



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD MEETING MINUTES March 18, 2021

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Bender called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM

Chair Marie Bender, Vice Chair Thomas Hildebrandt, Secretary Craig Olson, Trustee Carol Lynn Berseth, Trustee Ethe, Trustee Geraldine Poor, and Council Liaison Lisa Anderl participated remotely using a video teleconferencing platform by Zoom.

Staff participating remotely included: City Clerk Deborah Estrada, Deputy Public Works Director Alaine Sommargren, and Natural Resources Specialist Kim Frappier.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES: There were no public appearances.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Review and Consider Approving Minutes of the January 21, 2021, OSCT Special Meeting

MOTION: A motion was made and duly seconded to approve the January 21 minutes as amended; Motion passed.

PROS Plan Update

Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations, provided an update on the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS). Kintner explained that the current plan expired at the end of 2019, noting that it is a six-year plan that anticipates the programming and capital projects necessary to meet the community's need for parks, recreation, and open space, as well as trails, arts, and cultural events.

Conservation Technix was selected as the consultant to manage the process, including providing a baseline analysis on existing conditions and community needs, conducting a multi-faceted community engagement process, and developing a draft framework for the final PROS Plan. However, due to the Pandemic, the PROS Plan was suspended in April 2020.

At the end of 2020, the staff and consulting team resumed the planning process for the PROS Plan, with an initial focus on assessing the work that was already completed, adjusting the project timeline, and modifying the scope of work to reflect the need for virtual engagement strategies. To date, work completed on the PROS Plan included a review of existing conditions, one presentation to the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Arts Council, a process update to the OSCT (September 2019), and the completion of a community survey.

A virtual public meeting will be conducted on March 23 to include a presentation and provide opportunity to receive community input through live polling and breakout discussions. Following the virtual meeting, the staff and consulting team will utilize input to inform the next steps of the process. Due to the time lapse, additional input is anticipated from both the Arts Council and the Open Space Conservancy Trust later in 2021, ahead of the transmittal of the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation to the City Council.

Code of Ethics – Informal Opinion

City Clerk Estrada provided an abbreviated training on the City's Code of Ethics, noting that it was originally adopted in 2018 and later amended in 2019. Estrada continued, explaining that in January 2021, City Council directed staff to update the Code of Ethics and communicate with Board and Commission Members the option to seek an informal opinion from the City Attorney on the applicability of the Code of Ethics. Trust members were also advised that the City is working with outside counsel to develop a revised Code of Ethics and

that training on the revised Code of Ethics is anticipated to begin in April.

Forest Health Survey: 10-year update

Kim Frappier, Natural Resources Specialist, provided a detailed presentation on the Forest Health Survey.

The Forest Health Survey was initiated by the OSCT and City Staff in 2008 to gather quantitative data on the levels of invasive and native species within the park and identify funding levels needed to complete the goals set out on the Pioneer Park Forest Management Plan. At the time, the City had only conducted a high-level qualitative analysis of invasive plants in Pioneer Park and did not have baseline measurements to track progress over time or assess budget needs.

In 2008, the City worked closely with the Seattle Urban Nature Project (which later became EarthCorps Science) to develop the study protocols. The project manager at the time Paul West, hired two staff to collect the data in 2008 – one of whom is our own Alaine Sommargren.

The primary goals of the project were:

- Provide a quantitative inventory of native and invasive species in the park
- Compare the success of previous management efforts
- Create a management plan based on the data collected
- Estimate the time and cost necessary to meet the set goals.

The Forest Health Survey included a detailed Forest Health Plan broken up into Short-term, Mid-term, and Long-term objectives.

Results and Findings addressed the following:

- Canopy Trees & 2018 Canopy Tree Density by Species
- Regenerating Trees
- Invasive Tree Treatment Methods
- Regenerating Trees & 2018 Regenerating Tree Density by Species
- Shrubs
- Herbaceous Plants

A summary of the results included:

- Species richness – 81 documented species during the 2018 survey.
- The density of native canopy species remained constant while the density of invasive canopy species decreased.
- Density and composition of regenerating trees showed overall positive trends – with a decline in broadleaved evergreen invasive trees such as English holly.
- Percent cover of ground ivy showed an increase compared to 2008.

Restoration Work Plan

Alaine Sommargren, Deputy Public Works Director, explained that staff reports to the Trust board each year on planned forest restoration activities in Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space. Restoration activities are performed by professional contractors, volunteers, seasonal crew members, and Natural Resources staff. Restoration work is guided by the Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan and the 10-Year Update to the Open Space Vegetation Management Plan.

Staff reported that the 2021 Work Plan is scheduled in all three quadrants of Pioneer Park as well as Engstrom Open Space and that Pioneer Park work will largely focus on launching comprehensive invasive removal efforts as outlined in the Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan. The following contractor work is out to bid and field work is slated to begin in late April:

- Comprehensive Invasive Removal
- Invasive Removal Maintenance
- Ivy Ring Creation
- Fall Planting
- Watering of New Plantings

- Invasive Tree Treatment

Staff further explained that the Natural Resources crew will continue to monitor and treat noxious weed populations on all Trust properties. The Crew will also be available to respond to restoration related issues and tasks as they arise throughout the field season.

It should be noted that due to ongoing COVID-19 safety concerns and programmatic changes at EarthCorps, the City has not secured a Professional Services Agreement for volunteer management services for 2021. Natural Resources staff will be working with EarthCorps in the next couple of months to develop a plan for revised volunteer event offerings.

Letterboxing Program Update

Sommargren reached out to the letterboxing volunteers and confirmed that they do have the materials for the letterboxing program. While there was considerable input from volunteers, staff contributed to the development and printing of the booklets, and the outreach. As a result of the Pandemic and without a full recreation program, staff decided that the resources do not exist to support the program within the constraints of the existing timeline. The Recreation Reset plan may provide an opportunity to pick this program up at a later date.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Bender summarized the joint meeting with city administration, Mayor Wong, and Board and Commission Chairs outlining virtual meetings and the city's efforts to improve communication across each.

New Email Addresses & Public Records Requests

Deborah Estrada, City Clerk, explained that city email accounts would be created for each Trust member to ensure that emails to and from staff and trust members is managed in accordance with the Public Records Act.

Board Terms & City Updates

Staff reported that two positions were due to expire May 31 and that if Trust members wished to reapply, applications were due by May 6 with appointments scheduled for the June 1 City Council meeting.

Sommargren reported that Sam Harb would start as the new Parks Operations Manager on March 22.

Sommargren addressed Kim Frappier's departure and how much she contributed to the city trails. Trust member Ethe read a letter on behalf of the OSCT expressing their gratitude and appreciation for Kim Frappier and all of her work with the City.

Quadrant Reports

Trust members provided brief reports on each quadrant – other than mud, no major problems reported.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2021, at 5:00 PM.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Open Space Conservancy Trust, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 PM

Marie Bender, OSCT Chair

Attest:

Deborah Estrada, City Clerk