

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 1**

CONVENE: 7:03 p.m.

PRESENT: Planning Commission Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Grace Edwards, Terry Kirkpatrick, Meghan Sullivan, Michael Tobias, Anthony Varela, and Kelly Von Holtz.

Excused: Commissioner Brian Schumacher.

Tree Board Chair Trent Grantham and Boardmembers Joel Hecker, Michael Jackson, Dennis Olson, and Jim Sedore.

Excused: Boardmembers Tanya Nozawa and Brent Chapman.

Staff: Planning Manager Brad Medrud, Sustainability Coordinator Alyssa Jones Wood, and Department Assistant II Brittaney Kelton.

Others: Kim Frappier, Environmental Planner & Urban Forester, Watershed Company, and Amber Mikluscak, Landscape Architect & GIS Manager, Watershed Company.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS: Planning Commission Chair Robbins welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commissioners and Boardmembers provided self-introduction and shared information about their respective background and experience.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: There were no changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF
PLANNING
COMMISSION
MINUTES: AUGUST
27, 2022:**

MOTION: Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to approve the minutes of August 27, 2022 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF
TREE BOARD
MINUTES: AUGUST
8, 2022 &
SEPTEMBER 12,
2022:**

MOTION: Boardmember Sedore moved, seconded by Boardmember Hecker, to approve the Tree Board meeting minutes of August 8, 2022 and

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 2**

September 12, 2022 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS: Commissioner Sullivan acknowledged the national holiday of *Indigenous Peoples Day* on October 10, 2022 celebrating indigenous people. Indigenous people lived in area prior to white settlers arriving to the area. The area is ancestral the land of the Squaxin Island people.

BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS: There were no reports.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Medrud reported he included a summary of the Planning Commission interviews conducted last month in the Commission's meeting packet, as well as copy of an email from a Tumwater resident.

At the next Commission meeting on October 25, 2022, the Commission is scheduled to review the work program for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

The City Council approved the housekeeping ordinances on October 4, 2022 with some amendments to the Commission's recommendations.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Coordinator Wood reported she is scheduled to present the Green Team's Annual Sustainability Report to the City Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no public comments.

JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION AND TREE BOARD WORKSESSION ON Manager Medrud reported the worksession would involve a review of tree and vegetation preservation in the City. The City contracted with the Watershed Company to assist the City with the update.

TREE AND VEGETATION PRESERVATION REGULATION UPDATE: Kim Frappier reported the Watershed Company is assisting the City to update Tumwater urban forest management regulations. Over the next year, the update will include reviews of Title 16.08 *Preservation of Trees and Vegetation*, the Tumwater Street Tree Plan, and Title 12.24 *Street Trees*. The worksession will review components of the update project to include the Public Engagement Plan and the municipal code update process.

Ms. Frappier reviewed the worksession agenda:

- Policy Objectives & Considerations
- Public Engagement Plan
- Tools & Strategies
- Online Open House
- Municipal Code Update
- Capacity Assessment and Background Research

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 3**

- Regulation Assessment Topics
- Project Timeline

Ms. Frappier invited feedback on the requirements for a healthy urban forest of trees and vegetation on both public and private lands.

Boardmember Sedore offered that his definition of a healthy and resilient urban forest includes native and mixed species, mixed stages of growth, mixed environments, and riparian wetlands. It is important to recognize the challenges of hardscape in the urban environment and the need for balance between roofs, driveways, sidewalks, roads, playgrounds, and shopping malls while sustaining a healthy plant and animal life that is compatible with the community.

Ms. Frappier agreed on the importance of species diversity, structure, and age diversity, as well as ensuring species resiliency to pests, disease, and climate change by having the ability to withstand increases in the duration of summer drought, increased temperatures, and increased winter rains.

Ms. Frappier reported the City's Urban Forestry Management Plan guides the stewardship of the City's urban forest. Data, goals, and objectives as outlined in the Plan will be used as a cornerstone for the municipal code update process. The specific goals tied to the code update are summarized in Chapter 3 of the Public Engagement Plan. The code update will focus on a balance of protection and support of the community and urban forest with the other strategic priorities of the City, such as providing affordable housing, developing a walkable urban community, economic development, addressing climate change, and protecting endangered species. She acknowledged that some in the community would be advocating that no trees should be removed under the revised tree protection code. However, within the urban environment, that practice is not always feasible when considering ongoing infrastructure needs and development. Trees have a life span and live within a dynamic ecosystem within the urban forest. Planning of succession should be included in the approach to urban forest resiliency. The code update is intended to strike a balance to ensure the short- and long-term resiliency of the City's urban forest and to provide for sustainable urban development within the urban growth boundary. Urban forest management is important in the context of the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the Tumwater Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Frappier invited comments and feedback on how the Comprehensive Plan and the GMA should be considered in the context of updating ordinances.

Chair Robbins expressed appreciation of the ecosystem approach, as the update should reflect a holistic process to ensure all elements are captured

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 4**

for the community. She encouraged a better understanding of existing ordinance language and identifying opportunities to create a more holistic and ecosystem approach to help close gaps.

Commissioners and Boardmembers offered comments on the importance of considering trends, such as wildfires and balancing growth in areas where trees could pose as a future risk to residents; consider current trends of more people working at home and other future technology that might alter infrastructure needs; importance of accountability by the City by enforcement of codes; allowing exemptions for development of less desirable properties; and encouraging growth in the City rather than in the urban growth area.

Ms. Frappier said another policy consideration is the need for response to climate mitigation and addressing actions within the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan. Some of the strategies in the Climate Mitigation Plan recognize the importance of tree canopy, sequestering carbon, and maximizing municipal tree canopy where appropriate and in balance with other City goals.

Another important factor is equity and environmental justice. Those factors will be infused within the engagement and outreach process and in the development of code updates. As part of the process, the project team will discuss the role trees play in equity and environmental justice and what the City's role and responsibility should be relative to tree preservation and appropriate actions the City can explore with respect to equity and environmental justice. Ms. Frappier invited feedback.

Commissioner Sullivan asked about any considerations to incentivize or compensate individuals as a strategy to engage diverse communities that might lack the time/schedule, bandwidth, or perhaps interest in engaging and participating in the update process. One way of building trust within diverse communities is through collaboration with stakeholder leaders. She questioned how the makeup of the Tree Board aligns with the goal of targeting representatives of historically underrepresented populations and interests.

Ms. Frappier responded that during the development of the public engagement plan, the consultant team and staff discussed the issue of compensation and incentives. Manager Medrud added that staff continues discussions on the topic as it encompasses not only this update process, but also all City strategies involving affordable housing, climate mitigation, and equity and environmental justice efforts. The intent is to approach development of a tool or effort that would encompass a broader scale effort and not focus only on this specific update as part of a Citywide effort. Staff is working through initial discussions internally to present ideas to the

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 5**

Board and the Commission.

Boardmember Sedore referred to language within the agenda material that speaks to the lack of low tree canopy correlating with disadvantaged socioeconomic groups and/or people of color. His observation has been that in the creation of affordable housing, canopy is lost as density of housing is created with a lack of open space for trees and plants.

Coordinator Jones Wood pointed out that historically, the correlation between low tree canopy and people of color is tied to redlining and historic housing practices and is not necessarily only a product of higher density housing today but rather unfair housing practices that are still prevalent in some places rooted from the era of the Great Depression.

Ms. Frappier reported the Tree Board has had an opportunity to review and provide some feedback on the Public Engagement Plan. Additional feedback is welcome from the Board and the Commission. The Plan includes: Overview of Code Update Process; Engagement Goals and Strategies; Stakeholder Demographics and Interest Groups; Outreach Strategies and Notification Tools; and Draft Outreach Schedule. The overall strategy is to solicit broad outreach, engage a wide and diverse audience, and interpret the feedback into some actionable guidance to inform the ordinance update process.

Amber Mikluscak reviewed components of the draft online Open House. The public campaign will take advantage of all multimedia promotions to direct community members to the online open house. The web-based open house will be available during the duration of the project serving as a clearinghouse for individuals interested in tracking progress or seeking information about the project. The City is concurrently working on three major ordinance updates during a staggered timeline. Although there is clear division between the updates, there likely will be questions on how the different codes interrelate. The site will include links between the different update processes. The open house can be accessed at any time. The team will collect freeform and structured input and provide all documents and updates as the project progresses. Earlier comments received by the City will be integrated within the process. The open house is scheduled to launch on October 17, 2022. Opportunities will be included for individuals to submit comments or participate in meetings. The site is viewable on a cell phone. The website will be updated regularly through the update process.

Ms. Frappier said the stakeholder meetings would be a major component of the public engagement effort to include both internal and external stakeholder meetings. Internal stakeholder meetings will be scheduled with department leads, permitting and code enforcement employees and other

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 6**

employees in the City engaged in urban forestry management and tree code implementation to receive feedback on the efficacy and desired improvements/changes to the code.

Three planned external stakeholder meetings are geared to transition with the first meeting open to all interested community members and stakeholders followed by a second and third meeting focused on specific areas of interest driven from the first meeting. Additional meetings may be scheduled dependent upon the outcome of the first three meetings. The purpose of the meetings is to facilitate iterative discussions to help inform the ordinance update process. More detailed information is included in the Public Engagement Plan on the specific approaches for the stakeholder meetings.

Ms. Mikluscak addressed questions on the stakeholder meeting process. She explained that in order for the process to achieve a common goal while ensuring a constructive process, it is important to provide balance between competing interests. Often, that might entail participation by some individuals representing mobilized interests and other individuals who may not be as vocal or as organized representing valid interests that can often be difficult to parse out to ensure a balanced process. Hosting an initial meeting affords an opportunity to identify interests and ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak enabling staff and the consultant team to identify interests that might be representative of a group of people versus an individual's interests. Staff would identify all interests for the subsequent meetings and seek individuals who are interested in continuing to participate to ensure all interests are represented throughout the process.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick inquired as to whether the process has accounted for some demographics not represented in the stakeholder meetings or the online open house. Ms. Mikluscak affirmed that the team has identified some potential vulnerability of the process by reviewing attendance from the first meeting to ascertain whether some interests were not represented. Within the Public Engagement Plan, Coordinator Jones Wood is serving as a liaison to ensure a connection to some of those communities or individuals. As each step in the public engagement process moves forward, the team will continue to monitor engagement and make any refinements that might be necessary to capture interests that have been identified as critical to ensure a successful process.

Commissioner Von Holtz commented on the possibility of including a child of color or people with a disability within the imagery on the postcard.

Ms. Mikluscak addressed questions and explained that the online open house is designed to serve as an information source for individuals to learn about or catch up on the process. The online open house will be updated

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 7**

regularly throughout the process.

Commissioner Varela offered that the materials for posters and postcard should be material that is renewable and recyclable. Ms. Mikluscak said printing has not been coordinated at this time; however, the suggestion is viable and it could entail instructions to the printer to note the material content on the promotional materials.

Commissioner Sullivan asked whether the process includes some collection of demographics and whether participating individuals can self-identify their race or ethnic background. Ms. Mikluscak advised that the question has not been discussed with City staff; however, online surveys typically enable individuals to self-identify.

In response to questions on tracking response rates, Ms. Mikluscak provided information on typical response metrics for different forms of media to assist in identifying whether the response rate has been successful. She addressed questions about including mailing or telephone information for those in the community that do not use a computer, the use of QR codes to track responses from different sources, and participation by students and others who travel to the City to shop or work.

Ms. Frappier said individuals who engage through the website would be asked to provide their address. Many people who are unable to vote within the City because of age, citizenship status, or other issues are welcome to participate because their quality of life is just as affected as those who live in the City or are of voting age.

Ms. Mikluscak added that during a meeting with City staff to identify potential groups to inform about the Public Engagement Plan, the conversation included the schools as a potential avenue as a community gatekeepers as it represents a good equalizer in society and is representative of the one key group of working families with school age children. The process may be an opportunity to reach individuals that may not be informed through other channels. Urban tree canopy affects all residents and visitors in terms of quality of life, restorative benefits of trees, and the positive correlation between lifespan and air quality. There are a number of reasons why many individuals were identified as stakeholders. Some questions for the Board and Commission to consider include the degree members believe the feedback that guides the process is balanced in terms of competing interests of a worker in the City versus someone who resides in the City, whether those interests would be considered equal data points, whether public engagement feedback should be amplified for residents only, or whether the effort should be considered as a potential way to attract people to live in Tumwater.

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 8**

Commissioner Sullivan asked about the availability of capacity to distribute flyers during a football game or having environmental studies teachers providing extra credit for participation. Ms. Frappier supported the suggestion and noted that the team identified a suite of strategies within a specific budget effective for the project team and for the City; however, the team can explore other suggestions, such as contacting local PTAs and other community groups that are active in the schools.

Manager Medrud added that during the development of the Regional Climate Mitigation Plan, the process included an active component of high school students in the community who participated in the entire process. Those students were very active and offered good ideas. The process could tap into an existing audience. In terms of staff capacity, he advised that he would contract City administration on the best approach for working with the school district. The first focus should be on high schools as it affords the best opportunity to receive good feedback.

Ms. Frappier provided an overview of the City's ordinance update process. In conjunction with the public engagement process, the Watershed group will complete background research and evaluate City policies and processes. The project team will use the background research coupled with public engagement feedback to develop a gap analysis to use in the development of amendments for review by the Tree Board, Planning Commission, and City Council during worksessions prior to determining final amendments for consideration during the City's ordinance process. During the worksessions, the team will outline specific code provisions and discuss options and implications for specific amendments. Regulation components to be reviewed and examined include trees and development standards, management of public trees, equity and resource allocations, trees on private property, protecting mature trees and groves, in lieu fees, permit requirements, specific needs for single family homeowners versus developers, and other topics. The team plans to develop a schedule with staff following completion of the gap analysis to identify the main amendment topics for additional review and assessment.

Boardmember Sedore asked whether the evaluation of existing processes includes collection of data required to evaluate processes to ensure success of the project. He urged advancing the measurement of successes and failures as a priority.

Chair Robbins added that another aspect to consider is identifying some opportunities where the City has not achieved full success or insufficient success that might benefit from the process.

Ms. Frappier said the team and staff plan to offer suggestions on better ways to pursue tree preservation in the City to include practices that have

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 9**

been effective, missed opportunities, and ways for the City to strengthen the process.

Commissioner Tobias referred to an email received from a resident that speaks to a pending apartment development located south of Israel Road. The email refers to the City's granting of a multi-year property tax deferral. He asked whether there is an overlap or connection between a tax deferral for development and the in-lieu fees for tree mitigation. Manager Medrud explained that the City has adopted a multifamily property tax exemption program in the City for housing development along major corridors throughout the City. The City has received three applications for three buildings that were approved by the City Council. One development is nearing completion to receive final approval. Two other applications are anticipated to be received in the fall. The availability of data on the relationship between the tax exemption program and trees and vegetation is not available; however, it is a valid issue that could be examined in the future.

Boardmember Sedore offered that the proposal for language to reflect a middle to high school reading level would be appropriate for outreach and engagement materials and should apply to regulations, which should be included as part of the assessment review. Ms. Frappier agreed that it would be considered as language is drafted.

Ms. Frappier reviewed the project timeline:

- Quarter 3 2022: Develop Public Engagement Plan
- Quarter 4 2022: Online Open House Online; Capacity Assessment/Document Review; Internal and External Stakeholder Meetings
- Quarter 1 2023: External Stakeholder Meetings Continued; Complete Gap Analysis, Tree Board Worksession, First Draft of Amendments
- Quarter 2 2023: Ordinance Development: worksessions and briefings with Planning Commission and Tree Board; Ordinance Revisions; Public Hearing with Planning Commission
- Quarter 3 2023: General Government Committee Briefing; City Council Worksessions
- Quarter 4 2023: Tree and Vegetation Preservation Ordinance Adoption

Chair Robbins invited public comments.

**PUBLIC
COMMENTS:**

Lynn Fitz-Hugh, Director of Restoring Earth Connection, said the organization's action group is the Friends of Trees. She is excited that the

**JOINT TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
& TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
October 11, 2022 Page 10**

process has launched as she has been in contact with staff over the last three years in anticipation of the process convening. The public engagement strategy published earlier in January and February is somewhat different, as it appears the external stakeholder group is comprised of certain representatives of groups. The strategy as presented is much more diverse and will involve more people; however, her concern is that organizations, such as Restoring Earth Connection have spent time studying best practices from other places that have specific ideas that members would like to offer early in the process. It is unclear as to how members of the public will be able to engage during the stakeholder meeting. She is hopeful to have an opportunity to present an idea followed by some discussion. Offering an idea in two minutes is too limiting, as well as receiving feedback on the suggestion. She is hopeful the process will engage some community members who are not well versed but become engaged through limited feedback while affording others with more expertise on the issues the ability to share that information. She hopes the process can be tailored to accommodate for those differences. She stressed the importance of reviewing enforcement standards, as it has been a difficult for jurisdictions when the public is often unaware of tree standards. She asked for the Tree Board minutes to be available to the public, as they were not posted on the City's website.

Tara Ziegler advocated for outreach to high school students, as they are worthy to engage on tree policy. Any high school student is four years away from voting and the nation's next block of voters. Student protests on climate change have resumed this year. Many students in Thurston County are aware of the effects of climate change and how it will affect their livelihood and their lives within the next 80 years. Students are an important part of the process on revisions to tree policies and protections.

Commissioner Tobias suggested the project team should reach out to the Tumwater FRESH program. The program includes high school students from Tumwater High School and Black Hills High School.

NEXT MEETING: The next regular Planning Commission meeting is on Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 7 p.m. and the next Tree Board meeting is on Monday, November 7, 2022 at 7 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: **Commissioner Sullivan moved, seconded by Commissioner Tobias, to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**