

# URBAN FORESTRY SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

Date:	11-18-2024
Time:	4:35 – 6:29 pm
Place:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
Attending:	<b>UFS:</b> Chair Christine Johnson, Vice-Chair Thea Hayes, Keith Warren, Jim Buck, Steve Stevens (until 5:25) <b>Staff:</b> Jim Wheeler <b>PC Liaison:</b> Greg Schroeder <b>Council Liaison:</b> Jerry Hinton (until 5:45) <b>Guests:</b> John Hartsock
Absent	<b>UFS:</b> N/A

Agenda Item #2 – Public Comments	
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Decisions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

Agenda Item #3 – Approval of Meeting Minutes	
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2024, no changes</li> </ul>
Decisions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval (no changes)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2024 (5-0)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

Agenda Item #4 – Tree Code Revision Presentation (Mary Phillips & Gabby Sinagra)	
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tree Code Revision Presentation</b> Mary Phillips, Senior Planner, and Gabby Sinagra, Planner 2, presented the Tree Code Revision project.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Project Update                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Project Scope</li> <li>b. Phases (completing Phase 2 – goal setting – now)</li> <li>c. Community Engagement:                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Summer Outreach Events</li> <li>ii. Goals and Priorities Survey</li> <li>iii. Cross-Cultural Outreach Work Sessions</li> <li>iv. Community Priorities Feedback – priorities and concerns</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Policy Update Concepts                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Update Volumes I and II</li> <li>b. Update the regulations in Volume III</li> <li>c. Analysis of Alternative Approaches</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>

- **Presentation UFS discussion**

- Project goals
  - Outreach had over 250 respondents
  - Results indicate priority of increasing density of trees or more tree canopy
  - Any outreach to the new development areas (e.g., Pleasant Valley) where there are fewer trees with the development? A lot of community engagement through the Pleasant Valley Update Project (not specifically oriented toward trees). Those that expressed opinions, tree preservation and more street trees were priorities. Parks was also a large discussion related to Pleasant Valley.
- Priorities Feedback
  - Would the ratings be higher if there was a better understanding of correlation between trees and mental health? There were comments related to better place to live, happier, community vibrancy.
  - Importance of tree selection related to the concerns listed.
  - Importance of enforcement in maintaining tree canopy.
  - Concerns listed align with UFS concern for arterial and travel corridors and parking lots needing more trees.
  - Stormwater management is a UFS concern/benefit.
  - Food-bearing trees were not an item that came up in the community engagement efforts.
  - Community desire for hazard mitigation.
  - Keith Warren commented that the survey did not reveal any surprising information to him. He feels that Gresham citizens have always wanted to have trees in the City, although the strong response and desire for density was remarkable. The feedback would have ideally included arterial and travel corridors (and parking lots) needing to have larger canopy trees, but it did not.
  - Chair Johnson shared that she hopes that the tree code could allow for flexibility with regard to alternatives to taking trees out and replacing them with bioswales as she feels this is not an adequate use of resources.
- UFS Goals
  - Education: tree maintenance, stormwater, mental health connection.
  - Mitigation for retention of large trees/tree groves.
  - Preservation.
  - Tree planting number, size and type of trees in context of planting location.
  - Getting tree canopy coverage in areas that doesn't have tree canopy (urban heat island effect and tree die-off areas). Coverage requirements based on location and type of development.
  - Content of tree guidebook, technical tree manual, etc.
  - Requirement for developers to justify removal of existing trees. Making removal of non-hazardous trees more difficult to remove with development.
  - Educate the development community on the benefit of mature trees to assist in preservation of existing trees.
  - "Qualified Arborist" for assessment of tree preservation/removal.
  - Urban Forester on city staff is needed (in-house expertise).
  - Address code enforcement mechanisms in the revised code.
  - City of Portland approach to tree preservation, with exceptions?
  - Keep city staffing and monetary restrictions in mind – having the burden placed more on the developer/property owner.
  - Tree effect on stormwater impacts (types of trees and an analysis of stormwater uptake).
  - Diversity of trees (including conifers).
  - Need to maximize street trees, need to have street tree types based on planter strip width and look at types of trees for less than 3-foot-wide planter strip.
  - Need periodic assessment of green space tree health.

\*Of note: Chair, Christine Johnson, stated she is a member of the Urban Forestry Subcommittee on a volunteer basis, and her employer, Todd Prager and Associates, was the consulting firm selected to assist with the Tree Code. She stated that she would remain impartial based on her employer.

Decisions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

<b>Agenda Item #5 – General Update (Jim Wheeler)</b>	
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts Plaza Tree Planting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Per the approved building permit plans, 2 street trees along NE Kelly Ave (up from 1 on the planning permit set) and 6 street trees along NE 2<sup>nd</sup> St (down from 11 on the planning permit set) were required. The reduction in the number of street trees along NE 2<sup>nd</sup> St is due to Fire aerial access requirements (3 trees) and underground utility conflicts (2 trees) that came up during the building permit review. Discussion about Fire Code. Jim Buck strongly encouraged that this part of the review would be earlier on in the process.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Historical Tree City USA data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The annual Tree City USA reports for the past 3 years was emailed to the UFS members on November 18, 2024.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SW Community Park concept planning, next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ On October 17<sup>th</sup>, the city sent out a Notice of Intent to Award the Planning, Design and Permitting work to Juncus Studio and is still in contract negotiations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tree topping – code compliance and timing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A reported tree code violation is enforceable. If a reported violation was in the “distant” past and continues to be repeated, it is enforceable. How long in the past that a reported violation is enforceable, is subjective (context, how far in the past, how severe the violation (also subjective), safety/imminent hazard). Continued pruning is considered to still be topping and should be enforceable, regardless of original topping violation timing. Clarification of this topic needs to be addressed through the Tree Code Project.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Decisions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

<b>Agenda Item #6 – Other Business</b>	
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UFS Meeting Rescheduling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ December 16<sup>th</sup> – during Council Recess. Move to December 9<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>○ Survey for January (1/20/25 is MLK Day) and February (2/17/25 is Presidents Day)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2025 Arbor Month Event – February 8, 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 130 trees.</li> <li>○ Neighborhoods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rockwood</li> <li>▪ Centennial</li> <li>▪ NE Gresham</li> <li>▪ North Central</li> <li>▪ NW Gresham</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Friends of Trees planting on 11/23/2024 in Gresham</li> <li>• Participation in the 20-minute Tree and Garden Walk (end of April 2025) that is being coordinated as part of the IRA collaboration between Portland and Gresham.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Green Infrastructure Grant discussion.</li></ul>
Decisions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UFS motions to support the City applying for this grant (4-0).</li></ul>
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Move the December meeting to December 9<sup>th</sup>.</li><li>• Survey to be sent for moving the January and February dates.</li></ul>

\*These meeting minutes were approved at the January 27, 2025, Urban Forestry Subcommittee Meeting