

TUMWATER TREE BOARD
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
July 10, 2023 Page 1

CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

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

Staff: Sustainability Coordinator Alyssa Jones Wood.

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

**APPROVAL OF
TREE BOARD
MEETING
MINUTES - MARCH
13, 2023:**

MOTION: **Boardmember Sedore moved, seconded by Boardmember Coval, to approve the minutes of March 13, 2023 as presented. A voice vote approved the motion.**

**TREE BOARD
MEMBER
REPORTS:**

Boardmember Chapman asked that the City follow-up on the status of newly planted tree along Littlerock Rock and 77th Way that appear to be dying from the lack of irrigation.

Coordinator Jones Wood said she would review the street tree list to determine if the trees are City-owned. If the trees are privately owned, the property owner has a three-year bond and must replace the trees. She will follow up with the Community Development Department on the status of ownership, location, and the health of the trees.

Boardmember Sedore reported he is working on potential nominations for heritage trees. His recent efforts have centered on the Fred Meyer Garry oak trees. The store's legal department claims the strip of land is not owned by Fred Meyer. It appears the land is owned by the Panda Express restaurant. He spoke to the facilities manager of the restaurant. Additionally, a local citizen who advocates for Garry oak trees sent a list of several Garry oak trees located on public right-of-way including trees on the Trospen Lake Park property. The park is undeveloped land located behind Tumwater Middle School off Littlerock Road. He spoke to Director Denney about retaining the Garry oaks when the property is developed in 2027.

Boardmembers Michael Jackson and Tanya Nozawa joined the meeting.

**COORDINATOR'S
REPORT:**

Coordinator Jones Wood referred to a memorandum from Manager Medrud regarding the pause on the updates of the urban forestry codes until staff reviews new requirements of the Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code enacted by the state to address wildfire hazards and the interface between rural

TUMWATER TREE BOARD
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
July 10, 2023 Page 2

and urban areas that could pose wildfire hazards. Community Development is reviewing the Code and is working with other cities, Thurston County, and the Department of Ecology, as critical areas appear not to be exempt from the Code. Following the review, the update process will be reinitiated on the amendments.

Boardmember Chapman asked whether the requirements are from the state or the federal government. Coordinator Jones Wood said the International Building Code was adopted as a Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and requires a larger amount of defensive space between buildings and vegetation. The Code also requires a certain distance between canopies in certain areas, which speaks to uncertainties associated with both groves and wildlife corridors.

Boardmember Sedore said the Code requires all residential, industrial, and commercial uses to provide 10 feet of space between buildings and trees with trees spaced 10 feet apart.

Coordinator Jones Wood shared information on additional uncertainties surrounding the new requirements, especially as it pertains to wildlife corridors.

Boardmember Sedore commented that the new requirements would eliminate most trees on most properties in the City.

Coordinator Jones Wood referred to a map included with the memorandum identifying areas in the City subject to the new code. The urban core of the City is not subject to the Code; this raises equity concerns and possibly more requirements for an area not subject to risk. The City is required to adopt the Code by October 2023.

Boardmember Sedore asked whether the Code is retroactive. Coordinator Jones Wood said the City's Building Official has interpreted the Code as retroactive, which speaks to removal of trees/vegetable not meeting the standards to maintain defensible space.

Chair Grantham asked whether irrigated property would be exempt. Coordinator Jones Wood said defensible space on properties with trees/vegetation must be irrigated. The approach for any amendments to the landscaping code to reduce mandatory irrigation was planting drought-tolerant native species may not be possible under the new Code. The Community Development Department is leading the review of the Code to identify any leeway/flexibility within the new requirements.

Boardmember Sedore asked whether the new code affects current proposed developments in the City. Coordinator Jones Wood said the requirements would not be effective until adopted by the City.

TUMWATER TREE BOARD
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
July 10, 2023 Page 3

Boardmember Sedore asked whether the City has placed a moratorium on development until staff can resolve the issues surrounding the new Code. Coordinator Jones Wood indicated she was not aware of any moratorium.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported the Parks and Recreation Department has indicated interest in continuing to combine Arbor Day/Earth Day events each year.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported that four interns from The Evergreen State College have been working in the Water Resources and Sustainability department to support efforts on urban trees and vegetation. One intern cross-referenced the City's approved street tree list with resources and research on heat and hardiness vulnerability for climate change. Another intern is working on a demonstration garden design on the City Hall campus. Funding is provided for the garden for water conservation and bioremediation. Last quarter, four interns have worked in the department. This quarter, another intern will interview the top 10 residential water consumers to investigate the reason for such high water usage. The interview will be a qualitative open-ended interview conducted remotely. The results will assist the City in producing a more tailored water conservation messaging campaign. The homeowner interviews are voluntary.

Boardmember Sedore inquired about the status of the annual review of the street tree list. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the pause in the urban forestry updates also applies to the street tree list.

Coordinator Jones Wood responded to requests for information on the research the intern utilized for heat and hardiness vulnerabilities of trees. She offered to forward the information to the Board. The intern was able to locate a study on urban trees in Puget Sound recently completed by a non-profit organization in the Seattle area.

Boardmember Sedore asked whether the intern included National Wildlife Foundation's recommended plants listed on its website. Coordinator Jones Wood explained that the intern cross-referenced the City's existing list as proposed recently by the consultant. Boardmember Sedore noted that entering the zip code in the Foundation's website produces a list of recommended plants for an area. It is an easy to use reference that the City should consider when the Board reviews the street tree list. Coordinator Jones Wood said the current version is an updated proposed street tree list that includes native trees.

Boardmember Coval asked about the value of inviting the interns to attend the Board's next meeting to present information on their current work. Coordinator Jones Wood said only one intern is working with her at this time and she could extend an invitation to attend the next meeting. The intern is completing their summer internship remotely from Texas.

TUMWATER TREE BOARD
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
July 10, 2023 Page 4

Boardmember Chapman asked about the maintenance responsibility for the demonstration garden. Coordinator Jones Wood said the Parks and Recreation Department may maintain the garden. The department has been involved throughout the process.

Coordinator Jones Wood updated the Board on the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan. The plan includes a section on agriculture, prairies, and forests. Four actions are related to those areas as well as some agriculture-related actions. Actions include reforestation programs, native municipal canopy, tree preservation, tree canopy preservation, and prairie preservation. The three entities responsible for implementing the plan include an elected official entity comprised of one elected official from the four jurisdictions (Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Thurston County), a community advisory workgroup comprised of 15 community members from various organizations, and a staff team comprised of one staff member from each jurisdiction. Staff identified one regional priority with suggested priorities related to trees and forest. Staff identified a major priority of focus for each jurisdiction and two tree-related actions for the elected officials to champion and move forward. One action is rural tree canopy targets with target outcomes. Thurston County is completing a tree canopy assessment that will be analyzed to help identify forested areas of high risk of conversion and opportunities for conservation and restoration. Data will be applied to establish targets for tree canopy at the regional level focusing on rural Thurston County where the majority of carbon sequestration occurs. The action will be led by the county. Other actions advanced for regional focus in 2024 include state forestlands management advocacy with two proposed outcomes of legacy forest protection and a dedicated funding source for purchasing, protection of legacy stands, or DNR enrolling more of its land in its carbon project. Elected officials will work with DNR and other agencies to advance the actions regionally.

Boardmember Sedore asked whether the timber industry is represented on the community advisory workgroup. Coordinator Jones Wood identified members serving on the workgroup. Members include Thurston Conservation District, Puget Sound Energy, Intercity Transit, a tribal representative, different stakeholder groups identified by the elected official committee, such as representatives from the building industry, realtors, transportation, rural lands/agriculture, and others. At this time, no forestry or timber-related interests are represented on the workgroup. The Thurston Climate Action Team tree group has requested adding a position representing forestry. At this time there is no dedicated position for forestry.

Boardmember Coval said his business was contacted about serving as a representative; however, the business declined because of time constraints.

Coordinator Jones Wood said the committee currently has two vacant positions. The staff team is developing a recruitment strategy. Members of

TUMWATER TREE BOARD
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
July 10, 2023 Page 5

the workgroup serve a one-year term. She described ongoing recruitment efforts and the intent to advocate for a forestry representative.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported on the loss of a large limb from the Meeker Garry oak tree located off Old Highway 99. The tree is located within City right-of-way and staff is working with Kevin McFarland to investigate why the limb fell and assess the overall health of the tree. Mr. McFarland is completing a Level 3 assessment using sonic tomography to detect decay and cavities in the tree. Some decay was identified by Mr. McFarland with efforts ongoing by the City to ensure the health of the tree.

Boardmember Jackson mentioned the car that crashed into the retaining wall and hit the tree approximately 10 years ago. The accident left a large gap in the tree, which has nearly closed over the last 10 years.

**PUBLIC
COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

**BRIEFING:
URBAN FORESTRY
MANAGEMENT
PLAN – CITY-
OWNED TREE
INVENTORY AND
MAINTENANCE
PLAN SCOPE OF
WORK:**

Coordinator Jones Wood reported on the receipt of a grant award from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) of \$40,000 with a City match of \$20,000 from the Tree Fund to complete six actions in the Urban Forestry Management Plan. The grant scope of work includes updating the existing street tree inventory dataset. She encouraged the Board to assist in the work or identify any volunteers that might be interested. The City released a solicitation for a consultant. One company responded to the solicitation. The tasks include updating the street tree inventory, completing a point-based inventory of other City properties not heavily forested, and completing a sample-based approach inventory of other heavily forested areas (excluding the golf course), developing a four year maintenance schedule, and budget estimates for maintenance.

Boardmember Sedore asked about any mechanism that the City uses to maintain the inventory. Coordinator Jones Wood said the inventory would be updated based on new development applications; however, the inventory is not connected to the City's work order system or the GIS system at this time. The City is phasing to a new system over the next several years that will include those abilities. During the update to the Arbor Day Foundation on the number of trees removed to maintain the City's USA Tree City designation, staff could be contacted about documenting the number of trees removed, the species, and the locations.

Boardmember Sedore shared that he spoke to a staff member during the Arbor Day event who indicated records of trees removed are available. Coordinator Jones Wood said she does not have access to the records but would follow up with staff.

Boardmember Sedore questioned the City's process of confirming the

TUMWATER TREE BOARD
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
July 10, 2023 Page 6

plantings of new development based on the submittal of landscape plans. Coordinator Jones Wood explained that the inventory only pertains to trees located on City property. Developers are responsible for maintaining plantings within the first three years for private development.

Discussion ensued on the lack of inventory for private properties. Coordinator Jones Wood explained that the City has plans on file for all new development but lacks the resources for inputting the information.

Coordinator Jones Wood added that the scope of work for the grant also includes development of a Community and Urban Forest Maintenance Report. Associated tasks include providing a summary of methodology and inventory results, reporting on results of iTree analysis, development of a maintenance prioritization and strategy, a cost estimate for maintenance work, and a planting strategy for improving tree canopy equity.

The City applied for an Inflation Reduction Act Urban Forestry grant of approximately \$400,000 with a required 50% match by the City. The funding would be used to hire an urban forester as well as fund some incentive programs geared towards low and moderate income households to include tree assessment assistance, small grants for low and moderate-income households with non-City-owned street trees requiring maintenance, a tree giveaway program for low and moderate income households and other areas of the City in need of plantings, and placement of heat sensors at locations throughout the City to measure the increase in tree canopy. Announcement of the federal grant award is not anticipated until November.

Boardmember Sedore asked for a description of the analysis for the new inventory. Coordinator Jones Wood said the analysis uses a sample-based approach documenting the method of sampling to determine the number of trees within a specific space. Boardmember Sedore questioned whether the City will complete an analysis on the inventory. Coordinator Jones Wood explained that the inventory will identify potential planting areas and needed maintenance. At this time the inventory is not intended for any further analysis. The data will be in an excel format. Boardmember Sedore commented that the effort might be conducive for an intern who is interested in biostatistics. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that her department is moving to the campus of South Puget Sound Community College and the intent is to create an internship program with the college and continue the internship program with The Evergreen State College.

DISCUSSION:
HERITAGE TREE
NOMINATION AT
330 SCHMIDT
PLACE:

Coordinator Jones Wood reviewed the process for nominating a heritage tree. The nomination of the Japanese Bigleaf Magnolia tree located at 330 Schmidt Place was submitted by Boardmember Sedore.

Boardmember Sedore reported the City contracted with an urban forester who assessed the tree on June 29, 2023 and estimated the tree is 83 years old. He

TUMWATER TREE BOARD
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
July 10, 2023 Page 7

and the urban forester disagree on the species of the tree and he plans to follow up with the urban forester as to why he believes it is a saucer magnolia tree, which should be clarified before forwarding a recommendation to the Council. The tree may be the largest of its species in the world based on the Monumental Tree database. If there is agreement on the species of the tree, he plans to submit data to the Monumental Tree database to document that the tree is the largest Japanese Bigleaf Magnolia tree in the world.

MOTION: **Boardmember Sedore moved, seconded by Chair Grantham, to recommend the City Council approve designating the Japanese Bigleaf Magnolia tree located at 330 Schmidt Place, pending confirmation of the tree species, as a Heritage Tree in the City of Tumwater.**

Boardmember Sedore added that the tree is not native and is an exotic tree. He questioned whether the tree falls within the parameter of the City's heritage tree definition. Coordinator Jones Wood said the code does not specify that a tree must be a native tree.

Boardmember Sedore explained the significance of accurately defining the tree species. If the species of tree is identified as a saucer magnolia, the species is not rare or large and is a more common tree. He believes the tree is not a saucer magnolia. Typically, saucer magnolia trees have multiple stems.

MOTION: **A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

DRAFT MEETING SCHEDULE: Coordinator Jones Wood reviewed changes to the meeting schedule caused by the delay in the urban forestry amendments. The revised schedule reflects monthly Monday meetings and no joint meetings with the Planning Commission pending input from Manager Medrud. Coordinator Jones Wood reviewed a future field trip of potential planting areas in the City.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The Board agreed to cancel the August 7, 2023 meeting.

MOTION: **Chair Grantham moved, seconded by Boardmember Coval, to cancel the August 7, 2023 Tree Board meeting. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Chair Grantham adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.**