

Meeting Minutes

Date Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2024

Time 6 p.m.

Location Virtual only due to inclement weather

Commissioners/Board Members Present:

Melissa Johnston, Clif Barnes, Susan Law, Jeff Kessenich, Khanh Tran

Commissioners/Board Members Absent:

Jamie Beyer

Staff Present: Jessica George, Charles Ray

Guests: Riley Schleiss, AmeriCorp

ITEM 1: Call to Order and Roll Call – Chair/Vice Chair

The January 17, 2024 meeting of the Urban Forestry Commission was called to order at 6:02pm by Melissa Johnston (Chair). This meeting was held online due to inclement weather.

ITEM 2: Approval of Minutes – November 15, 2023

Motion by Jeff Kessenich, seconded by Clif Barnes, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the November 15, 2023 Commission meeting.

ITEM 3: Introductions

None

ITEM 4: Review UFC Calendar & Schedule

Charles with Urban Forestry shared the Urban Forestry Commission 2024 calendar of activities, including timelines for completing various projects. The Commission has tentatively chosen June 2024 to be the summer recess month with no commission meeting.

ITEM 5: Review Heritage Trees Program Ordinance & Criteria

Members

Melissa Johnston Chair

Clif Barnes Vice Chair

Susan Law Past Chair

Jamie Beyer

Jeff Kessenich

Khanh Tran

Vacant

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The Commission began its 2024 review of the Heritage Tree program, including working to determine the most appropriate criteria for a “heritage tree,” accurate definitions of each criterion point, and scorecard improvements for the next cycle. Ongoing discussion also includes code policy on both heritage trees in the development process and the procedure of removing a heritage tree, potentially requiring additional documentation within a heritage tree application, and the possibility of creating a strong sample application to serve as an example for future nominators to reference.

At the February UFC meeting, the commission will review the nomination form.

At the March UFC meeting, the commission will review the scorecard, including usage and verbiage.

ITEM 6: Program Updates

Sent by email

In-meeting updates include:

Corridor Committee conducted flyering in the Fruit Valley area, but still require additional sign-ups from residents as more sign-ups were found at industrial/commercial addresses; the awarded Watershed Alliance Grant will fund up to 33 trees in this area. Additionally, in coordination with City Transportation, two upcoming traffic calming projects at NE 72nd and NE 39th St. hold opportunities for tree plantings, with upcoming informational letters being mailed to homeowners who live along the corridors; a call for volunteers was made for February flyering and the potential spring planting.

A Friends of Trees planting was cancelled due to inclement weather and was rescheduled for January 27th.

AmeriCorp representative Riley Schleiss shared that the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day planting was rescheduled for February 17th due to inclement weather.

ITEM 7: Community & Arborist Communications

None

ITEM 8: Urban Forestry Report

Included in email packets

ITEM 9: Commission Communications

Clif shared of subcommittee meetings rescheduled due to inclement weather.

Susan shared of Corridor subcommittee meeting and suggestion from a Vancouver resident for incentives to be provided to developers to protect and plant more trees.

Khanh shared of the holidays, including a group recap of the December social.

Jeff shared of a rescheduled invasive species subcommittee meeting due to inclement weather, recent Tree of Heaven ID walk with volunteers, summer plans for tree mapping, and communication with University of Georgia contacts regarding the ability to digitally input the gender of a Tree of Heaven sample within the database for improved mapping.

Melissa shared of return to work and volunteering.

ITEM 10: New Business/Agenda topics for future meetings

A call for volunteers was made for tabling at the Farmer's Market, with shifts from 10am-2pm, set-up, and break-down available.

ADJOURNMENT

7:00pm

Melissa Johnston, Chair

Meetings of the Urban Forestry Commission are electronically recorded on audio. The audio tapes are kept on file in the office of the City Clerk for a period of six years.