

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, Tanya Nozawa, and Dennis Olson.

Excused: Commissioner Jim Sedore.

Staff: Community Development Director Michael Matlock.

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

TREE BOARD MEMBER REPORTS: There were no reports.

MANAGER'S REPORT: There was no report.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no public comments.

2022 ARBOR DAY DISCUSSION: Director Matlock reported the Arbor Day celebration in 2022 is scheduled either on Saturday, April 23 2022 from 10 a.m. to noon or Saturday, April 30, 2022 from 10 a.m. to noon. The Tree Board's budget for the event is \$1,000. Staff anticipates that because of the pandemic, the event will be a drive-through format. Staff is seeking feedback on the location of the event, the format of the event, support for the event, and advertising for the event. Staff anticipates beginning public outreach efforts later in the month through April. The Council is scheduled to issue the Arbor Day proclamation on March 15, 2022.

Several event configurations could include hosting the Arbor Day event in conjunction with City Earth Day activities at Tumwater Historical Park, at the City Hall parking lot, or at a large commercial area. Parks and Recreation Department staff indicated availability to provide support if the event is held at Historical Park. Based on prior feedback from Commissioner Olson, staff contacted the City of Tacoma, which provides coupons for a specific dollar value of a tree that the Board might want to consider as an option in lieu of the tree giveaway. Other options are coordinating with the Mayor and the City Council to plant trees as part of the celebration, or as part of the tree seedling giveaway include a tag with social media information for the recipient to upload pictures of tree plantings and photographs to track progress on the growth of trees planted from Arbor Day tree giveaways.

Commissioner Hecker supported sponsoring the event in conjunction with Earth Day activities for convenience to the community.

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Commissioner Chapman asked about the possibility of coordinating a tree planting(s) either with the Council or with students. Director Matlock offered to follow up as to whether a location could be identified for a tree planting. Chair Grantham noted that prior Earth Day activities at Historical Park typically involved the removal of ivy and weeding. The North Fire Station has indicated a need for a tree on the property to serve as screening for the patio. He suggested following up with Public Works or Parks and Recreation to plant a tree at that location.

The Board noted that Earth Day is celebrated on April 22, 2022 this year.

Chair Grantham suggested moving forward with the joint Arbor Day/Earth Day event at Historical Park. The lack of turnout last year was mainly because of the weather.

The Board discussed the availability of trees to purchase for the giveaway. Commissioner Jackson cited the Board's previous discussions about purchasing trees in containers recognizing that it would likely increase the cost with fewer trees to giveaway. Commissioner Chapman cited a nursery located south of the airport for tree availability. A one-gallon vine maple costs approximately \$7 as an example. Commissioner Jackson said that typically, the Board limited the purchase to 100 trees ranging from bare root stock of conifers and graduating to other species of trees/shrubs in more recent years.

Director Matlock suggested offering a mix of container trees and bare root seedlings. Commissioner Jackson volunteered to follow up on pricing and availability and provide information at the February meeting. He suggested offering native bare root roses or other types of flowering shrubs as well.

Commissioner Olson suggested contacting the Native Plant Society as it schedules a plant sale each year.

Chair Grantham recommended reviewing availability of trees and plants at the February meeting and following up with staff on the current inventory of giveaway items (coloring books, posters, etc.). Commissioner Chapman recommended following up with Commissioner Sedore to develop some informational sheets on the species featured for giveaways this year. He asked about the possibility of scheduling a parallel event for planting a tree at the fire station or another site in the City. Chair Grantham recommended following up with the Parks and Recreation Department to identify a location in the City either in conjunction with Arbor Day activities or on another day dependent upon coordination of logistics and the size of the tree.

Director Matlock said staff would contact staff from Public Works and

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Parks and Recreation and discuss options.

Commissioner Hecker suggested featuring the tree planting prior to Arbor Day to advertise and increase awareness of the Arbor Day event. Commissioner Chapman added that the City's Communications Department could advertise the event through social media to generate more publicity for the Arbor Day event.

Commissioner Olson recommended engaging in conversations with participants to learn if they have received prior giveaways to obtain information on the status of the tree(s) they planted and provide information to the Board on the status of trees residents received through the event giveaway. It could also afford an opportunity to ask residents to forward photographs of successful tree plantings. Commissioner Olson offered to serve as the coordinator to organize any feedback from the community. Director Matlock said staff could also coordinate with Communications Manager Cook for ideas on a feedback process.

Commissioners discussed the probability of more successful tree plantings if plants were provided in containers as opposed to tree seedlings.

Director Matlock supported hosting a tree planting event prior to the Arbor Day event as a way to publicize Arbor Day activities. He plans to follow up with Communications Manager Cook on publicizing the event through different City venues. Next month, with information from Commissioner Jackson on tree ordering information and with an update on advertising options, the Board can begin solidifying details of the event. He confirmed that the \$1,000 is the budget specific for Arbor Day.

Chair Grantham asked about the option of using Tree Fund monies for planting a tree. Director Matlock said he believes Council approval is required to access funds from the Tree Fund; however, a tree planting should not be problematic.

For the benefit of Commissioner Hecker, Chair Grantham explained the purpose of the Free Fund. Essentially, the City requires a specific number of trees on new development and if the development is unable to meet the requirements, the developer is assessed fees that are deposited to the Tree Fund. The fund was utilized to plant new trees along Capitol Boulevard when trees were damaged during a winter storm. Commissioner Jackson cited the Home Depot in Tumwater and the absence of trees on the property as an example. The developer was unable to meet the tree retention requirement and was required to pay the Tree Fund. The funds are used for plantings throughout the City.

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Commissioner Olson referred to the City of Tacoma's tree voucher/coupon program and invited feedback. Commissioner Chapman asked how he foresees implementing a similar program this year for the Arbor Day event. Commissioner Olson said the program requires some coordination to develop the program, research different species of trees, contact local garden centers and nurseries to assess interest in participation, establish some timelines, and implement a program. He assumes it would not be a staff effort; however the City could mediate a program through the community college to establish a project offering college credits with some collaboration with the City. Initiating the project could be through a pilot project with the evaluation and promotion completed by the City.

Commissioner Chapman offered that fall planting of trees and shrubs is much more successful than in the summer for survivability. He suggested the program could be a companion program to the Arbor Day celebration. Commissioner Olson concurred. The program could be a supplement to street trees to engage neighborhoods and residents in the City. The program could assist the City is achieving the goal of increasing tree canopy throughout the City through a process that can be measured, tracked, and perhaps expanded. The City of Cleveland, Ohio has promoted a similar program by offering training and support to increase tree canopy across the city.

Commissioner Chapman inquired as to whether Habitat for Humanity or other low income housing programs could benefit from the program as they might have the economic ability to plant trees. Director Matlock said the City is working with Homes First on a house acquired by the City off Henderson Boulevard, which might be a good candidate for a project. Commissioner Olson said the program would not necessarily require the planting of trees but rather vegetation that is site-specific to the owner and is conducive for the site.

Commissioners discussed different configurations of a voucher program that could cover up to three-fourths of the cost of the tree/vegetation.

Chair Grantham agreed the program could support some of the outreach and community engagement improvements included in the Urban Forestry Management Plan. He supported the Board working on initial steps of a program. Director Matlock suggested identifying a proposed budget and potential source of funding and administrative details for coordination of the program. Chair Grantham offered that a program might be a Board-directed effort with the Board accepting applications with funds from the Board or seeking additional funds from the Council to support the program.

Commissioner Chapman offered to work on the program in support of

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the Board.

Chair Grantham recommended following up the suggestions with Manager Medrud as a way to also increase public attendance to Board meetings.

Commissioner Olson added that the City could also assist high school students fulfill community service hours by having students evaluate applications based on a set of criteria through a Request for Proposal process.

The Board discussed a potential connection to students enrolled in the Tumwater FRESH program at Isabella Bush Park who might be interested in serving on a review panel, as well as Boy Scouts who might be working on an eagle scout project.

Commissioner Chapman supported the Board becoming more active in a tangible project.

Commissioner Jackson mentioned previous membership of students on the Board as another consideration. Commissioner Olson noted that with the advent of climate change, students are much more aware and engaged in activities.

Chair Grantham supported tying the recommendation to the Urban Forestry Management Plan as one of the implementation actions by the Board and continue conversations on development of a program.

STREET TREE PLAN SCOPE OF WORK:

Director Matlock reported the proposal is for an application of a grant for a Community Forestry Assistance Grant through Department of Natural Resources, which is due by March 4, 2022. Staff prepared a scope of work for feedback for submittal of a grant application. The grant is offered to assist communities in planning and implementing projects that improve the management, care, and public engagement of trees in natural areas, parks, rights-of-way, and as an impetus for projects addressing social and environmental disparity. The grant is one of the next steps for implementation of the Urban Forestry Management Plan. The grant supports amendments to the City's Street Tree Plan in support of the Urban Forestry Management Plan. The plan guides street tree plantings and maintenance requirements.

The draft scope of work should define the users of the information and information needs. Stakeholders have been identified as property owners, homeowner associations, residential, commercial, and industrial developers, City tree maintenance staff, and tree cutting and landscaping maintenance companies.

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Commissioner Chapman suggested substituting tree management companies or tree care companies rather than labeling them as tree cutting companies.

Director Matlock said the proposal is submittal of the grant prior to March 4, 2022. If successful in securing the grant, staff would prepare a draft scope of work and request proposals for a consultant to support the project with several Commissioners participating in the interview and selection of the consultant.

The proposed Street Tree Plan would include street tree plantings for arterials and connector streets, maintenance and guidance, summary of street tree management responsibilities, best management practices for street tree care, a street tree planting list, street tree design recommendations, street planting specifications and details, and street tree pruning guidelines. The Street Tree Plan also supports regulatory amendments to Tumwater Municipal Code Title 12 Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places, Title 16, Environment – Protection of Trees and Vegetation, and Title 17 Land Division. Additionally, revisions would be required to the Tumwater Development Guidelines, Littlerock Road Subarea Plan, Tumwater Town Center Street Design Plan, and the Capitol Boulevard Community Design Guidelines. The proposed schedule to complete the work includes the Board, Planning Commission, and the Council providing input on the grant scope followed by submittal of the grant in March. During May and June, the City would conduct the RFP process and select a consultant with grant funds available to the City in July 2022. With consultant assistance, staff anticipates completion of the Street Tree Plan by the end of the year. Staff is seeking input on the scope of work and the proposed schedule.

Commissioner Chapman inquired about the process for identifying the amount of the grant the City is seeking. Director Matlock explained that it is a combination of the maximum grant award and the scope of work. If the scope of work exceeds the grant amount, the difference would need to be augmented with City funds.

Commissioner Chapman recommended emphasizing the intent of the update of street tree management responsibilities as it is unclear as to whether it also addresses the responsibility of abutting property owners to maintain street trees.

Chair Grantham asked that the Board receive a copy of the grant application for its review. He asked Commissioners to provide any feedback to staff by January 28, 2022.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting is scheduled on February 14, 2022.

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ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Chair Grantham adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.**

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