

TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

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CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Trent Grantham and Commissioners Brent Chapman, Joel Hecker, Michael Jackson, Dennis Olson, and Jim Sedore.

Excused: Commissioner Tanya Nozawa.

Staff: Planning Manager Brad Medrud.

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

TREE BOARD MEMBER REPORTS: New member Joel Hecker provided self-introduction. Commissioner Hecker said he has lived in Tumwater for approximately four years and is originally from the Midwest. He serves as a geologist for a local company involved in environmental clean-up projects. He learned of the Tree Board vacancy from Mayor Kmet during their work on several environmental projects. Mayor Kmet encouraged him to apply for the position.

Commissioner Sedore inquired about any opportunity to invite Mayor-elect Debbie Sullivan to attend a meeting to learn about her priorities for the Board. Manager Medrud advised that Mayor-elect Sullivan would likely present a City update to the Board in March or April 2022 affording time to discuss City priorities.

Commissioner Chapman said he forwarded an email from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Urban and Community Forestry Program on an annual grant program for urban and community forestry activities. DNR has funds available in 2022 for urban and community forestry grants and is hosting a webinar on the grant program on December 16, 2021. With the City's adoption of the Urban Forestry Management Plan, the City could likely be in a highly competitive position to receive a grant to help launch the Street Tree Plan or begin completing some initial actions.

Manager Medrud advised that staff plans to submit a grant application. He recommended a review at the January meeting to identify actions to pursue with the grant funds.

Commissioner Chapman asked staff to provide an executive summary of the Board's top priorities for the Urban Forestry Management Plan during the next several years.

Chair Grantham asked whether the Council has identified any actions to pursue next year. Manager Medrud advised that at this time, the Council has not provided any feedback. The Council and the Planning

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Commission are meeting jointly on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 to review the 2022 Long Range Planning Work Program. Identifying potential actions in support of the Urban Forestry Management Plan would be an appropriate discussion during the review of the work program.

Commissioner Sedore mentioned DNR's presentation on street tree manuals as some of the information spoke to the importance of cities requesting grants to create or develop street tree manuals. He asked about the possibility of the City contracting with a technical writer using DNR grant funds to draft a manual. Manager Medrud supported the suggestion as it speaks to the importance of expertise involved in the draft of any technical document.

Commissioner Sedore reported on November 16, 2021, he participated in an online course sponsored by the Tree Fund, an international organization funding research on urban forestry. The presentation was presented by an Italian forester on *Growing Trees in Paved Sites*. The presentation attracted 1,300 participants from around the world. The project was funded by the Tree Fund and sponsored by Auburn University.

The speaker constructed 24 plots in northern Italy of impervious surfaces, buried monitoring equipment, planted two species of trees (Fraxinus Ash & Celtis (Hackberry) in the plots, and monitored the trees for nine years to track the physiology of the trees based on the ground surface. The plots included non-pervious surface, porous asphalt (permeable) surface, brick & sand surface to enable infiltration, and plots with no surface covering (control plots). The results indicated soil temperatures under impermeable surfaces were significantly higher as was soil moisture because moisture did not evaporate when subjected to radiant heat.

Most significantly was the level of carbon dioxide in soil with impermeable and permeable pavements at ten times higher than porous and controlled surface plots. Carbon dioxide was high because it was not possible to escape under plot surfaces creating a reduction in tree root growth but not affecting height growth. The experiment revealed how permeable pavement, similar to what is occurring in some developments in the City, have experienced damage more over the test period than non-permeable surfaces because of water freezing between permeable surfaces.

Additionally, species selection was the most significant issue, as Celtis (Hackberry) grew four to five times better than Fraxinus Ash under identical conditions. It appears some species tolerate permeable and impermeable conditions much better than other tree species.

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Commissioner Sedore said he reviewed the City's tree survey that tracked performance with notations of information on damage to the hardscape. Based on the results of the inventory, a percentage of trees caused the damage; however, the analysis did not identify any one species that would likely cause hardscape damage than another species. He suggested reviewing the inventory and using information from the survey to identify species that might be causing significantly more hardscape damage than other species.

Commissioner Sedore reported DNR recently announced that the carpinus caroliniana, also known as Musclewood, or American hornbeam, a low-growing deciduous tree has been crowned the 2022 Society of Municipal Arborists Urban Tree of the Year. The City of Seattle has designated the tree as a preferred tree for the city as the mature height of the tree is below the level of power lines. Commissioner Sedore recommended the Board visit sites in Seattle and possibly add some trees to the City's recommended tree list on the website.

**MANAGER'S
REPORT:**

Manager Medrud reported the draft 2022 Long Range Planning Work Program includes completing the Street Tree Plan, updates to the Landscape Code, and a review and update of the Tree Protection Ordinance (the last two updates would be facilitated by a consultant).

Commissioner Chapman inquired about the status of hiring the Sustainability Coordinator. Manager Medrud said the position would likely be filled by mid-2022; however, it appears the City is recruiting applicants during the first quarter of 2022. The position will serve as staff support for the Tree Board and assume the lead for the Urban Forestry Management Plan in addition to supporting the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan and City sustainability actions. Planning staff will work closely with the Sustainability Coordinator. Approval of the work program is anticipated by the Council in January 2022.

In response to Manager Medrud 's inquiry for feedback on the format of next year's Arbor Day celebration, which was held at Historical Park in conjunction with Earth Day activities, Commissioners shared their respective preferences acknowledging that COVID-19 restrictions would likely still be in effect next April. Commissioner Sedore preferred to sponsor the Arbor Day event at a local retail store to attract more community participation. Chair Grantham commented that the lack of attendance at this year's event was likely because of weather and is unsure sponsoring the event at a local retailer would be beneficial as local stores attract regional shoppers whereas the Arbor Day event is focused for the Tumwater community. He suggested hosting the event at the library as it has been prior to the pandemic. Manager Medrud offered to follow up with Parks and Recreation Department staff on a potential

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format, such as a drive-through event because of COVID restrictions.

Commissioner Olsen asked about any follow up by the City in terms of how many of the individuals receiving trees during the giveaway planted their trees. Manager Medrud advised that follow-up could be considered by including information in the materials with the trees encouraging residents to follow up with City on the status on their tree. Commissioner Olsen reported the City of Tacoma offers coupons for a specific dollar value as a giveaway during Arbor Day. The coupons provide residents with an option of purchasing larger-sized trees as local garden centers or nurseries from a list of suggested tree species.

Commissioner Sedore offered an option of asking community members to consider volunteering for follow-up by the City by seeking photographs of their trees. The City could use the photographs to advertise future Arbor Day events. The City could also seek photographs from other previous year beneficiaries of trees. Photographs submitted by residents would be posted on the City's website. He also recommended following up with Parks and Recreation Department during projects involving landscaping to take advantage of having the Mayor plant a tree. Those photographs could be incorporated within the Arbor Day webpage.

Commissioner Hecker recommended adding tags with City social media addresses/contact information so recipients can submit future photos of them and their trees to avoid soliciting contact information from community members.

Manager Medrud noted the meeting in January includes a discussion on the Arbor Day celebration in 2022.

Manager Medrud reminded Commissioners to participate in online open public meetings training for those members who have not completed training within the last four years. Commission and board members are required to participate in training every four years. More information will be provided in January 2022.

**URBAN FORESTRY
AMENDMENTS –
STREET TREE
PLAN, ORDINANCE
NO. O2021-016:**

Manager Medrud reported a draft of a new Street Tree Plan was included in agenda materials with many elements from the 2002 Comprehensive Street Tree Plan and the Urban Forestry Management Plan included to assist the Board's discussion in January.

Chair Grantham questioned the context of the Street Tree Plan with respect to the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Manager Medrud explained that the introduction of the plan is similar to the introduction of the Urban Forestry Management Plan with a focus on the purpose of a Street Tree Plan. Chapter 2 covers more of the background on street tree

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policies, regulations, data collection efforts in 2018, and results of a tree survey completed within the past 20 years. The information is important because it speaks to the importance of street trees assisting the City to meet its goals for tree canopy cover in the Urban Forestry Management Plan, as well as emphasizing the importance of staggering age and species diversity, managing street trees for climate mitigation, matching soil to tree species, and microclimatic considerations. The review also includes discussion on street tree selection. Street tree selection was a component of the original 2002 Comprehensive Street Tree Plan. The plan also included construction details for proper planting and the appropriate selection of trees. The issue is whether the plan should provide another level of detail to developers not included in the Urban Forestry Management Plan. The intent of the plan is to provide guidance to several different audiences, such as developers responsible for a majority of street tree plantings, staff who are responsible for ongoing maintenance and replacement, and individuals who might want to remove and replace street trees as sidewalk damage occurs or homeowner associations pursue improvements. A plan could serve as one reference source for all audiences to ensure comprehensive guidance is provided on the proper planting and maintenance of street trees.

Commissioner Sedore offered that developers might have a different perspective than a homeowner. Developers might be more willing to review an extensive document whereas a typical homeowner might not be interested. He suggested including an executive summary for homeowners and homeowner associations.

Commissioner Chapman questioned whether the policies could be enforced by the City and the outcome when developers do not follow the policies. Manager Medrud responded that the section on tree planting specifications within the Comprehensive Street Tree Plan guide developers in the selection and planting of trees. The City's enforcement is through landscape inspections when trees are planted and landscaping is installed. The City inspects those plantings to ensure plantings are according to the standards. Additionally, if changes are warranted to practices, an update could include changes, such as including additional inspection criteria. The City also has street tree details as part of the City's development guidelines.

Chair Grantham pointed out that typically, developers only plant to the bare minimum as required by the code. Any additional elements that would increase tree canopy or extend the life of plantings should be in the code and not part of a guideline.

Manager Medrud explained how the development code is applied to projects. The Tumwater Municipal Code governs all City development and other activities in the City. Title 18 is the zoning code and includes

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the landscaping code. Title 12 includes the street tree code. The City's tree protection ordinances are in Title 16 (Critical Areas). Street tree provisions are embedded throughout many sections of the Tumwater Municipal Code, as well as engineering details and requirements that fall within the development guidelines as requirements. Tree planting specifications could be referenced in the Tumwater Municipal Code as requirements while also residing within Development Guidelines as part of the development review process which identifies which guidelines are applicable to a project to ensure plans notate proper requirements to be addressed. References to "guidelines" can be misleading as the guidelines are essentially requirements and are enforceable.

Chair Grantham suggested ensuring details include all the requirements desired by the Board and the City. Manager Medrud advised that the staff report includes existing language as an appendix. Appendix 6 includes detailed specifications for review to ensure they are the most current requirements.

Chair Grantham pointed to the code that speaks to allowing irrigation only if necessary; however, if a developer deems it is unnecessary, the City has no option to enforce the requirement. Manager Medrud advised that the intent of the review is to identify those instances where the Board believes the provision(s) should be updated.

Manager Medrud reported the 2003 Comprehensive Street Tree Plan focused on arterials and collector streets in terms of species and the appearance of trees. He asked for feedback on whether to retain or update the sections as individual street tree themes are identified for particular road sections. The section also includes a table of street segments with primary, secondary, and accent trees identified. He asked members to consider whether the information should be retained, updated, or is no longer necessary.

Commissioner Chapman expressed interest in whether the City has implemented the street tree plan over the last several years and reasons for any exceptions that might have been granted. He asked staff to provide information on the planting plan for the new Sky View development to determine if actual plantings correlate with the current street tree plan. Manager Medrud said he would follow up with staff and obtain some recently approved landscaping plans. He also plans to identify other larger development projects throughout the City to provide information on current planting activities to assist the Board in identifying whether actual conditions are matching with City goals.

Manager Medrud referred to the chapter on street tree planning, which addresses separation and planting widths. He asked members to review the chapter and provide feedback on whether the chapter should be

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retained or updated. The chapter also includes a calendar for general street tree planting in terms of timing of planting, watering, and fertilizing.

Commissioner Chapman suggested that any graphics included in the chapter should represent the current International Society of Arboriculture graphics. Manager Medrud said the graphics are from the original plan (2002). New graphics would be included as part of the update of the chapter.

Manager Medrud encouraged members to review the information and provide feedback on information to retain, update, or eliminate. Commissioner Chapman asked whether consultant services would be available to assist the Board. Manager Medrud replied that the Board has the option of deferring the review to a consultant who has the expertise with staff directing the review. Timing would be based on whether the City receives a grant. If successful, the work would likely be deferred until fall 2022. The department received approval to contract with a consultant to update tree protection and landscaping codes. Staff did not pursue contracting with a consultant for the street tree review. Consultant assistance for the street tree review would be dependent upon the City receiving the grant.

Commissioner Chapman supported seeking a grant to provide consultant assistance despite delaying the review until fall. Commissioner Sedore agreed. He added that he applied the section on the introduction that speaks to the benefits and values of street trees to the Gunning Fog Index (a tool rating readability). The tool rated the section with a readability score of 21.8 equating to a person with 21 years of formal education able to understand the section in one reading. He recommended considering readability of the code as part of the review as well. Manager Medrud acknowledged the suggestion.

Chair Grantham recommended the Board review the information for a future discussion in the next several months despite delaying the overall review until later next year. Manager Medrud suggested the Board's review could be used to develop a scope of work for the consultant as part of the grant application.

Commissioner Chapman added that the scope should also include ensuring all graphics and standards are current, as well as considering how the plan supports achieving urban forestry goals within the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Commissioner Hecker questioned the City's odds of receiving a grant. Manager Medrud said he believes the City has good odds because the City recently completed the Urban Forestry Management Plan without

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grant funding, has an active Tree Board, and has been designated a Tree City U.S.A. for many years. The next step is ensuring development of a good scope of work, which can benefit from the Board's discussion. The grant deadline is March 4, 2022.

The Board discussed some next steps in support of developing the grant application. Several suggestions included surveying staff responsible for implementing street trees codes, some local developers, and homeowners or homeowner associations to receive feedback on what should be included in a street tree plan. Additionally, the plan should identify the responsible party for maintaining street trees. Manager Medrud added that as part of the development code update next year, maintenance of street trees would be clarified. Commissioner Chapman asked about the probability of staff providing a draft scope of work plan for the consultant by the January meeting. Manager Medrud affirmed that he would draft a general scope of the work for the Board's January meeting. He plans to provide some links to other jurisdiction's street tree plans as well.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting is scheduled on January 10, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Chair Grantham adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Prepared by Puget Sound Meeting Services, psmsoly@earthlink.net