

TO: Neighborhood Tree Team members and Portland tree advocates
FROM: Bruce Nelson, Cully Tree Team 13 August 2023
RE: Portland Urban Forestry Commission Meeting June 15, 2023:
Summary and Comments

NOTE: This document is not an official document of the Urban Forestry Commission. I am a private citizen who is an unpaid 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 summary & 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, and occasionally either to identify who is saying what or for emphasis.**

I was at this meeting in the room where it was held. However, I had difficulty hearing what people said. I didn't hear the You Tube recording of the meeting until six weeks later. I base these comments and summary on the recording and my notes.

The monthly UFC meeting was held Thursday, 15 June, 2023, 9:30 am – 11:30 am as a joint Zoom and in-person meeting at the Portland Building, 1120 SW 5th Avenue, Room 216.

UFC Members Present Adrienne Feldstein, co-chair & meeting facilitator; Roberta Jortner, co-chair; Derily Bechthold, Casey Clapp, J.R. Lilly, Justin Misner, Melinda McMillan, Bruce Nelson, Leah Plack and Megan Van de Mark

UFC Commissioners Absent Ivory Iheanacho

PP&R UF Staff Present Jenn Cairo, City Forester (PP&R UF); Brian Landoe, Strategy and Planning Manager (PP&R UF); Casey Jogerst, Manager of Permitting and Regulation (PP&R UF); Belinda Judelman, Planning & Policy Analyst (PP&R UF)

Other City Staff/Contractors Present Kathy Sharp, Human Resources Generalist (Portland Bureau of Human Resources)

9:30 a.m. Public Comments None made

9:31 Minutes Review

Minutes from the May 18, 2023 UFC meeting were approved as written.

9:35 City Forester's Report Jenn Cairo, City Forester (PP&R UF)

1. Updates:
 - a. Ashley Reece of PP&R UF will no longer be serving UFC as minute taker and writer. She has been moved to the *tree planting group*. *On the tape I couldn't hear if it was PLANTING or PLANNING. Ms. Reece kept very accurate and detailed minutes, which I greatly appreciated.*
 - b. The City Council voted unanimously to delist Heritage Tree #26, as was recommended by UFC. The City Council also approved the Fiscal Year 23/24 Tree Regulation Schedule Changes. *Some fees charged for specific Urban Forestry services went up.*

c. Oregon Legislature House Bill 3414 has recently been amended so it does not exempt local construction from appropriate city or town or county regulations pertaining to tree and other natural resource protections. *This bill did not succeed in the legislature but it is possible that the Governor may try to resurrect the measure in some way, as it is considered an important element of her efforts to stimulate housing production. The Governor's Housing Production Advisory Council is an appointed body that continues to work on means to make recommendations to the Governor on how to reach her goal of stimulating 36,000 additional housing units being built each year. At a meeting on August 11th, this group apparently once more made some suggestions to reduce some of the local environmental constraints that may increase housing costs. For more updated information, see <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/Pages/Housing-Production-Advisory-Council.aspx>*

1. The UFC has a goal of being a representative body for Portlanders working on behalf of the urban forest. It should also function constructively with inclusivity and respect for all, including staff, fellow commissioners, and visitors. City Forester Cairo supports UFC efforts to develop a community agreement, which will be discussed later in the meeting. UFC members should know that since City Forester Cairo began her service she has worked diligently to include more women and people of color as Urban Forestry staff and members of UFC. Training is a requirement for all PP&R staff and volunteers.
2. New funds from the Parks levy have allowed UF to:
 - a) increase its staff capacity; b) establish and implement for the first time ever a routine parks tree maintenance schedule; c) do follow-up on permit conditions and tree code compliance; and d) do street tree planting and Yard Tree Give-aways in priority areas. Due to the increase in staff, more work space is needed. Some staff moved out of the East Delta UF headquarters. Non-development staff are moving to 1900 SW 4th Avenue, where the Tree Technicians and Tree Development team are also located. The Tree Inventory team has moved to the Portland Building downtown.
3. Portland is part of the National Vanguard Cities Coalition. <https://naturebasedclimate.solutions/vanguard-cities-initiative> PP&R UF is the lead for the City of Portland in this venture. The focus of this group is to help cities work for reduction of urban heat while promoting urban forestry as central for both equitable community development and reduction of urban heat island effects. The team from Portland is participating in the Urban

Nature Based Accelerator group, whose purpose is to integrate trees and urban forestry into cities to better advance equity and environmental justice. The team from Portland includes Vivek Shandas from Portland State University, as well as representatives from the Multnomah County Health Department, Portland Opportunities and Industry Center (POIC), Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, and the Portland Clean Energy Fund. City Forester Cairo views this as an exemplary networking resource. It was on the recommendation of this group that PP&R UF was part of a community-based coalition led by Friends of Trees that submitted a \$17 million dollar Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) fund request.

4. UFC members have been asking about the reported tree losses as part of the Oregon Department of Transportation's infrastructure improvements to Powell Boulevard in east Portland (*east of I-205*). Powell Boulevard is a state highway and therefore not subject to the City of Portland Tree Code. PP&R UF has been in conversations with ODOT since 2014 on this project. Those conversations have helped save many trees. ODOT has paid \$180,000 into PP&R UF's Tree Planting & Preservation Fund. It should be noted that PP&R UF Tree Permitting and Regulation's group handles about 10,000 development requests annually that involve trees. The Powell project was but one of them.

Questions from UFC members about City Forester's Report:

--Commissioner Clapp wondered if ODOT plans for the Outer Powell tree planting can be shared. Manager Jogerst will send what she has that can be shared. *Both the approved tree removal plan and the tree planting plan were sent to UFC members shortly after the meeting.*

--Commissioner Nelson thought it would be appropriate for PP&R UF to stage both its Yard Tree Give-Away and Street Tree Opt-Out Planting programs in close proximity to the Powell Boulevard development in East Portland. This would show PP&R UF's concern about tree and canopy loss along Powell while demonstrating active steps to increase canopy in this part of Portland. *At least \$180,000 paid by ODOT into the Portland Tree Planting and Preservation Fund should be allocated for use in areas affected by this ODOT project.*

--Commissioner Jortner wondered at what stage in this project trees were considered. Was tree preservation included in the project goals? It will take decades to replace the canopy being lost from the removal of over 570 trees for the improvements along SE Powell between I-205 and Gresham.

--Commissioner Lilly offered that two community organizations to engage in this would be East Portland Parks Coalition and East Portland Land Use and Transportation Committee. He reminded UFC members that the PBOT Division

Street project yielded fewer new trees than originally planned along Division (*Portland Water Bureau did not allow trees in the median due to the proximity of a large water conveyance pipe*). Some street trees were planted in nearby streets, thanks to creative endeavors on the part of local residents and various government operations.

--UFC co-chair Feldstein hopes that with more UF staff it is currently and will continue to be more likely that PP&R UF is actively engaged in these sorts of projects in a timely and effective manner.

City Forester Cairo reminded UFC members that staff increases are fairly recent. PP&R UF staff did push for more trees being put on SE Division Street as part of that project but these efforts were unsuccessful. However, PP&R UF efforts did lead to trees being planted in nearby areas.

Manager Jogerst said that staffing level increases have been in non-development areas, not development areas.

The hiring of Policy and Planning Analyst Belinda Judelman has allowed PP&R UF to be involved in these sorts of development projects at a much earlier stage, according to Manager Landoe. *Analyst Judelman has been on staff for about a year.*

City Forester Cairo reminded UFC members of the importance of active involvement in development projects very early if we want tree concerns to be considered in the final design. She also stressed that the Urban Nature Based Solutions Accelerator program has a strong focus on design.

Per City Forester Cairo, Friends of Trees has submitted a \$17 million request for Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds. This collaborative project includes PP&R UF, the City of Gresham, APANO, Black Parent Initiative, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, VERDE, POIC, Wisdom of the Elders, and Connecting Canopies. PP&R UF's focus as part of this IRA request is street tree maintenance and two rounds of targeted treatment of selected 450 ash trees for emerald ash borer control.

10:00 Human Resources Administrative Rule 2.02 Prohibition Against Workplace Harassment, Discrimination, Racism, & Retaliation:

Prevention Training Kathy Sharp, Human Resources Generalist, Business Associate (Portland Bureau of Human Resources?)

<https://www.portland.gov/policies/human-resources-administrative-rules/equal-employment/hrar-202-prohibition-against>

I am not sure if Ms. Sharp is a City of Portland employee or a contracted worker from a private company. What confuses me is the job title of Business Associate. She does have an e-mail address with the City.

Ms. Sharp spent 30 minutes going over Human Resources Interim Administrative Rule 2.02. This is a required training for City staff members and City commission members. Core values adopted by the City include equity, transparency, fiscal responsibility, communication, anti-racism, and collaboration. She reviewed the means by which each of these are addressed by City practices. UFC members had multiple questions and comments for Ms. Sharp:

Commissioner Van de Mark: What happens when a concern is brought forward related to behavior or actions of another individual? Ms. Sharp: Talk to the individual concerned if you are comfortable doing that. If not, talk to their supervisor, working your way up the administrative chart as appropriate.

Commissioner Bechthold: Is this an interim rule? Is there an update expected? What would it be dealing with? Ms. Sharp: It is interim. The expectation is that HR 2.02 will be amended to include City harassment guidelines that pertain to religious practices as well as mental and physical considerations.

Commissioner McMillan: What is retaliation? Ms. Sharp: Actions taken against someone who brought a complaint forward.

Co-chair Feldstein: Since UFC regularly meets only monthly, what is the process for dealing with issues that arise outside of regular meetings? Ms. Sharp: It is helpful if there are agreements among the group as to what is appropriate. It is not appropriate to use public forums for admonishing the behavior of others. Sometimes the best approach is to step away from bad behavior.

Commissioner Plack thought that this whole area is one that might be appropriate to discuss at a UFC retreat.

Commissioner Bechthold considers omission as sometimes a form of retaliation.

Ms. Sharp: Exclusion can be particularly hard on people.

Commissioner Plack: The act of interrupting someone whose speech or actions need to be questioned should not be viewed as inappropriate.

Manager Landoe will forward Ms. Sharp's presentation to Commissioners after he receives it. *I don't believe this has been done yet. However, above I have included the link to this administrative rule.*

10:30 Urban Forest Management Plan Update

Belinda Judelman, Planning and Policy Analyst (PP&R UF)

Analyst Judelman is leading the work on the review of the Portland Urban Forest Management Plan. This document provides a comprehensive framework that guides PP&R UF programs, policies, and actions. It is intended as a 10-year document, with the current Plan having been adopted in 2004.

The timeline is still:

- Identify scope of work and develop Request for Proposals--Sept. 2022 to March 2023;
- Select consultants and finalize contract--April 2023-July 2023;
- Launch project--July-August 2023;
- Develop plan—2023-2025

This endeavor includes active community engagement. UFC is expected to form an important component of those conversations. There will be:

- A technical advisory committee composed of representatives from appropriate bureaus, state, and regional entities;
- A community advisory committee to include a variety of individuals;
- Input from underserved communities often not part of discussions involving development of government planning documents;
- Public/other stakeholders, as happens with many citywide projects.

UFC has already provided feedback in helping to define the scope of this project. Areas that UFC may assist include outreach strategies, visions and goals development, challenges and opportunities to be addressed, canopy targets, recommendations/priorities, and review of draft documents. UFC members may want to participate in or listen to public engagement forums.

Analyst Judelman requested clarification from UFC about exactly how they wish to participate in this project. Possibilities include receiving periodic updates during regular UFC meetings, identifying UFC members to join the community advisory committee, or forming an internal UFC group to work directly on this project.

UFC member comments, questions and suggestions:

Commissioner Van de Mark: All three are good options, do the first two;

Commissioner Plack: Wants UFC to be more pro-active than reactive;

Commissioner Lilly: Likes the idea of having a UFC member on the advisory committee. Will UFC be asked to endorse the finished document? Does the City Council need to okay the document?

Manager Landoe thought that this document will be an administrative rule that will be brought to City Council for their endorsement. It will also be brought to UFC for our support and endorsement.

Commissioners Clapp and Nelson were supportive of all three suggested means of engagement.

Commissioner McMillan thought maybe UFC should form a subcommittee that focuses on content for the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Co-chair Feldstein summarized the sentiment of UFC as:

--All UFC members should receive regular updates on information. This can occur at regular meetings and also via electronic means as needed;

--Commissioner McMillan is happy to serve on behalf of UFC on the community advisory committee but UFC will need a back-up.

--Co-chair Jortner thought that a good role for UFC on the community advisory committee is as a listener.

During the discussion there was some thought to involving the UFC Policy Committee in the Portland Urban Forest Management Plan. Commissioner Van de Mark shared that some of that is already happening. Manager Landoe thought that it might be burdensome to expect the Policy Committee to be involved in this, as they are often dealing with other very important issues.

11:00 UFC Community Agreement discussion, Derily Bechthold, J.R. Lilly – UFC members

Commissioners Bechthold, Lilly, and Co-chair Jortner are still working on the draft of the UFC community agreement, taking into account comments received at the May meeting. This draft should be ready in a few days.

Commissioner Bechthold hoped that the draft would address issues pertaining to accountability and consequences. Commissioner Bechthold shared that the three UFC members working on this draft all have experience with other organizations that have developed similar agreements. It may not be a good idea or a common practice to include consequences in these types of documents. There is a gap between what you can accomplish with a community agreement and what you accomplish with Title 11 language. *I didn't completely understand this. I think it referred to working for different goals in a UFC community agreement than the goals you would have for the bylaws of the Urban Forestry Commission or the goals for Title 11.*

Commissioner Lilly considers the adoption of a community agreement as a first step toward ensuring civil discussion on topics brought to the UFC. UFC members should receive the revised draft soon. There will be further discussion at a future UFC meeting.

11:10 Brainstorming Potential Agenda Items for UFC Meetings

Brian Landoe, Strategy and Planning Manager (PP&R UF)

Manager Landoe asked UFC members for potential agenda items for future UFC meetings. City Forester Cairo reminded UFC members that the overarching goal of UFC is to advise Urban Forestry on policies. *In Title 11, UFC's responsibilities are listed in 11.20.020 E. They include other important items besides that overarching goal.* <https://www.portland.gov/code/11/20>

Commissioner Misner would like to see a discussion about the rules of recording UFC meetings, specifically what is to be recorded and what is not.

Manager Landoe stated that meeting recordings are not a requirement of City or state law. It is uncommon for advisory groups to record their meetings or to make them available on You Tube.

Commissioner Bechthold thought it would be helpful if the chair would state during meetings when the recording is on and when it is off. Being clear on this can help all understand what conversations are being recorded.

Commissioner Clapp would like to see a discussion of the Heritage Tree Program, including how to build this program. *At the time of the meeting, there was no staff person working on this program, but an upcoming new hire will have this program as part of their work responsibilities.*

It was suggested that a discussion or presentation on the 82nd Avenue Project would be useful.

Commissioner Van de Mark would like to have different UF staff members tell UFC about the responsibilities of their particular work group or program.

Commissioner Misner would like to see information presented on the planned construction of a new North Portland aquatics center.

Commissioner Lilly wanted to invite UFC members to the Pow Wow that will be happening at Delta Park.

Commissioner Plack would like a discussion about how to have trees and greater human population density.

Commissioner McMillan would like to have information presented about what other bureaus do that relates to trees.

Commissioner Nelson would like to see UFC develop regular contact with City Commissioners, as was done by Meryl Redisch when she participated in UFC.

This was a brainstorming session and no commitment or decision was made on any of these potential agenda items. The usual practice for determining meeting agendas is for the chair or co-chairs to meet with City Forester Cairo and Manager Landoe to discuss agenda items for the upcoming meeting. Requests made by other bureaus to present are prioritized. There is always a City Forester's report. The remaining agenda items that are included depend on the time available and the decisions of this agenda-setting group. UFC members can always e-mail suggestions for inclusion in meeting agendas. But the final decision is made by the City Forester and the UFC chair or co-chairs.

Next Urban Forestry Commission Meeting:

The next UFC meeting will be 9:30 am – 11:30 am, July 20, 2023. It is likely that this will be a hybrid meeting with both in-person (same location as today's meeting) and Zoom for attendance and participation. Check the link below prior to the meeting for the agenda, meeting materials, and how you can gain Zoom access to this meeting. <https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc/events/2023/2/16/urban-forestry-commission-meeting>