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue. There is no action pending listed on portlandmaps.com for the newly created, smaller lot which has no listed address on portlandmaps.com*)

- Ted Labbe expressed concern about conversations currently underway between upper management personnel of the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) and Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) regarding the transfer of all tree-related activities of BES to PP&R's Urban Forestry Division. Ted hoped that there could be better communication between these bureaus and better cooperation in tree-related activities.

Jenn Cairo, Portland City Forester, reported that as more information becomes available on this she will share it with the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC).

*(Currently BES is purported to spend upwards of \$2 million annually in tree-related activities. This includes funding that supports some Friends of Trees street tree plantings plus Friends of Trees street tree pruning of around 1,500 trees and follow-up care by outside contractors for some newly planted trees in other public spaces for at least 3 years in selected locations. Currently Urban Forestry does some of this, but focuses very little of its dollars and personnel on delivering actual field work (planting, pruning, watering, weeding) on right-of-way trees. I have worked with the staff at BES's urban tree program. My experience with them has been quite positive. I have found their general attitude to be "Let's get it done" and sure enough they figured out a way. The staff in BES's tree program has shown an understanding of and commitment to trees as critical green infrastructure.*

*It is unknown if UFC will be able to have any input on this transfer action. It is possible that this is viewed strictly as an internal action between two bureaus and not subject to public review.)*

**Minutes Review and Approval**: Minutes from the December 17, 2019 and January 16, 2020 meeting were approved after minor revisions.

**City Forester Report**            **Jenn Cairo – City Forester**

1. Urban Forestry Commissioner Thuy Tu has decided that she will not be serving a second four-year term on the Urban Forestry Commission. This was to have been her last meeting as an official member of the Commission. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend this meeting for health reasons. Jenn expressed gratitude for the service Thuy has given the commission and wishes her well in her increasingly busy professional work. As soon as the Office of Community and Civic Life (OCCL) updates some of its processes, OCCL will send out an official notification of an opening on the Urban Forestry Commission. No time line was given for this. Individuals interested in applying for the open Urban Forestry Commission position should contact Brian Landoe at [brian.landoe@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:brian.landoe@portlandoregon.gov) . The City Forester expressed the hope that members of underrepresented communities of Portland would apply.
2. Adena Long, (PP&R Director) was originally scheduled to attend this meeting but was unable due to changes. She will report to UFC at a later time on efforts underway to improve coordination between the tree activities of BES and PP&R.
3. The ongoing annual spring budget management process (BMP) sessions begin soon. There will be meetings in March and April, for allocation of spring funds. *I believe this means for budgetary items not already included in the bureau budgets submitted earlier in the year.* Approval of the budget for the July 1, 2020- June 30, 2021 fiscal year must be done by June 30, 2020.
4. Urban Forestry’s annual Tree Planting Report is available at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/2640a9dab3bf44fa975dfb301082e7fe>
5. In the first Tree Bark of January 2020, details regarding Urban Forestry’s tree giveaway program in 2019 are summarized. <https://t.e2ma.net/webview/crl4gc/be86369cef42a6d23556eafa4388f693>
6. Urban Forestry has several seasonal temporary positions opening up. Information about the Adult Crew Leader for the Youth Conservation Crew, Urban Forestry Seasonal Tree Giveaway Assistant, Seasonal Maintenance Worker and Urban Forestry Seasonal Outreach and Science Assistant positions is available by contacting Clare Carney at 503.260.0817 or emailing at [clare.carney@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:clare.carney@portlandoregon.gov)
7. Portland’s Urban Forestry division recently received three different national or international recognitions.
  - a. 43<sup>rd</sup> Year as a recognized Tree City USA, <https://www.urban-forestry.com/sma-accreditation>

- b. Society of Municipal Arborists Accreditation <https://www.urban-forestry.com/sma-accreditation>
  - c. Tree City recognition by United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Arbor Day Foundation as part of an initiative to recognize cities for their commitment to urban forests. <https://www.3blmedia.com/News/Arbor-Day-Foundation-and-Food-and-Agriculture-Organization-United-Nations-FAO-Recognize-Tree>
8. The annual Urban Forestry Title 11 Fund Report for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 has been prepared and will be presented to City Council as required by Title 11 Tree Code. Urban Forestry is in the process of gearing up a 5-year plan to increase spending from the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund to around \$600,000 annually. This will be a significant jump from the past expenses from this dedicated fund (*first 5 years of existence of fund saw expenses of \$0; \$0; \$202,000; \$426,000; and \$217,000*). This will primarily involve contracting out planting and preservation tree work in line with the Portland City Council’s adoption of the City-Wide Planting Strategy. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/705823>
  9. Work continues on Title 11 amendments. Staff from the Bureau of Development Services (BDS), Urban Forestry, and Bureau of Planning and Sustainability are working together to “scope work for code changes.” By July 8<sup>th</sup>, they need to bring to Portland City Council recommendations on:
    - a) code changes pertaining to zone exemptions from the tree code and
    - b) size thresholds for exemption from mitigation fees in lieu of preservation. As part of this, Urban Forestry is requesting monetary resources for an Analyst position at the Spring BMP sessions coming up. Currently, there is a public hearing scheduled for June 3<sup>rd</sup> in the evening; specific time and location will be determined for proposed Title 11 Tree Code changes.

**Urban Forestry Commission 2020 Priorities Discussion Vivek Shandas**

The February 2020 UFC meeting allocated a short time to list potential Commission priorities for the upcoming year.

Vivek asked each Commissioner to state what they saw as the more important objectives for UFC to work on during 2020. Priorities listed by commissioners included outreach, committee structures, recruitment of new members, budget, how to increase capacity of UFC, Title 11 amendments, working with other bureaus, use of Tree Planting and Preservation Fund for tree property purchase, more meeting time for substantive discussions, more pro-active as opposed to reactive focus. At the March UFC meeting more time will be spent refining priorities for 2020.

## **South Reach Plan - UFC Policy Committee Daniel Newberry**

Daniel reported that the Policy Committee, at its last meeting after some discussion, agreed to ask Committee member Roberta Jortner to write a draft letter to UFC making specific comments and suggestions for a letter to be sent to the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) regarding the River Plan/South Reach.

<https://beta.portland.gov/bps/south-reach/about-river-plan/south-reach-project>

This letter was shared with Commissioners. UFC approved sending this letter to PSC so they have it prior to their next discussion of this item. It was also agreed that a member (who is not a UFC Commissioner) of the UFC Policy Committee could publicly speak at that PSC meeting, identify themselves as a member of the UFC Policy Committee but not a UFC Commissioner (if indeed they are not), testify that all items listed in the letter are UFC-endorsed ideas but could not testify as a representative of UFC. *(A draft copy of this letter is attached).*

## **Streets 2035 Update Matt Berkow (Portland Bureau of Transportation)**

The big question for Streets 2035 Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) Project is basically how are decisions made by PBOT for use of the space in the right-of-way when so many different uses are allowed and needed.

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/79886>

This multi-year endeavor has concluded that first phase of Streets 2035 by identifying for the right-of-way space a) current user agencies (public and private), and b) current functions. Pertaining to trees, it has been noted that clearly trees need adequate space in the right-of-way to thrive and that preservation of existing trees is an important consideration in future right-of-way improvements.

A big challenge for PBOT that became obvious with this initial stage was that there is not always uniformity in placement of utilities, especially in geographic areas that have been incorporated into Portland in the last 40 years. For example, a water main may not be where you expect it to be.

The second phase (ROW Policy Recommendations) and third phase (Implementation Tools) are scheduled to start in 2020 with final completion by 2021.

There is a finite amount of right-of-way space in Portland. It will not change over time. Its level of development will change as Portland experiences substantial population growth within the next 30 years. As new development happens and

population increases occur, PBOT will be striving to follow uniform, coherent policies that advance City goals. Specifically, PBOT wants “context-sensitive decisions.”

Streets 2035’s broad objectives are to:

1. Better achieve citywide and individual bureau goals;
2. Reduce situations that require individual interpretation and inter-bureau negotiation;
3. Increase certainty and clarity for people wishing to develop in and adjacent to the right-of-way area.
4. Create a consistent starting point for capital projects design development.

*(Looking online I encountered varying numbers for the miles of streets in Portland. One older PBOT web source (2016?) said that Portland has 4,842 miles of roads. Of that total, 307.2 miles centerline paved streets have no curbs. At the time of the website information entry, there were also 56.6 centerline miles of unpaved streets.)*

Residential streets are commonly 28’ or 36’ wide. Within the City of Portland, the widest city-maintained streets are in East Portland, east of I-205. The wider the street in Portland, the higher the likelihood that pedestrian fatalities occur.

Streets 2035 looks at various transportation networks like bike, pedestrian, emergency, mass transit, car, and truck. Streets are categorized as part of a community corridor (collector streets) or civic corridors (public transit priority). The goal is to have 8 street trees per 200 linear feet of street. The current average for Portland is 2.5 trees per 200 linear feet of street. The outer east side of town is especially low.

The 3 identified tree-related issues to date for Street 2035 are:

1. Organization of sidewalk corridor – siting utilities including storm drainage;
2. Organization of sidewalk zones – constrained area and many demands, when to make sidewalk narrower?
3. What utility infrastructure needs to be in the right-of-way?
4. Curb placement relative to pedestrian zone.

Currently PBOT is revising the Pedestrian Design Guide. This is in the early stages. A citizen advisory committee is being formed for this. If you are interested contact:

Michelle Marx, PBOT Pedestrian Coordinator

[Michelle.Marx@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Michelle.Marx@portlandoregon.gov)

Urban Forestry Commissioners shared a range of concerns and questions. These included:

- a) Is there a diversity plan for east Portland streets development?
- b) Is there an equity plan? **(Yes, equity is one issue that is part of performance metrics on every PBOT project.)**
- c) Can you stack underground utilities? **(We can't stack water and sewer above one another but can do so for other utilities.)**
- d) Will you be using citizen input gathered from the Division street project to help guide your activities in east Portland **(Yes, we expect to)**
- e) Sidewalk maintenance as it pertains to repairs is an equity issue,
- f) Will you be considering the option of bumping out streets to allow space for larger trees? **(In Phase 2, we may fit that in as an upgrade but it will be challenging.)**
- g) Trees serve multiple functions in the right-of-way and all of those functions need to be considered as part of the decision making regarding whether or not a tree goes in the right-of-way.

### **Next Urban Forestry Commission Meeting**

The next Urban Forestry Commission meeting will be Thursday, March 19, 9:30 – 12 noon in the Lovejoy Room at City Hall.

The agenda is unavailable at this time. Check the link below in March for meeting agenda and materials: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/80167>

### **Appeals Board Hearing**

The Appeals Board listened to the appeals request regarding trees at 1201 SW 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.