

TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

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CONVENE: 7:03 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, Stormwater Program Lead David Kangiser, and Water Resources Specialist Grant Gilmore.

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

APPROVAL OF TREE BOARD MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 12, 2022:

MOTION: **Chair Grantham moved, seconded by Boardmember Sedore, to approve the minutes of December 12, 2022 as presented. A voice vote approved the motion.**

TREE BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:

Boardmember Sedore reported he is working on a heritage tree nomination for a tree located on the Schmidt House property. The tree is a Japanese Magnolia. He is seeking approval of the nomination from Executive Director John Freedman of the Olympia Tumwater Foundation. Curator Karen Johnston is working with him on the securing approval. The draft of the nomination form was submitted to Mr. Freedman.

A website, *Monumental Trees*, documents the tallest, oldest, and widest trees at breast height in the world. The tree located on the Schmidt House property is as large as the largest tree listed on the website.

Boardmember Chapman inquired as to whether the consultant arborist would complete the measurements. Boardmember Sedore said the nomination has not been formally submitted pending final approval from Mr. Freedman.

Boardmember Sedore said he is meeting with a member of the Thurston Youth Climate Coalition to discuss Garry oak trees. A list of questions was provided to him seeking answers on the likelihood of Garry oak habitat becoming extinct and the steps necessary to maintain and restore Garry oak trees.

Coordinator Jones Wood advised that she provides updates to the Thurston Youth Climate Coalition every two months on the City's progress on climate mitigation implementation. The Thurston Youth Climate Coalition

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was initially an action group as part of the Thurston Climate Action Team (TCAT). However, the group has branched out with less oversight from TCAT. A TCAT staff member attends meetings and provides support and coordination as needed. The group staged a die-in protest at local council meetings as well as the Tumwater Council meeting in January urging the cities to act on the climate crisis.

Boardmember Sedore reported the heritage tree nomination for a Garry oak located on the Walmart property has been submitted to the City. The remaining Garry oaks are located within residential areas. He plans to contact property owners of the Garry oak trees.

Boardmember Chapman invited the Board and staff to attend the Wednesday, April 12, 2023 10 a.m. Washington State Arbor Day celebration on Capitol Campus. The Governor will be speaking in addition to Hillary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands. Forty children will sing and assist in planting a tree in an area across from the old General Administration Building.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT:

Coordinator Jones Wood welcomed new Boardmembers Hannah Ohman and Brodrick Coval.

Staff with Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is tentatively scheduled to present the Carbon Sequestration White Paper to the Board at its October 9, 2023 meeting. All Board meetings until September will be a joint meeting with the Planning Commission. The City Council is also scheduled to receive the same presentation during its May 23, 2023 worksession.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported she submitted a grant proposal to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for \$40,000 for a City property tree inventory. Included within the proposal is a maintenance plan. The plan will identify priority maintenance areas for scheduling during a four-year cycle as dictated by the Urban Forestry Management Plan, as well as producing cost estimates for the work.

Coordinator Jones Wood responded to suggestions to review the tree inventory and explained that the only inventory the City currently has is the street tree inventory. The City lacks a tree inventory of other City-owned properties. The proposal establishes a baseline of a tree inventory for all City properties to include all parks. The proposal implements several actions in the Urban Forestry Management Plan. She plans to request the hiring an urban forester or urban ecologist position in the next City's budget cycle.

At the next joint Board and Commission meeting, members will receive a draft of the Tree Preservation and Vegetation Protection Ordinance. The

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draft will be published on the City's website on Wednesday prior to the joint meeting. The document is in a tracked changes format for comparison of existing language and proposed changes.

Coordinator Jones Wood mentioned three compost projects in progress by the City.

Boardmembers are scheduled to receive Tree Board business cards to identify each member as a Tree Board member. She asked for feedback on information to include on the business card. Boardmember Sedore recommended adding "Tumwater Tree Boardmember" as an identifier. Chair Grantham suggested ordering nametags for each member. Coordinator Jones Wood said she followed up with staff and learned that business cards are the least expensive option. The line item for the Tree Board in the budget was not funded in 2023. Funds from the Sustainability budget are being utilized for the Board.

Coordinator Jones Wood advised that she is attending a Thurston County Food Bank event at Mountain View Church and will hand out information during the distribution to promote the tree giveaway during the Arbor Day celebration and distribute Stream Team newsletters. During those types of events, she typically interacts with several hundred people from Tumwater or from the south county area. She also prepared seed packets and added a handout from the National Wildlife Federation on how to provide water for Monarch butterflies. She prepared 50 packs of seeds of milkweed and an additional 50 packets of Pacific Northwest pollinator wildflowers. The packets and the tree seedlings will be distributed during the Arbor Day event. Bags containing various an assortment of materials have been prepared for distribution during the event. Some materials include the old heritage tree map and last year's plant list replaced with this year's plant list. She also developed a postcard with a QR code to promote the new story map for heritage trees in the City. Additionally, a tree care pledge was developed to give to recipients of free trees. The pledge includes address information for possible follow-up later on the condition of the tree the person received.

Coordinator Jones Wood advised that staff drafted a property owner consent form for the heritage tree program. Staff also is reviewing ways the City can track heritage trees when the property changes ownership. One option would include a provision in TMC 16.08 by making it the responsibility of the property owner to share the information with the buyer about a heritage tree designation.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

DISCUSSION -

Coordinator Jones Wood indicated the Tree Board expressed an interest in

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STORMWATER- TREE BOARD SYMBIOSIS:

utilizing stormwater sites as potential planting areas. She introduced stormwater staff members to share information on opportunities and limitations for utilizing stormwater sites for tree plantings.

Dave Kangiser reported he serves as the Stormwater Program Lead and is responsible for coordinating the City's NPDES permit requirements and spill response, as well as working on habitat restoration projects with a nexus to stormwater.

Grant Gilmore, Water Resources Specialist, said he works with Coordinator Jones Wood and Program Lead Kangiser in the Water Resources and Sustainability Department focusing on conservation, habitat restoration, and education and outreach. He is one of the founding members of the Washington Stormwater Center. Trees were mentioned as a focus for many efforts associated with stormwater and restoration.

Program Lead Kangiser said many stormwater features in the City may appear to be good locations for planting trees; however, stormwater facilities are engineered for specific infiltration rates with specific soils. Any planting within a stormwater facility would alter the infiltration rate. Some limited opportunities exist for tree plantings at stormwater facilities. One example of a stormwater facility that could accommodate tree plantings is located west of I-5 off Israel Road. Two stormwater facilities include both wet and dry ponds. The slope of the facilities could provide an opportunity to plant some trees. Infiltration rates are also very site-specific. For example, a pond with plantings could slow infiltration because of plant roots. Sometimes the types of trees create root runners that can compromise pond liners. Engineered structures are maintained by staff. Trees planted in stormwater facilities can create leaf litter that can alter the water quality. Deciduous trees tend to drop more leaf litter. Evergreen trees can alter the pH of water by dropped needles.

Boardmember Sedore pointed out that an increase in the trees planted within a subdivision will reduce stormwater flow to retaining ponds. Program Lead Kangiser said the City's NPDES permit is issued by the Department of Ecology to regulate stormwater and surface waters. The permit has many rules governing how the City operates its stormwater facilities. A new permit is due for release in 2024. One of the proposed changes to the new permit is tree retention. The proposal speaks to a specific date the City is required to document existing landscape canopy cover and riparian tree canopy for the permit coverage area. That information is required to be documented over time. New requirements speak to no later than a specific date, permittees shall adopt and implement tree canopy retention and restoration objectives to support stormwater management and water quality improvements in receiving water. The work of the Board has enabled some progress by the City to meet the new requirements. Although, the language is a draft, once the new permit is

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issued, the requirements will be more specific. The updated tree inventory will be a major component.

Boardmember Sedore asked whether more trees planted near the perimeter of a stormwater facility could reduce the size of a retention pond. Chair Grantham replied that retention ponds are designed to handle water runoff from streets and other impervious surfaces.

Specialist Gilmore added that stormwater ponds are designed to retain a specific amount of impervious runoff from development. Stormwater ponds are designed and sized to receive a specific amount of water from all impervious surfaces. Not all stormwater ponds are equal as they are designed and engineered differently to accommodate the needs of the developer, the code, and water quality regulations, etc.

Boardmember Sedore spoke to a tour of the Kirsop Landing development last fall. Members noticed the hardscape roof downspouts fed into some type of stormwater system or stormwater was dissipated by the lawns. Program Lead Kangiser said the system is designed based on the soil type. Typically, a roof drain system does not require treatment prior to infiltration. Some sites include a collected system draining to a stormwater facility. Boardmember Sedore commented that in newer high-density development, it appears because of the number of roads and driveways development requires a stormwater pond. Program Lead Kangiser noted that Boardmember Sedore's subdivision, Foster Place, was constructed in 1975 when newer stormwater facilities were not in existence. Today, more stormwater treatment is required to accommodate increased density.

Boardmember Chapman expressed interest in learning more about best practices for vegetation surrounding stormwater ponds. For example, if trees were planted along the perimeter of a pond, his interest is in the type of species that would provide the greatest benefits.

Boardmember Sedore said he was approached by several residents last year questioning why the City was not planting more evergreen trees to reduce the impact of rainfall. He asked how deciduous trees versus evergreen trees handle stormwater runoff. Program Lead Kangiser said an approved planting list is included in the drainage manual outlining allowed species and planting locations. He offered to forward the information to the Board.

Boardmember Sedore commented that historically, he has witnessed the evolution of stormwater management in the City where today stormwater management is incorporated within the City's code and included in development plans. He questioned the use of incentives for developers and homeowners to manage stormwater versus the imposition of rules. With climate change, temperatures are increasing and it is important to motivate actions to promote an increase in canopy to help control temperatures rather

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than imposing rules. Program Lead Kangiser said language within the City's drainage manual is somewhat lax in terms of tree retention. Rather than requiring specific actions, the language speaks to "should," enabling more latitude to the property owner or the developer. Language within the stormwater permit does not speak to replacement of trees or a specific number of trees to retain. The Community Development Department imposes tree retention requirements. However, he agreed the language should be specific and definite.

Boardmember Jackson spoke to the importance of prompting actions early within the development process. He cited the retention of three large maple trees near a local retention pond. During the development process, the developer had intended to remove the trees because of the required size of the retention pond. Although the maple trees provide a good canopy, they also drop too many leaves into the pond. However, he is not aware of any issues with the effectiveness of the retention pond. The trees were retained because City staff worked with the property owner from the start of the process and throughout the project.

Discussion ensued on proper maintenance of retention ponds and the quality of water in a mixed native forest versus a stormwater pond. Specialist Gilmore added that retention ponds are not designed to receive precipitation from one area because they are designed to receive water from a larger area. Natural forests receive waters and distribute more evenly with trees absorbing the water. Ponds treat water that was never treated. Engineered ponds are designed to treat water to an acceptable degree. The City does not test all retention ponds as water is infiltrating and traveling through the system.

Program Lead Kangiser cited a pond near the church off Israel Road. Water from the parking area infiltrates in the small pond, which is designed to treat that specific area. The soil mix within the pond is designed to treat water and contaminants from the parking area.

Boardmember Sedore commented on the complexity of creating more retention ponds without the benefit of trees with canopies to accommodate the increase in density with yards too small to infiltrate water.

Boardmember Chapman noted that the City also practices zero impact development where hardscaping is much less. Staff advised of recent research on other bio-filtration methods providing ways to combine both density and adequate stormwater treatment.

Specialist Gilmore advised the Board of ways of addressing the challenges by considering all wetlands, critical areas, streams, and riparian areas and considering opportunities for inventorying areas to plant. All those areas need restoration. Following an assessment of opportunity sites it might be

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possible to work with private property owners to invite efforts to enhance sites that could result in creating wildlife corridors, enhancing trails, or improving conditions between systems. Staff is working to update ordinances to address development and how mature trees are considered on sites and potential opportunities retain those trees. He noted that each site is unique and has its own set of criteria. The goal is always to retain and plant Northwest native species. Planting opportunities should be considered as phase 1 of the process by planting trees of a specific size with an understanding of its rate of growth and water needs within the first several years and following up later by planting the understory. There are many opportunities around the City to increase tree canopy. Water Resources and Sustainability Department staff have expanded substantially in the last year and efforts by the team have been focused on the environment and increasing trees and tree canopy in the City. He urged the Board to identify any locations that could benefit from additional trees.

Boardmember Chapman questioned whether staffing resources would be available to map opportunity sites across the City. Planting all opportunity sites across the City could increase the tree canopy. Tree canopy is one of the major metrics for habitat, stormwater treatment, and ecosystem services.

Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the GIS position could provide some support after quantifying the volume of information.

Boardmember Chapman noted that most of the roundabouts along Littlerock Road do not contain any trees. Most of the roundabouts in the cities of Olympia and Lacey contain trees. Not all trees need to be Douglas firs or big leaf maples.

Coordinator Jones Wood shared an aerial photograph of an area of top priority by the City. The area is located at the golf course along a fence line of 700 feet and eight feet wide. The area is top priority. Stormwater crews recently removed willow plants.

Program Lead Kangiser reported the site is a stormwater facility that was not functioning because of the amount of willow plants. The facility treats water before discharging to the Deschutes River. Stormwater entering the facility is from Cleveland Avenue. The facility was hydroseeded with proper grass. However, an opportunity exists between the fence and swale to plant trees.

Specialist Gilmore added that he is working on developing a plan to identify the number and type of trees for the site. The multi-phased approach is preferred because of the availability of trees. Staff is considering several hundred trees of different species. The site will likely be overplanted to account for any loss of trees. The site will be planted with understory plants later in the process. The site could serve as a model for implementing a

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project. His focus is working with the Parks and Recreation Department and the golf course to widen the buffer along the golf course of at least 10 to 20 feet to convert the perimeter to a riparian buffer with various plantings. Because of his representation on the Stream Team he has the capacity to increase volunteer events in partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department. Stream Team is cooperatively sponsored and funded by the storm and surface water utilities of the cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater and Thurston County. Stream Team fills a niche in the South Sound providing free quality environmental education programs and activities and hands-on action projects. Following the lessening of the pandemic, volunteer efforts are ramping upwards as well as education outreach, hands-on science experiences, and tree planting activities.

Program Lead Kangiser queried the Board on any interest in replanting other sites similar to recent plantings at the Palermo Wellfield site. There are many opportunities to replant developed sites around the City.

DISCUSSION – TUMWATER SCHOOL DISTRICT SUMMER PROGRAM:

Specialist Gilmore reported Tumwater School District has been a priority to build connections and relationships. A joint effort is underway to create a summer program with the Pacific Education Institute (PEI), Tumwater School District, and the City with possible engagement by South Sound Green. The program is a forestry and stream management program offered during the first week in August for five weeks of instruction and hands-on science activities totaling 180 hours. The program is open to grades 9 through 12 for 16 students. The subject matter includes forest practice law with a focus on wetland delineation, watershed management from the headwaters to the Sound, a mapping component, and opportunities to plant trees and implement an independent restoration project at Sapp Road Park. The program is under development and sponsors are seeking individuals who would like to offer their expertise in forest management and other related fields that would benefit the students. He invited the Board to consider contributing their time to educate students. The program will likely be competitive because many students have expressed interest in the program. If the program is successful, the program will be expanded regionally as there is an existing deficit in workforce development in forestry and environmental fields.

Boardmember Coval expressed interest in participating as his profession has a strong nexus with the program. PEI also works closely with South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group. Additionally, the Department of Natural Resources created a new position of an Outdoor Education and Training Program Manager. The manager would likely be interested in the program. She is working on the agency's youth education and outreach program strategy and is collaborating with other programs across the state.

Boardmember Chapman asked whether participating students would receive environmental science credits. Specialist Gilmore said he believes credits

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would be provided, as the course will be advanced. The school district will determine the credits. The group is developing and piloting the program. Information has been shared with school districts in Olympia and Thurston County. All Water Resources and Sustainability staff will be engaging with the students. Many science teachers are focused on forests, tree canopy, and how plants process water and chemicals.

Boardmember Jackson asked whether any fieldwork is anticipated. Specialist Gilmore said the curriculum includes a mix of classroom and fieldwork. Facilitating the program is the easy part as the school district has the available equipment and facilities; however, organizing and seeking volunteers to mentor and teach the students is much more difficult.

Boardmember Jackson said his company manages a tree farm near Millersylvania Park of approximately 1,000 acres with 364 acres of wetlands that abut Beaver Creek. The Board should continue to receive updates on the status of the program because it presents a good opportunity to become involved in forestry as the field lacks young people who are interested in forestry jobs. Specialist Gilmore suggested the company consider hosting a day of learning for the students in how the property is managed. He offered to follow up to coordinate efforts.

DISCUSSION – HERITAGE TREE NOMINATION AT 5800 LITTLEROCK ROAD:

Boardmember Sedore reported on a Garry oak tree located along the edge of the Walmart parking lot. Mary McQueen was the previous owner of the property. For years, roads and parking lots have been constructed around the tree. He understands the tree is located on City right-of-way. Tree experts examined the tree and recommended removing soil from the roots and the trunk of the tree added during the development of the Walmart parking lot. He has nominated the tree as a Heritage Tree to protect and retain the tree.

MOTION:

Boardmember Sedore moved, seconded by Boardmember Chapman, to recommend the City Council approve designating the Garry Oak at 5800 Littlerock Road as a Heritage Tree in the City of Tumwater. Motion carried unanimously.

Boardmember Chapman asked about the remediation work suggested by the consulting arborist. Coordinator Jones Wood reported she has discussed the issue with the Transportation and Engineering Department responsible for street trees. The department plans to hire a contractor to trim the tree and remove the material as recommended. Boardmember Chapman recommended the consulting arborist should be at the site during the pruning and material removal process to ensure the safety of the tree. Coordinator Jones Wood said she was unsure as to the status of the work but would coordinate the request with staff.

Boardmember Chapman inquired about the potential nomination of another

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Garry oak north of the site. Boardmember Sedore said he is aware of three more Garry oak trees in the City.

Coordinator Jones Wood addressed questions concerning the heritage tree nomination process. Trees can be nominated by Tumwater residents, City staff, or the Tree Board. Two other trees have been nominated by residents but action was tabled until more information is available about the trees. Several trees were designated as heritage tree prior to creation of the program in the City's code.

Boardmember Sedore asked about the status of several Sycamore trees on the Department of Transportation property located off Capitol Boulevard. Chair Grantham replied that the City plans to widen the road and the trees would likely be removed. Boardmember Sedore expressed interest in learning how the designation of a heritage tree affects the construction project. Coordinator Jones Wood shared that recently, the City approved the method the Community Development Department receives data on heritage trees. A process was subsequently created to develop a point of interest map, which did not include current data on the new heritage tree program. Better data have been provided to cross-reference when the department reviews development plans.

OTHER BUSINESS: Boardmembers introduced themselves and shared information about their profession, length of service on the Board, and their respective interest in forestry.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is a joint meeting with the Planning Commission on May 9, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Chair Grantham adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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