

TUMWATER TREE BOARD
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
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CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Trent Grantham and Boardmembers Brent Chapman, Brodrick Coval, Michael Jackson, Hannah Ohman, and Jim Sedore.

Excused: Boardmember Tanya Nozawa.

Staff: Sustainability Coordinator Alyssa Jones Wood.

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

**APPROVAL OF
TREE BOARD
MEETING
MINUTES –
OCTOBER 9, 2023:**

MOTION: **Boardmember Sedore moved, seconded by Boardmember Jackson, to approve the minutes of October 9, 2023 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

**TREE BOARD
MEMBER
REPORTS:**

Boardmember Sedore referred to a prior presentation on the migration of tree seed in response to climate change. He reviewed recent news reports of several Pacific Northwest experts discussing the difference between seed migration and range expansion. Typically, ornamental trees planted in the state are from the same hardiness zone. In term of hardiness, the trees are intended to survive; however, environmentally, there could be a significant impact by introducing non-native species across the landscape. In terms of hardiness, it usually speaks to cold weather. The Pacific Northwest experiences unique drought during summer months when rainfall is limited. Trees that may be able to withstand temperatures in the Northwest also require surviving a 90-day summer drought added to the challenges of soil, insects, and disease. More experts are promoting assisted migration at the forestry level. He asked at what point, should non-native species be introduced into a biological community and whether that issue is of concern by the Board as members work with the City on the species of trees that should be planted in Tumwater beyond the issue of whether the species is considered hardy. Boardmember Chapman also questioned whether the Board should consider the factor of acclimating function. During Boardmember Sedore's employment with the Department of Natural Resources Webster Nursery, there were concerns about seed source/seed zones with staff striving to select seed from the same elevation and location for replanting. Staff attempted to generically plant trees of the same species as the trees were adapted to particular sites. Today, many experts are indicating that because of climate change, that practice should be deviated. He asked about the process of learning about the source of trees sold by local

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retailers.

Chair Grantham advised that most of the trees originate from Oregon.

Boardmember Sedore questioned whether the City is experiencing more insects and disease of trees purchased from Oregon. He does not believe the City is tracking the source of any trees planted in the City to help ascertain whether there is a correlation to poor growth or death of a tree to its origin. It is also important for the City to develop a tracking mechanism to document the source of trees.

Discussion ensued on the suggestion in terms of pros and cons as it would be difficult to implement and would need to occur over a long period. It would also depend on whether the species are ornamental trees or native species. Boardmember Sedore questioned whether it is possible to justify what the experts are promoting in terms of climate change affecting trees and that anyone planting trees should consider its source of seed stock from a more drought-tolerant or heat extreme seed source.

Boardmember Chapman supported pursuing multiple strategies, such as planting different species of plants that are urban tolerant of future climate changes. Individual homes lacking an ecosystem or habitat should diversify and plant different species of plants that would be tolerant of future climate change.

Boardmember Sedore commented that the City's practice could be improved if 80% of all plantings are failing. The challenge is what was available ten years ago might not be available today as there are new varieties and different nurseries. Forty years ago, he served as the reforestation consultant for the Makah Indian Reservation, which elected to plant approximately 10,000 sequoia trees. According to some news reports, many communities in the Pacific Northwest are planting sequoias because the tree is drought tolerant and hardy. Western red cedar is declining in Thurston County as well as big leaf maple trees, which is a significant percentage of the City's tree species on the tree inventory. He asked whether the City has staff responsible for selecting the trees planted by the City who would have the time and the interest in learning more about the source of trees planted by the City.

Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the Parks and Recreation Department's certified arborist is scheduled to retire in April. Another staff member works closely with the arborist. The Department does not determine the species of trees planted for all properties in the City except for locations that have buildings or are parks. At this time, other plantings are selected from the tree street list for right-of-way plantings. The City does not contract with nurseries as the landscape architect assigned to a master contract for a project selects the source of the trees for planting.

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Boardmember Coval asked about the possibility of the City incentivizing preferential treatment for selecting assisted migration-type tree stock. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the Board could provide the Parks and Recreation Department with a list of preferred trees and sources. However, it would be difficult to guide plantings by the public because it is not appropriate for the City to promote any specific business.

Boardmember Sedore asked whether there is any collaboration between the cities when contracting for purchasing street trees. Coordinator Jones Wood said she was not aware of any situation. Boardmember Sedore noted that Forestry IFA is a cooperative nursery for collective timber companies that provides reforestation stock for timber companies.

Boardmember Chapman said the City of Olympia at one time sponsored a neighborhood woods program that purchased tree seedlings to stock a city nursery enabling control over the tree/plant species the City raised.

Boardmember Sedore said he interest is incentivizing and ensuring the genetics of the trees planted in the City are mostly likely to succeed.

Boardmember Chapman cited several organizations in addition to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) including Washington State Nursery Landscape Association, and Washington Association of Landscape Professionals as avenues for additional information.

Boardmember Sedore said more people involved in the industry have opinions that are evolving. Some recent work involves planting more drought tolerant varieties of red cedar, such as Western red cedar as several communities have begun to plant cedars as well as reforestry organizations (timber companies). The seed source many are using today of the Western red cedar is from a drier and hotter seed zone than Western Washington seed stock.

Boardmember Coval asked about the possibility of the Board receiving information from the landscape architects as to the seed source they use for tree plantings on City property. He recommended including a provision for any City-issued request for proposals to provide the City with seed source information.

Coordinator Jones Wood advised that she would review the request with the City Attorney.

Boardmember Sedore questioned whether the City has a system for recording the information. He offered to follow-up with DNR on seed sources.

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**COORDINATOR'S
REPORT:**

Coordinator Jones Wood reported on her tour of the McIntosh Family Forest with Vice Chair Jackson last month.

Training dates for staff by DNR are tentatively scheduled on the Principles of Urban Forestry (4 hours), Basic Tree Biology (4 hours), and an all-day workshop on pruning. The training is complimentary to the City. Approximately 20 employees will participate in each class from different City departments involved in forestry and trees.

The consultant continues work on the inventory and the urban forestry maintenance report. Work on the inventory has been completed. Except for one volunteer who did not follow through, all other volunteers completed their work. Data was obtained for most areas in the City maintained by the City with the exception of an area along Tumwater Boulevard.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported on meetings with operations staff to discuss a work order process linked to the tree inventory. The Parks and Recreation Department does not utilize the same work order process requiring other methods to ensure the inventory remains updated. She provided staff with data and is working with other departments to link the systems. The consultant is working on the report. The report includes the maintenance schedule, cost estimates, I-Tree analysis, and potential planting areas. The priority planting analysis will designate the location of future plantings to address racial and social inequities and urban heat islands. All locations will be ground-truthed as the first step and separated into City-owned and privately owned properties. Staff is reviewing satellite images to identify locations that are not in areas of asphalt or where overhead lines are located to avoid conflicts. The project deadline is April 20, 2024. Areas for plantings include wetland and riparian buffers. Other areas excluded include areas identified in the Habitat Conservation Plan for pocket gophers and prairie areas. Conservation of the prairie areas must comply with the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is unlikely prairie areas would be reforested because of the unique habitat. Data are lacking on the location of land designated as prairie within the City of Tumwater.

The Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative approved a letter to DNR requesting a pause to timber sales in Thurston County. The intent is to protect mature forests.

The next meeting may be rescheduled to February 15, 2024 at 6 p.m. to facilitate a joint meeting of the Tree Board and the Historic Preservation Commission to discuss findings by the City's contract arborist regarding the Garry oak heritage tree located off Old Highway 99.

Vice Chair Jackson suggested that the scheduled plantings in 2025 should also include the source of the tree seed/seedlings. Coordinator Jones Wood affirmed that if it is possible to obtain the seed source information, the

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inventory could be adjusted within the GIS system to include another data point. Vice Chair Jackson reiterated the importance of documenting the data as it could serve as a way for the City to monitor developer sites to ensure the landscape plan was actually executed. Coordinator Jones Wood noted that the inventory reflects many unassigned trees from projects that were planned. However, it was not possible to identify whether the trees were the same species included within the plans. The trees were subsequently undefined. There are more than 1,000 trees of unidentified species in the inventory associated with new projects. Boardmember Sedore offered that the Board might assist staff during spring when the trees are in bloom to identify the species of approximately 100 trees each year.

Vice Chair Jackson commented on the number of instances involving improper pruning of trees.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported on the City Nature Challenge. Thurston County is involved in the challenge. Individuals can download the iNaturalist app that is helpful to determine a plant or animal species. The app record encounters with organisms and maintains life lists. The app helps scientists and resource managers understand when and where organisms occur and connects with experts who can identify the organisms. Thurston County is hosting a Bio-blitz of individuals finding and identifying as many species as possible.

**PUBLIC
COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

**ARBOR DAY
DISCUSSION:**

Coordinator Jones Wood reviewed the memorandum contained in the staff report listing a series of actions by the Board to consider for the Arbor Day celebration:

1. Confirm the timing for the Arbor Day portion of the event.
2. Decide on what will be done at the event:
 - a. Decide on the plant species to offer.
 - b. Determine what vendors may be able to provide more resilient stock based on the recent climate change vulnerability presentation to the Tree Board.
 - c. Review the list of handouts and other giveaway materials handed out last year, what is on hand for 2024, and determine what needs to be ordered by staff.
3. Review the draft 2024 Arbor Day Proclamation.
4. Work on volunteer staffing by the Tree Board for the event.
5. Consider potential tree planting in coordination with other Parks & Recreation Department activities.

Members discussed the timing of the Arbor Day celebration in conjunction with the Earth Day event. The Earth Day event typically attracts a different

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audience as it includes high school students involved in the Earth Day program. Boardmember Sedore noted that last year, Earth Day personnel set up for the Arbor Day event enabling the Board to pursue public interaction. Typically, the Earth Day event involves volunteers working on a project while the Arbor Day event is at one location offering activities and a giveaway of plants. Coordinator Jones Wood added that representatives of the Earth Day event, the PARC Foundation, and the Parks and Recreation Department have requested a joint starting time for both events. Typically, the Board arrives early to assist in the set-up; however, staff plans to arrive an hour before the event to begin setting up the area.

Coordinator Jones Wood said she prefers to schedule the Arbor Day event at the same time as the Earth Day event to begin at 10 a.m. instead of staggering the events, which has led to some confusion within the community because both events are held at Tumwater Historical Park.

Coordinator Jones Wood requested feedback on the activities, the species of plants to offer and plant vendors, and the list of handouts. Several members indicated the Board decided last year to offer one-gallon plants.

Members offered feedback on the plants to order. Last year, the City ordered 100, one-gallon of four different plants species, as well as packets of wildflower seeds (very popular). Boardmember Sedore supported smaller plant species as most residents in the City have smaller yards that cannot support larger trees. He recommended Oregon grape as one of the species to offer. The Board discussed the pros and cons of larger plant species, the goal to broaden the range of plants, and flowering versus non-flowering species. The Board recommended ordering Red Twig Dogwood, Pacific Wax Myrtle, Saskatoon Serviceberry, Vine Maple, Oregon grape (small), Wildflower seed packets, and Milkweed seeds.

Coordinator Jones Wood reviewed the existing inventory of giveaway items. Boardmember Sedore recommended providing a color poster of each plant at maturity. The Board recommended including handouts for each plant species, giveaway bags, and displaying other giveaways items separately.

Coordinator Jones Wood reviewed the event hours (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and set-up beginning at 9 a.m. Boardmember Nozawa has volunteered to participate. Boardmember Chapman offered to volunteer at the event from 11 a.m. to noon. Coordinator Jones Wood encouraged members to contact her so she can develop a volunteer roster.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported each year, the City receives a tree for planting from the PARC Foundation. The Tree Board has been invited to participate, as well as consider planting another tree or just be involved in the Earth Day tree planting. The Mayor plants the Earth Day tree. Boardmember Sedore referred to previous discussions to link tree plantings

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to an individual deserving recognition. Boardmember Coval asked about an option of recognizing an individual for volunteerism. Coordinator Jones Wood offered to follow up with Parks staff Todd Anderson as to whether the City recognizes an individual as volunteer of the year. Boardmember Sedore spoke to his suggestion that the City plant a tree during the Fall Fest, at other City events, or when dedicating new City facilities. The City should consider more opportunities to plant trees and plants. Coordinator Jones Wood said she would follow up with staff on the volunteer of the year award, as well as a potential memorial for lives lost during the pandemic. Boardmember Sedore recommended recognizing staff for their efforts during the pandemic as well.

Coordinator Jones Wood requested a review of the proposed Arbor Day proclamation. She cited some of the suggestions offered by Boardmember Sedore for consideration. The proclamation is a draft of the proclamation from 2023 with revised dates. Boardmember Sedore recommended adjusting language that speaks to plants rather than only trees. Boardmember Coval recommended updating the second “Whereas” to state, “The City Council has begun implementation of the Urban Forestry Management Plan” as a way to memorialize progress that has occurred. The last sentence within the last “Whereas” should be revised to state, “At this event, residents can take home Arbor Day memorabilia, free potted native plants for the first one hundred people, and have the opportunity to ask a professional forester, landscape architect, or horticulturalists about the proper planting of and care of trees.”

Boardmember Sedore questioned whether the proclamation should only speak to “native plants.” He also suggested deleting “first” before “one hundred people in the last “Whereas.”

Coordinator Jones Wood referred to the tree care pledge and requested feedback. Boardmember Sedore said he envisioned the opportunity to ask giveaway recipients for feedback on the status of a tree they received at an Arbor Day event or alternatively, the City could take a picture of an Arbor Day tree planting several years after planting to track progress. Several Boardmembers commented that the second option would be more manageable. The Board was receptive to tracking progress of previous City Arbor Day plantings rather than asking tree recipients for information on a tree or plant’s progress. Coordinator Jones Wood noted that records exist of prior Earth Day and Arbor Day planting events to include photographs. It has been difficult to track information prior to 2011.

Boardmember Coval asked about the possibility of documenting the process within a manual for the Tree Board or the possibility of an ongoing commitment by the Chair to take pictures of plantings for submittal to the City each year. He stressed that although the suggestion is a good idea, if the Board is unable to document plantings on an ongoing basis, the Board would

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continue having the same conversation in the future.

Discussion ensued on the City's 9/11 memorial tree and the likelihood that someone from the City took a photograph of the tree as it was planted. Boardmember Chapman commented that it is likely the City has taken photographs and that it is a matter of contacting appropriate City staff to post photographs on the website. Coordinator Jones Wood said she would follow up with staff to ensure the Board is involved in any future tree plantings.

Coordinator Jones Wood shared information on the involvement of students in Earth Day activities. Boardmember Chapman suggested inviting the students to participate in the tree planting as well.

Boardmember Sedore commented that he was surprised as to the number of people who signed pledges last year who were not Tumwater residents. Coordinator Jones Wood said many people who signed the pledge did not list their address. She developed a spreadsheet of all addresses as well as copies of all the pledges.

Boardmember Chapman expressed interest in pursuing planting options in the fall at City parks. He suggested having Parks staff provide a recommendation to the Board so the Board can purchase a tree(s) to plant in the parks. Fall plantings are preferable than planting trees in the spring. Coordinator Jones Wood added that a planting plan would likely be available for one of the parks by fall to include the golf course.

Coordinator Jones Wood described some complications surrounding an urban forestry grant the City received. She is confident the City will approve the urban forester position.

**NEXT MEETING
DATE:**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled on February 15, 2024. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that she would confirm the meeting date with the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Chair Grantham adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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