

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 1**

**CONVENE:** 7:00 p.m.

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

Excused: Boardmember Brodrick Coval.

Staff: City Administer Lisa Parks, Assistant Transportation and Engineering Director Mary Heather Ames, Planning Manager Brad Medrud, Parks and Facilities Manager Stan Osborn, and Sustainability Coordinator Alyssa Jones Wood.

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

**APPROVAL OF  
OCTOBER 9, 2023  
MEETING MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** Boardmember Sedore moved, seconded by Boardmember Jackson, to approve the minutes of October 9, 2023 as published. Motion carried unanimously.

**INTRODUCTION OF  
CITY  
ADMINISTRATOR  
LISA PARKS:**

City Administrator Parks reported she joined the City on June 16, 2023. She shared her background in land use and environmental planning beginning in June 1990 when she earned a degree in urban and regional planning from Eastern Washington University. It was the same year the Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted by the Legislature. Her first position was with Douglas County in North Central Washington as a long-range planner under the GMA requirements involving natural resource planning, critical areas, and community planning for small cities in Douglas County, as well as processing land use permits. She served in the position for approximately eight years and accepted the position of Community Development Director with the City of Leavenworth. She transitioned from county natural resource planning to a small city focused on tourism. She oversaw a variety of activities and the position afforded her with opportunities to be a member of the city's management team for a city that provided water, sewer, streets, and contracted fire and law enforcement services. She eventually opened a planning and environmental consulting firm based in North Central Washington serving mostly local governments (cities and counties) and expanding to serve port districts and public utility districts. She remained in business for approximately 11 years and then accepted a position as the Executive Director of the Port of Douglas County serving for approximately nine years. The Port of Douglas County partially owned an airport in the Wenatchee area

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 2**

but was primarily a small economic development-oriented port district. Following her move to the Olympia area in the fall of 2019, she began working for a consultant firm for environmental planning for port districts until July 2021 when she accepted a position with the Port of Olympia serving as the Environmental and Planning Program Director with responsibilities for capital facilities planning, government affairs, communications, and administrative functions. She applied for the City's position in early spring 2023 as it served as an opportunity to return working for city government. She has enjoyed her time at Tumwater and has found employees, elected officials, and community members very committed to the community. She invited members to visit with her at any time.

The Board asked about short-term goals for the City. City Administrator Parks responded that in addition to balancing resources with needs, she is interested in continuing to learn and build on the great workplace culture at the City. The City has many great employees with huge hearts for public service and for the City of Tumwater as well. Additionally, the City's upcoming biennial budget is scheduled to begin in 2024. Working with the new Council in 2024 and identifying the Council's priorities for the community, as well as establishing the budget to implement the strategies will be areas of focus in 2024. Working for a community that is 153 years old is also unique for her personally. The recruitment material spoke to Tumwater as a progressive community but also very connected to its past. She was appreciative of the message as having the history of the natural environment and those who settled the community adds to the unique character of the community.

City Administrator Parks said another priority is redevelopment of the brewery property. Every potential opportunity will be explored as it is the City's priority to clean-up the property of any environmental contamination that is very likely and probably present in the buildings and in surrounding land, as well as in the groundwater to help ensure appropriate and beneficial reuse of the property. Cleaning up the eyesore is a high priority for the City. Work on the brewery property is similar to some of the work on brownfield redevelopment at the Port of Douglas County, as well as at the Port of Olympia on the Budd Inlet Sediment Remediation Project.

**TREE BOARD**  
**MEMBER REPORTS:**

Boardmember Sedore mentioned numerous publications he receives monthly on gardening and horticulture. Within the last several months, many articles focused on native and ornamental shrubs. One article referred to a British YouTube video on the use of hedges and shrubs in the urban environment. The video highlighted some

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 3**

of the challenges the City is facing. In previous Arbor Day giveaways, the City offered Red-osier dogwood as an alternative to trees because many participants commented on the inability to plant trees in their small yards. He asked about ways the Board could address the urban environment of smaller spaces with respect to the species of plants that are typically associated with urban forests. In most cases, the species of trees and plants are oriented toward large areas, which in many cases, may be too large and result in unsuccessful plantings. The video featured numerous birds and insects inhabiting hedges, which provide habitat for those species. There could be some opportunities as the Board explores different planting options to consider different species of plants that provide different values and resources that should be included in the inventory. Many species of shrubs are valuable assets to the environment and to the community as a whole. He asked about the responsibility of the Board to consider other non-tree plants as part of the implementation of the Urban Forestry Management Plan and whether more of those plants should be considered within the City's promotions and activities. Historically, the focus has been on trees rather than shrubs and other species of plants. In many circumstances, the shrub may be the better choice to achieve a healthy environment that absorbs some of the radiation, runoff, and provides habitat for native animals. He suggested the Board pursue a discussion on the issue to include a possible name change of the Board.

Boardmember Jackson said the issue speaks to the City's history as the Board was created because of development occurring on Tumwater Hill when maple tree stumps were removed prompting efforts on a tree ordinance. The ordinance required the planting of three trees on each lot on Tumwater Hill in addition to the street trees planted by the developer. The Board expanded its discussions on the importance of both plant and tree canopy as understory vegetation is just as important as tree canopy.

Boardmember Chapman added that the Board intentionally included understory vegetation within the Urban Forestry Management Plan for those reasons.

Boardmember Jackson noted that today within the three-city area, many of the roundabouts with vegetation are impossible to see through because of the maturity of the plants and trees. Additionally, the state's new Wildland Urban Interface code may change the City's current tree retention of 12 trees per acre.

The Board discussed the importance of considering trees and shrubs as well as developing a preferred list of understory shrubs. Outreach

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 4**

to the community could guide and educate the community to help steer plantings that are more productive for the community. Native shrubs provide options that are more affordable and easier to replace. Members discussed options for promoting smaller plants in high density neighborhoods. Boardmember Sedore shared information about a local homeowner replacing grass with Astro turf, which might speak to potential violations of required impervious surface. Members commented on the possibility of enabling homeowners and other property owners to use plants to replace lawns to discourage the spread of noxious weeds.

Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the Board is scheduled to review the landscape ordinance following the adoption of the Wildland Urban Interface code.

The Board discussed appropriate descriptions for shrubs and hedges. The City's code speaks to plants as buffer plantings of different classifications of Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3 landscape screening. It is also important to ensure any replacement plantings meet the original plant or tree type required for the site

**COORDINATOR'S  
REPORT:**

Coordinator Jones Wood reported on her and Boardmember Sedore's recent visit to the Olympia Ecosystems Deschutes River Preserve. The restoration site is located near the City. The two-hour visit enabled them to learn about restoration efforts at the site. Olympia Ecosystems is a local non-profit operating throughout Thurston County. The restoration site of 367 acres is located near the Trails End area.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported on the release of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update survey on the City's website. She invited the Board to participate in the survey. Survey results will help guide the update process over the next 18 months.

Coordinator Jones Wood shared that with recent efforts to collect new data for the street tree inventory, staff plans to meet with GIS staff, Transportation and Engineering Department, and the Water Resources and Sustainability Department to review solutions to use the City's work order system to input data for mutual access across the City and to ensure data are maintained and updated.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Mary Turcotte** said she favors a broad plan that includes understory plants. She is also curious about the history of why many trees were cut down along Second Avenue as it served as good habitat for birds. Today, the sites are only grass. The removal of the plants occurred after trimming by a local tree service. Another issue is the appropriate species of plants in that area, such

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 5**

as salal or Oregon grape, but not St. John's Wort or other plants that do not provide food habitat for native animals.

**URBAN FORESTRY  
MANAGEMENT PLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION:**

Coordinator Jones Wood introduced the presenters. Brad Medrud serves as the City's Planning Manager, Mary Heather Ames serves as the Assistant Director of the Transportation and Engineering Department, and Stan Osborn is the Parks and Facilities Manager for the City.

Manager Osborn added that staff strives to maintain the right plant in the right place regardless if it is a tree or a plant.

Boardmember Chapman asked for an update on how staff manages understory to meet security needs. Manager Osborn said it is dependent upon the building. When he was employed by the school district, district crews planted much barberry plants to discourage entry through windows. Recent City efforts include installing lights to prevent incidents of vandalism.

Boardmember Chapman asked whether staff has received guidance or recommendation from the police department to aid officers. Manager Osborn affirmed the departments work closely together.

Coordinator Jones Wood added that code updates include focus on crime prevention through landscaping.

Boardmember Sedore asked whether his neighbor's recent contention that the City Council is considering action to open City parks to the homeless is accurate. Manager Osborn advised that the information is inaccurate. The City's current policy does not allow camping or overnight stays on any City park property. The proposed change would have enabled other City properties to fall under the same policy as it is technically possible for someone to camp in front of City Hall, but not a City park. The goal was to ensure the policies apply equally to all City properties.

Coordinator Jones Wood summarized the status of implementation of actions contained within the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Approximately 74% of the actions from 2021 through 2023 are on track, 12% of the actions are scheduled to begin in 2024, and 14% of the actions were delayed. Because of grant funding received last year, it was possible to pursue some actions.

The Board agreed to review actions that have been delayed.

Coordinator Jones Wood reviewed a list of delayed actions:

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 6**

- Regularly review and update the Public Works standards, the Development Guide, and facilities procedures for the maintenance of City trees and the community and urban forest and modify to reflect best tree management practices and employee safety. *Delayed until the code amendment updates are finalized.*
- Formalize relationships with organizations and green industries that share common aims affecting community and urban forest sustainability. *Staff reached out to industry leaders for the Code Amendment update process but did not receive any participation from those industries. More work is necessary after completion of the code amendment process. Boardmember Chapman asked whether the addition of an urban forester would support efforts for relationship building between the City and other organizations, as the outcome could produce some data that would be helpful. Coordinator Jones Wood agreed and indicated that staff plans to advocate for inclusion of the position within the next biennium budget. She requested advocacy by the Board to support the addition of the position. If approved, the position would be effective in January 2025. The City has four years of grant funding for the position; however, following the end of the grant funds, the City would need to fund the position. The position is integral in implementing many actions in the Urban Forestry Management Plan. The City received a grant from the U.S. Forest Service that includes allocation of 50% of the funding for salaries and benefits for a full-time urban forester. The grant is effective in 2025 in alignment with the City's budget with the goal of receiving an allocation to cover the remaining 50% cost for the position. The match for five years equates to approximately \$340,000.*
- Develop a stable funding source and budget for annual maintenance and selective harvest of trees within developed landscaped City property, such as City street trees and City facilities and parks. *The action will be evaluated for inclusion within the 2025/2026 general fund budget. Boardmember Chapman asked about the possibility of using some funds from the Tree Fund to fund the action. Coordinator Jones Wood explained that the Tree Fund has been used as a grant match for the tree inventory. Another use of the funds is for restoration activities in conjunction with some stormwater improvements.*
- Develop a stable funding source and budget for maintenance of natural forests on City lands such as critical or shoreline areas and their buffers and other such areas. *Staff will*

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 7**

*evaluate the action for the 2025/2026 general fund budget; however, the tree inventory provides a nexus to stormwater as another funding source from the stormwater utility in addition to the general fund and Tree Fund. Boardmember Chapman commented on the success rate by the City of Olympia for increasing taxes for community benefits and programs. He asked whether the City has considered similar actions to improve the environment. Coordinator Jones Wood said staff has never pursued a request for a tax funding mechanism other than monitoring the City of Olympia's consideration of requesting voters to fund climate efforts, which did not reach the ballot. The recent regional fire authority measure that voters denied would have freed some general funds for allocation to other City activities.*

- *Look for opportunities to build on and expand existing City educational outreach programs to increase the understanding of the value of the community and urban forest, as well as the responsibilities of the public and private landowners regarding its planting, maintenance, thinning, and harvest. Staff recommends delaying action until the Urban Forester is hired; however, the Tumwater School District Forest and Stream summer course helped advance the action in 2023.*
- *Develop education and incentive programs focused on maintaining the community and urban forest found on private property. The Tree Board delayed the decision on incentive programs until the 2025/2026 budget process is initiated.*
- *Support and incentivize the use of large-canopy trees in appropriate areas to provide maximum benefits. Staff recommends delaying the action until the Urban Forester is hired.*
- *Coordinate with the Fire Department on actions to minimize fire risks associated with urban forestry. The Fire Department plans to begin the work when the Hazard Mitigation Plan is completed both regionally and for the City. The Hazard Mitigation Plan will be presented to the City Council for consideration in spring 2024. Additionally, the status of the Wildland Urban Interface code also complicates the action.*
- *Remove trees and understory in specific situations identified in the Tumwater Annex to the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region to guard against wildfire. The Fire Department plans to begin the work when the Hazard Mitigation Plan is completed both regionally and for the City scheduled in spring 2024. Parks and Recreation staff typically removes all debris from projects to reduce fire*

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 8**

*hazards.*

- Develop a program to work with public and private property owners in maintaining and providing for public safety with the community and urban forest. *Staff recommends delaying the action until the Urban Forester is hired.*

Boardmember Chapman asked about actions that were successful in assisting in the implementation of the plan. Coordinator Jones Wood said the update to the codes was progressing well and were specific to achieving many of the actions. The inventory project is another project that benefitted numerous actions in the Urban Forestry Management Plan. City departments meet quarterly to receive regular updates on the status of implementation actions. At least once a year, she briefs staff assigned to complete different actions in the plan.

Boardmember Chapman suggested providing an update to the Council on the status of actions within the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

**MOTION:**

**Chair Grantham moved, seconded by Boardmember Sedore, to direct staff to provide an annual update to the City Council on the status of implementation actions within the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Grantham asked about any permitting increases in response to any proposed code changes. Manager Medrud responded that the City generally has not experienced an increase in permit applications based on perceived tightening of regulations; however, the department is experiencing a reduction in permitting due to external factors, such as financing and material and labor costs.

Boardmember Jackson asked whether the state still owns the former Department of Transportation site off Capitol Boulevard. Manager Medrud affirmed the state is the property owner; however, the City is currently considering options for purchasing the property. The City completed an initial review of the property and is seeking state funding for remediation work on the property. The property serves as the centerpiece of the Capitol Boulevard Corridor Plan as a redevelopment site. The primary concern surrounds the use of the property for the last 100 years for transportation-related uses.

Boardmember Chapman asked about the vision for the property not abutting Capitol Boulevard. Manager Medrud said the plan calls for mixed-use development with some level of commercial abutting Capitol Boulevard and residential multifamily in the rear. The City plans to work within the industry to determine the market focus for



**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 9**

the site. The goal is to increase more residential uses along Capitol Boulevard and additional commercial uses to support the community.

Discussion ensued on the goal to save existing trees on the property. There are likely many trees on the property that would be eligible for designation as a heritage tree.

Manager Osborn clarified that the Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for parks, stormwater ponds associated with parks, and other recreational and mitigation areas whereas the Transportation and Engineering Department is responsible for other right-of-ways in the City. Staff from both departments strive to work together to implement codes. The department currently employs a certified arborist and another employee who is pursuing arborist certification. However, unless the department receives funding, it has been difficult to tap into those resources as the department is short-staffed. Any request to the Council should include some funding to provide adequate coverage within the department. Coordinator Jones Wood noted in response, that the street tree maintenance plan would also include a budget request for needed maintenance of trees to include trees in parks with the exception of Pioneer Park and Sapp Road Park because many trees in those parks were not evaluated. The effort includes more specific information on each tree but the information is similar to the assessments completed several years ago by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Boardmember Chapman questioned whether the City has implemented an Adopt-a-Tree program enabling community members to sponsor the purchase and planting of trees. Manager Osborn said the City currently has no program but it would be worthy to explore. Boardmember Chapman pointed out that many members of the community would be willing to sponsor the cost of a tree for planting in a park. Manager Osborn explained that many of the crew's efforts are concentrated on older trees at the end of their lifespan that pose a threat because of rot and damage that are in parks and along trails.

The Board agreed to individually review the 2024 work program.

**2024 DRAFT MEETING  
SCHEDULE:**

Coordinator Jones Wood presented the 2024 draft meeting schedule. The April 9, 2024 joint meeting with the Planning Commission follows the scheduled adoption of the Wildland-Urban Interface Code, which might require an additional joint session dependent on the outcome of the legislation.

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**December 11, 2023 Page 10**

Discussion ensued on the timing for leadership elections and current member terms. Coordinator Jones Wood recommended scheduling elections in May following the Arbor Day event in April.

Boardmember Sedore inquired about the timing for the review of the recommended tree list. Coordinator Jones Wood said the review would likely be scheduled in April or rescheduled during another joint meeting. The review can be included as a pending item following the adoption of the Wildland-Urban Interface Code to assist in clarifying pending actions.

Boardmember Sedore inquired about the possibility of scheduling an annual analysis of the tree inventory as the intent is to maintain a current inventory that is relevant. An annual or bi-annual review might be necessary to review losses and gains especially with changes in climate that might require changes to avoid adding a specific species that is struggling because of climate change. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the action is not included within the work plan; however, she could pursue the possibility of seeking the services of an intern. Otherwise, another item on the work plan would need to be removed to accommodate an additional item. Boardmember Sedore asked about the potential within the new inventory tracking procedures to provide a summary of removals and additions each year. Coordinator Jones Wood explained that she is working with the departments to integrate the tracking process and is unsure whether a summary could be produced by the end of 2024 other than other information produced by the joint tracking effort.

The Board discussed the timing associated with updating the City's vegetation/tree canopy. The plan calls for an update every five years with the last assessment completed in 2018. Coordinator Jones Wood affirmed she would follow up with GIS staff to check on the frequency of the update and if staff has the capacity to complete the assessment. The cost and the number of trees removed each year are recorded by Parks and Recreation staff.

**NEXT MEETING**  
**DATE:**

The next meeting is scheduled on Monday, January 8, 2024.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**With there being no further business, Chair Grantham adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.**