



Urban Forestry Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Time 6 p.m.

Location City Hall

Aspen Conference Room

415 W. 6th St

Vancouver, WA 98668-1995

Commissioners/Board Members Present:

Melissa Johnston, Clif Barnes, Jamie Beyer, Jeff Kessenich

Commissioners/Board Members Absent: Susan Law, Khanh Tran

Staff Present: Jessica George, Nick Redmond, Charles Ray, Ian Bonham, Jesse Batty

Guests: Urban Forestry interns Eric and Fuller; Jaynee Haygood – Chair of Parks & Rec Advisory Commission; Steve Wille – Parks & Rec Advisory Commissioner

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

The March 20, 2024 meeting of the Urban Forestry Commission was called to order at 6:08pm by Melissa Johnston (Chair). This meeting was held both in-person and online.

ITEM 2: Approval of Minutes – February 21, 2024

Motion by Jeff Kessenich, seconded by Clif Barnes, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the February 21, 2024 Commission meeting.

ITEM 3: Introductions

The Commission offered introductions for community members present.

ITEM 4: Debrief last month’s presentation on mitigating urban heat

Commission discussed AmeriCorp member Heather Day-Melgar’s presentation of graduate research on urban heat at February meeting,

Members

Melissa Johnston Chair

Clif Barnes Vice Chair

Susan Law Past Chair

Jamie Beyer

Jeff Kessenich

Khanh Tran

Vacant

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including potential next steps inspired by presentation. Ideas include increased Planning Commission meeting attendance (including sharing attendance among Commissioners to ensure regular presence and/or making it part of Outreach or Policy Subcommittee) as well as the potential for an intracommission representative.

Urban Forestry staff will pull Planning Commission schedule and share with UF Commission.

ITEM 5: Arbor Day Prep

On Wednesday, April 10th, 2024, a school assembly with tree planting will take place at Hough Elementary School. Commissioner Clif Barnes will serve as representative, with other Commissioners also potentially attending.

On Arbor Day, on behalf of the UF Commission, Commissioner Khanh Tran will receive the Arbor Day Proclamation and Chair of Parks & Rec Advisory Commission Jaynee Haygood will receive the Native Plant Awareness Month Proclamation.

ITEM 6: 2024 Mac Awards – Commission to vote for this year’s recipients

Mac Award guidelines and nominee were emailed out to Commissioners prior to March’s meeting. The Gordon and Sylvia MacWilliams Evergreen Award is given to an individual or group on annual basis during the Arbor Day ceremony to recognize commitment to urban forestry, growing local tree canopy, and raising community awareness.

Motion by Jamie Beyer to nominate 2024 Mac Award recipient, seconded by Jeff Kessenich, and passed unanimously.

ITEM 7: 2023 Proactive Street Tree Management Program – Staff to provide overview of program’s first year.

UF Staff Jesse Batty gave a presentation on the program, including its history and origins, reasons for program, current opportunities for improvement (e.g. communication), expanding scope of tree care, future aims, and intricacies of the program, along with follow-up Q&A from Commissioners.

ITEM 8: Review Heritage Trees Program Score Card

The Commissioned review the current Heritage Tree Scorecard, including an overview and example of use in most recent program cycle.

Areas of potential improvements proposed include: how to score a grove, such as deciding whether to judge as a whole or separate out into ideal candidates; move to numerical scoring; and additional space for recording comments.

At the April meeting, the Commission will review the program’s Heritage Tree criteria as well as other communities’ criteria for comparison.

ITEM 9: Program Updates

Emailed out.

In-meeting updates include:

Annual Tree Stewards training will be hosted this May, consisting of 3 consecutive virtual sessions on Thursday’s and 3 Saturday in-person field sessions. Applications are currently being accepted.

Pollinator Subcommittee shared of guest speaker from City of Wilsonville on local program, successful growth of Subcommittee's first meadow planting project, and an upcoming guest speaker from Clark College regarding Bee Campus USA status and program learnings.

Invasive Species Subcommittee shared the return of UF Staff Nick Redmond, efforts to update Prohibited Tree List, and potential request for City to compose letter to state's Noxious Weed Control Board to have Black Locust be added.

ITEM 10: Community & Arborist Communications

None.

ITEM 11: Urban Forestry Report

On Earth Day, April 20th, 2024, the City will have a booth at the Mother Camas Earth Day event and put out a call for volunteers.

On the same day, the Cascade Park Community Library will host a ceremony to open their courtyard with its newly accepted Heritage Tree. The Commission has been asked to participate and offer a few words during the Heritage Tree ribbon cutting. UF Staff Jessica George will send an email out to obtain Commissioner availability.

ITEM 12: Commission Communications

Jeff shared of participating in a Friends of Trees planting, as well as rescuing and rehoming a local cedar tree.

Clif shared of visit with Vancouver Bee Project and volunteering with Friends of Trees.

Melissa shared of Outreach Subcommittee.

Jamie shared of Pollinator Subcommittee meeting and westside planting.

ITEM 13: New Business/Agenda topics for future meetings

None.

ADJOURNMENT

7:53pm

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.