

TO: Neighborhood Tree Team members and Portland tree advocates
FROM: Bruce Nelson, Cully Tree Team April 1, 2021
RE: Portland Urban Forestry Commission Meeting March 18, 2021:
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.

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).

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/urban-forestry-commission-0>

The decisions made at these meetings may affect the volunteer tree advocacy and may influence Urban Forestry division processes and actions. I am sending 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. **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 and occasionally to identify who is saying what.**

The monthly Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting was held Thursday, March 18, 2021, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., as a Zoom meeting due to COVID-19.

UFC Commissioners Present - Vivek Shandas (chair), Anjeanette Brown, Gregg Everhart, Barbara Hollenbeck, Bruce Nelson, Daniel Newberry, Megan Van de Mark

UFC Commissioners Absent - Lorena Nascimento, Damon Schrosk

Urban Forestry (UF) Staff Present - Jenn Cairo (City Forester, Portland Parks & Recreation, Urban Forestry division) Jenn.Cairo@portlandoregon.gov ; Brian Landoe (Analyst 1, Portland Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry division) brian.landoe@portlandoregon.gov ; Angie DiSalvo (Science, Outreach and Planting Manager, Portland Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry division) angie.disalvo@portlandoregon.gov

Deputy City Attorney- Tony Garcia (Portland Office of City Attorney)

Other City Staff - Matt Glazewski, matt.glazewski@portlandoregon.gov Senior Policy Analyst for City Commissioner Mingus Mapps; Maricela Aviles (Portland Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry division)

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.”

9:30 a.m. Public Comment

There were no individuals requesting time for public comment at this meeting.

9:30 a.m. Minutes Review This was not an item on the agenda so no previous meeting minutes were reviewed.

1. Jenn shared that she reviewed the lack of street trees at a new commercial development at SE 82nd (east side of street) between SE Stark Street and SE Washington Street that was raised by public testimony of Doug Klotz at the February UFC meeting. Errors were made by both Urban Forestry and the Portland Bureau of Transportation in this matter. A correction has been made so trees will be planted at this strip along 82nd Ave.
2. Jenn reported on the status of the Tree Planting Realignment Project with the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES). BES has informed Jenn that due to recent BES bureau reorganization and management hiring needs, BES is unable to focus on the Tree Planting Realignment Project at this time. The current BES programmatic permit from Urban Forestry expires at the end of May. Portland Parks and Recreation/Urban Forestry (PP&R/UF) will reach out to BES later this summer to see if BES is interested in pursuing an intergovernmental agreement to expand PP&R/UF planting on behalf of BES for the upcoming planting year.

If no intergovernmental agreement is made on the Tree Planting Realignment Project, there will likely be a reduction in BES-budgeted dollars (\$1.3 million occurred in the current fiscal year) to support the urban forest in the right-of-way (ROW). These failed inter-bureau efforts to resolve this matter will likely result in the loss of proven success of BES's ROW tree-planting program. A real strength of the current BES ROW planting program is support of selective community-centered activities that plant street trees and prune young street trees in low-canopy, underserved neighborhoods. The expertise of BES in delivering these services and the positive relationships with contractors who assist in this delivery may be jeopardized if the BES ROW planting program is discontinued. The rationale for the initial discussions between Urban Forestry and BES was to look for means of greater efficiencies by reducing redundancies in services. I remain very skeptical of the efficiency gained by removing a successful program from BES and transferring it to Urban Forestry. What efficiency might be gained between the bureaus will be at the cost of proven expertise in an already successful program.

3. The Portland Water Bureau continues to advocate for a policy that requires street trees to be at least 10' from a water conveyance pipe 24" in diameter or larger. Urban Forestry is not in agreement with this proposed policy as it has found no reports in Portland of tree root damage that would support this policy. This item is one of the discussion items in Streets 2035. The Portland Water Bureau wishes to make an administrative rule that prohibits any street tree planting within 10' of a 24" or larger diameter water conveyance pipe. Urban Forestry does not support the proposed 10' policy and believes that it would effectively eliminate thousands of potential or existing street tree planting locations. *Comments on this can be addressed to City Commissioner Mingus Mapps, who oversees the Bureau of Environmental Services (Portland Water Bureau is part of this bureau), as well as Gabriel Solmer, Director of the Portland Water Bureau.*
4. Urban Forestry continues to explore other means to fund street tree maintenance. Street tree maintenance was not part of the Parks levy passed in November 2020 because survey work done prior to the November levy suggested inadequate support by taxpayers for levy funds to support street tree maintenance.
5. Two new Urban Forestry Commissioners will likely be added sometime in the next few months. Work remains to be done by Commissioner Rubio's office to approve the nominees. Once they are approved by Rubio's office, they can be brought to City Council for confirmation.
6. There will be new positions opening up at Urban Forestry, as part of the passed November 2020 Parks levy's support of Urban Forestry. There will be announcements in Urban Forestry's Tree Bark.

Matt Glazewski (Senior Policy Analyst for Commissioner Mapps) wondered why the Urban Forestry permit issued to BES for its tree planting and pruning activities had not been extended beyond the current fiscal year (June 30). Matt also wondered why over the past few months only a month-to-month extension had been issued by Urban Forestry. Jenn's response was that the agreement made by directors of BES and PP&R directors in February 2020 was that BES tree planting activities would be housed under Urban Forestry. Urban Forestry assumed that this transfer would occur rapidly, hence the use of the month-by-month extension procedure. Also, since the planting season is essentially over in May, there is no reason to issue another permit. None has been requested by BES.

Matt also requested more information on the Portland Water Bureau's desire to have an administrative policy pertaining to no street tree planting closer than 10' from a water conveyance pipe 24" in diameter or larger. Jenn

shared that this discussion has been going on for at least 5 years, with Urban Forestry strongly opposing this proposed 10' policy, saying there is no evidence to support its adoption. Jenn also shared that this item is currently being looked at as part of Streets 2035. *I can't yet find a readily available online map from the Water Bureau which shows the locations of these 24" or larger water conveyance pipes for Portland. I believe Jenn stated that this proposed policy will result in the loss of 1000s of existing and potential street tree planting locations. If anyone can find such a map showing these 24" or larger water conveyance pipes, let me know. It is important for opposition to this proposed policy of the Portland Water Bureau be persistent, strategic, fact-based, and abundant. Opposition should be expressed to Gabriel Solmer (director of Portland Water Bureau), Matt Berkow (Portland Bureau of Transportation , Streets 2035 Project Manager) and the office of City Commissioner Mingus Mapps (oversees Bureau of Environmental Services/Portland Water Bureau).*

Comments/questions from UFC Commissioners:

Daniel would like to see some sort of strategic tree planting for all of Portland. This should not just focus on getting trees in the ground, but exactly where do we need trees in the entire city of Portland.

Vivek thought that he might be able to use some of his research students to support work that addressed Daniel's wish.

Jenn shared that strategic planting of trees is very important to Urban Forestry.

Megan would really like to have more time set aside at a future UFC meeting to discuss strategic planting of trees in Portland.

9:55 a.m. Onboarding New UFC Commissioners Vivek Shandas (chair, Urban Forestry Commission)

Two new members will soon be appointed to the Urban Forestry Commission. Recommendations have already been made to City Commissioner Rubio's office for their review. It is up to City Commissioner Rubio's office to bring those nominations to City Council. Vivek wondered if there should be a more formal process used by UFC for helping new UFC members become familiar with the processes and actions of UFC. Daniel shared that the Johnson Creek Watershed Council has been very satisfied with using more experienced members of its board to regularly work with new board members. Barbara thought that having face-to-face time with new members would be helpful. Megan stressed the importance of one-to-one informal meetings. Brian Landoe shared that the two

potential new members have both sat in on UFC meetings in the past. Vivek hoped that UFC onboarding actions would work to ensure longevity of UFC members, as it does take some time to get familiar with UFC operations.

No agreed-upon specifics came from this discussion. It would be appropriate for UFC to agree to work hard to ensure training and retention of appointed UFC members. A program could include:

- 1) having each veteran UFC member meet one-on-one with new members to introduce themselves;*
- 2) having a one-on-one meeting between the City Forester and each new member to review expectations;*
- 3) assigning one existing UFC member to mentor a new member for two years to:*
 - a) assist the new member in locating specific online resources,*
 - b) clarify the role that UFC plays,*
 - c) provide historical background on UFC,*
 - d) highlight the likely issues coming before UFC,*
 - e) identify the roles that City entities play in urban forestry matters.*

New Staff Introduction Angie DiSalvo (Science, Outreach, and Planting Manager; Portland Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry)

Angie introduced Maricela Aviles, who has been recently hired as part of the Science, Outreach and Planting program at Urban Forestry. Her major responsibility is oversight of contractors responsible for planting trees. Her previous work was in Indianapolis with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. (KIPI) as the Community Forestry Tree Planting Manager working with volunteers to plant trees.

10:10 am Fiscal Year 20 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) Title 11 Fund Report

Angie DiSalvo (Science, Outreach, and Planting Manager; Portland Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry)

As required in Title 11 Tree Code (implemented in 2015), the City Forester is required to annually report to both the Urban Forestry Commission and the City Council on the status of two different funds administered by the City

Forester (11.50.040). Angie DiSalvo presented a summary of the previous fiscal year revenues and expenses and starting and ending fund balances for the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund, as well as the Urban Forestry Fund.

For the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund, roughly 4,500 trees were planted during the fiscal year. Most of these were native trees planted in public parks. Urban Forestry has been reviewing the annual flow of revenues for this fund since its creation in 2015. Planning is underway for the future use of these revenues. Revenues have been used to support the Yard Tree Give-away program (target is 2,000 trees/annually) as well as the ROW opt-out street tree program in targeted neighborhoods (currently 250 trees/annually with a target of 1,200 trees/annually). Both of these programs involve Urban Forestry staff and contractors. Bruce suggested that it would be helpful to include more emphasis in the final written report on how funds are used to assist low-canopy, underserved neighborhoods.

The Urban Forestry Fund continues to be used to support the Tree Inventory project. It is hoped that in the future it will be used to provide more support for the Youth Conservation Corps, which involves 10 youth and two leaders. This endeavor seeks to engage youth from diverse communities in natural resources education and work.

UFC members had a variety of questions and comments regarding the information Angie presented.

Barbara wondered what the process was for neighborhoods where the opt-out program is being tried. Angie explained that very transparent information is presented to residents in a low-canopy, lower income area, stating that Urban Forestry will be planting street trees in the right-of-way space in front of your property. The information also clearly states that the property owner will be responsible for the care of the trees in the future. About 60% of the households choose to opt out of the program. Those who do not contact Urban Forestry to opt out get a tree selected by Urban Forestry that is planted by contractors working for Urban Forestry.

Bruce thought it would be cheaper to have the planting done by trained volunteers.

Daniel was glad to see that more trees were getting in the ground.

Angie shared that this endeavor is coordinated by the Science, Outreach and Planting group at Urban Forestry.

Megan requested more specific information regarding what neighborhoods were being targeted as well as what kind of information was being gathered regarding residents who were opting out. Angie shared that Hazelwood and east Portland had been identified as having low canopy, 4' or wider planting strips and electrical lines located high above the right-of-way strip. Urban Forestry does not have the capacity to access demographic information by census block. The various nonprofits engaged in this endeavor include Verde and Friends of Trees.

Gregg thought that with increasing development pressures in Portland, it would be appropriate to consider the use of conservation easements and land purchase as a means to save trees and groves of trees. Angie expressed reservations about overspending from either of these funds. Brian Landoe also stressed the importance of preserving adequate funds in the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund for needed maintenance of newly planted trees.

Jenn thought the idea of using conservation easements was a good concept and hoped that some separate non-governmental entity might take this on.

Daniel wondered if the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund could be used for a pilot project that included long-term maintenance of street trees in order to get a better idea of the costs, challenges, and advantages of having Urban Forestry take on maintenance of ROW trees. Jenn responded that there is no plan to do this.

One of the challenges for me in this discussion is trying to understand why there seems to be such a low level of fund usage annually over the life of these funds, especially for the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund. I raised this point. Brian and Jenn both said that money may have already been allocated for use in future years but that information is not included in the annual report. Below is my compilation of the data from these annual reports. Several UFC members suggested that the Annual Report gives an incomplete picture, as it does not indicate funds collected that have been allocated for use in future years. The limited information given (which is all that is required by Title 11) does not show how funds collected in 2019 for the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund may already be targeted for use in 2021. Brian Landoe agreed that this kind of information could be better reflected in

the annual report. The general concern expressed by different UFC members was that money collected for Tree Planting and Preservation was not being used as quickly as it should be. The challenge for Urban Forestry is to be able to sustain a program over time when revenues are volatile.

URBAN FORESTRY FUND REPORTS CUMULATIVE

Fiscal Year	As interpreted by Bruce Nelson 2.12.20 using data available from Urban Forestry Reports								
	URBAN FORESTRY FUND				Tree Planting and Preservation Fund				
	Beginning Balance	Revenue	Expenses	Ending Balance	Beginning Balance	Revenue	Expenses	Ending Balance	
2014/2015	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$198,605	\$0	\$198,605
2015/2016	\$0	\$11,650	\$0	\$11,650	\$198,605	\$478,395	\$0	\$677,000	
2016/2017	\$11,650	\$55,339	\$0	\$66,989	\$984,892	\$736,230	\$202,054	\$1,519,068	
2017/2018	\$66,988.90	\$93,405.79	\$84,713.64	\$75,681.05	\$1,519,068.35	\$1,185,082.81	426,438.48	\$2,277,712.68	
2018/2019	\$75,681.05	\$981,720.07	\$89,217.48	\$968,183.64	\$2,277,712.68	\$1,444,428.75	\$217,208.50	\$3,504,932.93	
2019/2020	\$968,183	\$87,361	\$59,598	\$995,946	\$3,504,932	\$905,497	\$316,825	\$4,093,605	

RATIO OF EXPENSES TO REVENUE PER FISCAL YEAR FOR BOTH FUNDS		
Fiscal Year	Urban Forestry Fund	Tree Planting and Preservation Fund
2014/2015	na	0
2015/2016	0	0

2016/2017	0	0.274
2017/2018	0.907	0.36
2018/2019	0.091	0.15
2019/2020	0.682	0.35

RATIO OF EXPENSES TO REVENUE OF PRECEEDING FISCAL YEAR FOR BOTH FUNDS		
	Urban Forestry Fund	Tree Planting and Preservation Fund
FY 14/15 TO 13/14	na	na
FY 15/16 TO 14/15	na	0
FY 16/17 TO 15/16	0	0.422
FY 17/18 TO 16/17	1.531	0.579
FY 18/19 TO 17/18	0.955	0.183
FY 19/20 TO 18/19	0.061	0.219

10:45 am UFC Bylaws - Vivek Shandas (chair, Urban Forestry Commission)

UFC has discussed at previous meetings recommendations for changes to the current bylaws of the Urban Forestry Commission. A main point of discussion, with some disagreement, concerned the role, composition, and procedures used by subcommittees. It should be noted that in the revised bylaws the term used is SUBCOMMITTEE, not committee. *How you can have subcommittees without Committees is beyond me!* The current subcommittees (?) of UFC are Policy, Heritage Tree, and Appeals Board. Needing resolution: 1) who is officially on a subcommittee, 2) who votes on any items the subcommittee decides it needs to vote on, and 3) how are members of the subcommittee selected.

Barbara thinks the wording in the proposed bylaws is not clear about who can actually vote in a subcommittee. Brian shared that the intention was to state that only UFC members on a subcommittee can vote. Barbara stated that subcommittees only make recommendations to UFC and that UFC is exclusively an advisory commission. Gregg was concerned that the Heritage Tree Committee currently has only two members of UFC on a rather large subcommittee. Both of these members have their second 4-year terms expiring 28 February 2022. New UFC members must be added to this subcommittee this year. There already are bylaws for the Heritage Tree subcommittee but they may need to be changed. Megan thought it very important to recognize and relay the opinions of the volunteer non-UFC members of subcommittees. Jenn stressed the importance of all subcommittees to be aware of diversity, equity, and inclusion goals espoused by Portland Parks and Recreation. Barbara thought we really need to be clear as to who exactly is a member of a UFC subcommittee and how is that status gained.

The chair asked if a motion could be made regarding acceptance of the revised bylaws. No UFC member made a motion and the discussion was concluded. UFC was not yet ready to approve the proposed bylaw changes.

Next Urban Forestry Commission Meeting: The next Urban Forestry Commission meeting will be 9:30 a.m. – noon, Thursday, April 15, as a Zoom meeting. Check the link below in early February for the meeting agenda, meeting materials, and how you can gain access to this Zoom meeting,

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/urban-forestry-commission-0>