

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
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**CONVENE:** 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Trent Grantham and Boardmembers Brent Chapman, Michael Jackson, Tanya Nozawa, Hannah Ohman, and Jim Sedore.

Excused: Brodrick Coval,

Staff: Sustainability Coordinator Alyssa Jones Wood and Water Resources Specialist Grant Gilmore.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:  
JANUARY 8, 2024 &  
MARCH 11, 2024:**

*Boardmember Jim Sedore arrived at the meeting.*

**MOTION:** Chair Grantham moved, seconded by Boardmember Jackson, to approve the minutes of January 8, 2024 and March 11, 2024 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**TREE BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:** There were no reports.

**COORDINATOR'S REPORT:** Specialist Gilmore briefed members on changes to strategies for planting plans in several locations throughout the City.

Initially, the City considered three planting sites last season located off Israel Road, Palermo wetland, and the golf course swale. Over the year, staff prioritized some of the City's restoration events. Throughout the year, staff has been working with the Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 13 Lead Entity to improve riparian corridors. Subsequently, staff considered planting opportunities across the City to implement a prioritized planting initiative. The golf course swale is a challenging site with limited space between the railroad fence and the swale. Following consultation with golf course staff and Parks and Recreation management, staff identified other suitable sites to focus on riparian habitat, corridor restoration, and widening buffers along critical areas within the golf course.

Staff completed a full site assessment and identified a dozen potential planting sites with several located along the Palermo wetland on the side of the golf course. The site is conducive for planting a protective layer for the wetland.

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Several other sites are located at the golf course; however, plantings must meet specific requirements. Four sites were identified along the Deschutes River with approval by the Parks and Recreation Department. Staff is developing a formal planting plan for all the locations over the next several months in coordination with golf course staff to identify specific native species. The plan will be presented to the Board for review and feedback.

The focus is to maximize the City's planting potential within critical areas meeting standards for certification by the golf course under the Salmon Safe Certification program.

The Israel Road site is an ideal site for developing a planting plan. Some challenges of the site are identifying the stormwater design criteria and the maintenance component of the design to determine whether additional plantings might increase demands on maintenance of the pond. Staff plans to initiate work on the project during the summer. By end of summer and beginning of fall, up to six planting plans would be completed and vetted by other departments and ready for review. At that time, staff will consider resource capacity to organize events and initiate plantings over the winter.

Specialist Gilmore shared information on work between the City and the Tumwater School District. Last year, the City launched in partnership with the school district, the Forest and Stream Ecology Program. Some Boardmembers participated. Additional efforts are planned this year since the first event was so successful.

A new program with the school district is a pilot program called the YES Program. The Forest and Stream Ecology Program is an OSPI-accredited program in partnership with the school district, New Market Skills Center, Pacific Education Institute, and other community members within the forest practices and ecological practices industry. A new program, Water Resources and Management Program, is a similar format offering five weeks of accreditation with heavy emphasis on watershed dynamics and how trees respire and ways to focus and prioritize restoration plans within in a watershed. Students will learn about water resource management, forest practices, and ecological management.

Through mutual work with the community over the last year, the need for a consistent restoration effort was identified as a need to enable the community to participate. Approximately five months ago, the City sponsored a Second Saturday Restoration Event series focused on restoration at Sapp Road Park. The project will eventually result in a large restoration event with the Parks and Recreation Department and students from the University of Washington and others. Over the last five

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months, volunteers have removed thousands of weed barriers installed approximately 20 years ago, which has compromised the entire understory of the forest canopy. Volunteers have removed weed barrier and trimmed low tree limbs to enable planting of vegetation. Some trees are no longer healthy will be removed and serve as log debris in the forest as a source of nitrogen benefits and nurse logs. The restoration plan for the park will include different features. The park is 11.7 acres in size with Percival Creek running through the park. The riparian corridor within the park is compromised because of the abundance of reed canary grass. By the end of the summer, all student research (fish habitat and riparian restoration with a focus on beavers) will be completed on the site and shared with the Board.

Specialist Gilmore described the location of Sapp Road Park, which is where Percival Creek intersects Sapp Road. The park provides parking and access to a trail along the east side of the park and the site of restoration activities. The park plays an important role in the function and health of the small subbasin within the watershed. Sapp Road Park was historically grazed by cattle with no trees on the site 20 years ago except for one large cedar tree. Over the years as trees matured, the weed barrier created much damage to the understory and to the trees.

Boardmember Chapman suggested adding the park to the Board's summer field trip.

Specialist Gilmore added that the park is predominately critical areas located in a sensitive riparian corridor with salmon. The goal is to restore the degraded wetland and riparian corridor to a functional vegetative biodiversity. An area within the wetland unit is perfectly suitable once water levels are increased to relocate Oregon spotted frogs to the park from other areas in the City. The goal is increasing frog habitat. The park serves as a learning lab. Staff is working with the school district to develop some learning initiatives around the park. The park is one of the sites forest and ecology students use for restoration activities.

Specialist Gilmore offered to provide a tour to Boardmembers of the park.

Boardmember Chapman conveyed appreciation that the Israel Road project is a high priority as the site is of high visibility to the traveling public. Specialist Gilmore explained how the Water Resources and Sustainability Department is a new department in terms of the history of the City. Many of the departments across the City are becoming acquainted with the new department and its capacity and skill sets. Relationships are developing between employees within different departments with the new department assisting in promoting coordination of projects across departments. It is important that planting projects are maintained and managed for several years to ensure sustainability of the

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plantings.

Coordinator Jones Wood reviewed changes to the Board's meeting schedule and the deferral of several agenda items. She encouraged members to offer site recommendations for the field trip.

Boardmember Chapman suggested adding the site of the new Operations and Maintenance Facility. The site includes a Garry oak tree. He recommended receiving information on facility and landscaping plans prior to the field trip.

Boardmember Sedore asked about the status of the recommended tree list. Coordinator Jones Wood said the list is part of the tree code update. Boardmember Sedore also participated in the four-hour principles of urban forestry training with Operations staff. During the training, Operations staff shared information about trees that pose difficulty, such as planting too close to City infrastructure, such as hydrants or utility boxes or hedges that create interference for antennas or telemetry for utility systems. She met with different crews from the Operations Department and requested feedback on the street tree list. She has met and has scheduled meetings with several crew leads in conjunction with planning staff. She has also outreached with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Community and Urban Forestry staff to receive feedback on the proposed street tree list. An improved and likely shorter list will be presented to the Board in August.

Boardmember Sedore commented that one issue is effectively marketing the street tree list because the majority of trees in Tumwater are located on private property. Coordinator Jones Wood noted that often even those trees desired by the City are often planted incorrectly by homeowners who desire to hide utility boxes or hydrants. Some of the proposed code amendments address City access to public infrastructure.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported she contracted DNR to obtain information about the Sterling Award.

Boardmember Chapman reported the Sterling Award was created by the Arbor Day Foundation to provide added incentive for communities to continue to diversify their efforts in caring for their local community forest. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that she plans to provide additional information on the award at the Board's next meeting.

**NON-  
REGULATORY  
INCENTIVES AND  
PROGRAMS:**

The City received a grant from the U.S. Forest Service. The grants are from the River Network as a pass through grant, which requires the City to meet match waiver requirements. The match waiver requires the project to benefit disadvantaged communities. The original narrative in the grant application depicted the project as providing extra incentives to

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low- or moderate-income households. However, the narrative did not meet the requirements with the grant requiring the City to use federal map tools to determine geographic areas where benefits and incentives would be offered. The City has access to the State Environmental Health Disparities Map that identifies lower air quality areas in the City because of I-5. However, the U.S. Forest Service did not recognize the state map and required staff to use a series of other tools. Because of efforts with the Forest Service and the River Network, the orange area of the map is the location eligible for application of the funds. The area includes the Olympia Regional Airport. A list of incentives was drafted for the grant application. Some of the incentives provided by the program include trees, tree health assessments by the City's urban forester (up to 25 a year), and street tree trimming services. Up to 50% of the urban forester's salary is covered by the grant for work performed in disadvantaged areas.

Boardmember Chapman commented on the number of impressive incentives and projects in progress in the City; however, he is unsure whether the community is aware of all efforts. He asked whether the plan includes outreach to the community to communicate efforts or collaborating with the Communications Department to publicize activities in the City. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that on May 28, 2024 she is scheduled to brief the City Council during a work session on an update of the Urban Forestry Management Plan, which includes the Tree Inventory and Maintenance Plan and an update on the grant. Based on the U.S. Forest Service acceptance of the revised application, staff will proceed with the grant agreement. After the agreement is executed, more information will be released to the community about the program. The urban forester will have approximately one year before the launch of the incentive programs. The grant includes funds for door hangers and mailers in the targeted area to announce the availability of the incentives.

Boardmember Sedore said he understands that much of the efforts will reach the underserved or low-income residents; however, it appears that most of the new low-income housing (apartments) in Tumwater do not have any associated land to plant trees. He agreed with the value of plants and trees around low-income housing complexes; however, residents have no power or influence to plant and maintain a tree in those types of developments. He asked whether there has been any consideration in terms of creating affordable housing communities to include open space around the complexes. Coordinator Jones Wood said apartment complexes are required to allocate open space for stormwater facilities or multi-use areas.

Chair Grantham added that the open space requirement is approximately 10% to 15% of the total area. The open space must be located within the property's boundaries.

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Members and staff discussed the new apartment complex located off Tyee Drive and placement of the structure so close to the road. Another new development is scheduled north of Tumwater Boulevard. Apparently, the development will include more open space. An existing urban forest could be protected. Boardmember Sedore said he reviewed the public hearing on the Yorkshire Apartments project comprised of a four-story mini storage facility that will be separated from Tumwater Boulevard by an existing heavily forested strip of land currently owned by the City as unopened right-of-way. The forested strip will effectively buffer the mini storage facility and the remainder of the project from Tumwater Boulevard. Project bulldozers are on the site with signs posted advising of trucks entering the roadway.

Coordinator Jones Wood advised that she would follow up with staff to obtain more information about the development.

Coordinator Jones Wood announced an open house on May 29, 2024 at City Hall for the Housing Element of the Tumwater Comprehensive Plan update. The open house will feature multiple stations featuring information on the City's future housing allocation for all income levels. The Community Development Department is hosting the open house with an accompanying online open house for a two-week period. A Climate Change Element Open House is scheduled on August 14, 2024.

**PUBLIC  
COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

**ARBOR DAY  
DEBRIEF:**

Members and staff reviewed the outcome of the recent Arbor Day celebration and tree giveaway. The dogwood tree was a popular choice this year. Handout materials and posters were popular items although it appears fewer children attended this year's event. One member suggested the City should consider planting different species of trees that are featured during the Arbor Day tree giveaway to serve as examples for the public when considering selection of a specific tree. Members addressed the possibility of diversifying the type of giveaway plants, such as adding groundcover for those residents who lack space for trees. This year's addition of vine maple trees was a popular addition. All trees and seeds were distributed during the event. The budget request for Arbor Day has been increased for the next biennium. Members discussed the importance of promoting diversity in vegetation through layering of ground cover, shrubs, and trees. Next year, the City will have an approved tree list, which will assist in identifying different tree species for the giveaway. The draft tree list includes native species for unimproved right-of-way areas. A laminated page listing all giveaway plants was helpful for attendees as many used the information to determine which species of tree they wanted. Individual handout information for each plant was also beneficial for the community.

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Members discussed the interaction of the Arbor Day and Earth Day participants as some of the participants in the Earth Day activity expressed interest in receiving plants. Members supported the physical setup of the two events at Tumwater Historical Park. All members agreed the event was very successful this year.

Members discussed the lack of a specific tree planting during the event and shared ideas on potential places to plant trees in the City to celebrate Arbor Day/Earth Day.

Members expressed interest in having the City display a banner across Tumwater Boulevard advertising the Arbor Day event. Coordinator Jones Wood said the Parks and Recreation Department control the placement of banners along Tumwater Boulevard. She indicated she would follow-up with Parks and Recreation on the possibility of displaying a banner next year.

**ROUNDABOUT  
LANDSCAPING:**

Boardmember Chapman commented on a relatively new roundabout that has not been planted located at Crosby Boulevard and Barnes. The roundabout was required traffic mitigation for an apartment complex. He questioned the lack of landscaping within the roundabout.

Coordinator Jones Wood said the roundabout is located on Tumwater Hill at Crosby Boulevard and Barnes near U.S. Highway 101. She shared photographs of the area depicting the smaller roundabout. Another unplanted roundabout in the City is located on 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue associated with private development requirements as part of the project. Landscaping in the roundabout was not required for either project. In both locations, the roundabouts are smaller and the approach geometry is tighter affecting sight distance with no trees recommended in the roundabout. As the roundabouts are limited in space, they are more difficult to plant while maintaining sight distance according to City engineers. All City-owned roundabouts are landscaped. All roundabouts in the City must be accessible by emergency vehicles. Smaller roundabouts with limited space would likely not be landscaped because of sight distance and accessibility by emergency vehicles. One forthcoming new City roundabout planned is located at Kingswood and Tyee Drive. The compact roundabout will not have landscaping because of accessibility for emergency vehicles.

Discussion ensued on different landscaping requirements for roundabouts in other jurisdictions and alternative options, such as rock gardens or adding sculptures, such as totem poles as some other jurisdictions have completed for some roundabouts. Boardmember Chapman recommended addressing roundabout landscaping during the review of the landscape code for landscaping requirements for different types of roundabouts to

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avoid just concrete paving. Members offered suggestions on the appropriate avenue to pursue requirements such as the development guide or through the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

**MOTION:** **Boardmember Chapman moved, seconded by Chair Grantham, to advocate for the City to require private development to install landscaping in roundabouts that meet the criteria. Motion carried unanimously.**

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Boardmember Chapman requested an update on the status of the Meeker-Davis oak tree. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the City Council's worksession on May 14, 2024 includes a discussion on the oak tree. The Tumwater Historical Preservation Commission did not delist the tree from the Historic Register, as the Commission desired more research and options. She noted that several public comments spoke to the creditability of the City's urban forester, Kevin McFarland. City Administrator Parks contacted the urban forester in the City of Olympia. The urban forester spoke in support of Mr. McFarland's reputation and offered his opinion on his report. He supported the completeness of the report submitted by Mr. McFarland. Although the Tree Board does not have a role in the decision concerning the outcome of the tree, Boardmembers are welcome to share their respective opinions about the issue as tree professionals. The City plans to release a community survey and the June meeting might be an opportunity to seek feedback from the Board on the outcome of the oak tree.

Boardmember Chapman expressed interest for the Tree Board to have a stronger voice in the process.

Boardmember Sedore referred to a recommendation he received from Nancy Partlow on a book titled, *The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees* by Douglas W. Tallamy. The author reveals what is going on in oak trees month by month, highlighting the seasonal cycles of life, death, and renewal. The book is an excellent environmental ecological study. According to the author, oak trees will grow for 300 years, maintain a stasis between new growth and canopy loss for the next 300 years, and then decline over the next 300 years. Oak trees can live with decay. During his employment with DNR, he learned from a state pathologist that trees can compartmentalize decay. Human beings do not compartmentalize decay, such as living with a dead liver, but a tree can live for hundreds of years with dead hardwood. On his property is a 150-year old apple tree. Some of the tree has rotted but it continues to grow and thrive, which is the case for the Meeker oak because the tree is experiencing hard decay, which is normal for an oak tree. The tree can live for hundreds of years with decay, as the tree is capable of compartmentalizing decay in the center of the tree. However, the location of the tree is problematic over a highway and next to an



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airport.

Discussion ensued on the damage to the tree years ago when it was struck by a vehicle. The damage was a very large hole in the tree, which is noticeable. The location and position of the tree is problematic. The City's conversation since last June surrounding the potential removal of the tree has focused on the health of the tree and the risk to the traveling public and the hanger. Boardmember Chapman commented on the possibility of diverting the highway further away from the tree. Coordinator Jones Wood said some community members offered the same suggestion at the last meeting of the Board.

The tree is located within City right-of-way. Mr. McFarland has planted some acorns from the tree.

Boardmember Sedore referred to comments by some in the community questioning the numerous restorative activities along Percival Creek when a homeless encampment is destroying the stream. He asked whether the encampment is located in Tumwater or Olympia. Chair Grantham said the site is located within the boundary of the City of Olympia. A large homeless community is polluting Percival Creek. The Olympia Fire Department responds quite frequently to the encampment. Many in the community are asking the City to address the damage that is occurring to Percival Creek. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the restoration activities by the City are located upstream of the encampment. Boardmember Sedore noted that salmon passage is affected by the encampment.

Boardmember Jackson mentioned another homeless encampment located off Martin Way within a buffer of a wetland. An apartment complex located on the opposite side was required to remove all understory vegetation and replant to the border of the wetland, which has negatively affected the wetland.

Boardmember Sedore addressed a letter from Nancy Partlow requesting the City inventory all oak trees. She has identified oak trees on many private properties and believes the City should create an inventory of both public and private properties with oak trees.

Discussion ensued on the capabilities of the City to inventory oak trees on private properties. Ms. Partlow also identified existing oaks at the future Trosper Lake park. She would like the trees preserved when the park is developed. Coordinator Jones Wood explained that the City's code speaks to Garry oaks as a protected state species. Requirements to protect the trees are triggered when development occurs. City staff also collected acorns from the Meeker oak tree with the intent of planting them at the new Trails End Park.

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Boardmember Jackson commented on the care required to nurture and grow oaks from acorns to develop a root system in several years.

Members and staff discussed issues associated with the urban environment and the ecological conditions necessary for successfully growing Garry oak trees. Several jurisdictions were cited with programs developed to promote the development and protection of oak trees and habitat in addition to many groups formed to promote the protection and planting of Garry oaks throughout the state.

**NEXT MEETING  
DATE:**

Coordinator Jones Wood noted that the meeting in June is not a joint meeting with the Planning Commission. The next meeting is scheduled on Monday, June 11, 2024.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**With there being no further business, Chair Grantham adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
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