

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

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

Staff: Sustainability Manager Alyssa Jones Wood.

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

TREE BOARD MEMBER REPORTS: Boardmember Sedore referred members to the *Smithsonian Trees of North America*, a book on North American trees published by the Smithsonian detailing more than 300 North American tree species in words with maps and photographs for each species. The book is available within the Timberland Regional Library system.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Jones Wood reported on the posting of the Urban Forester position. The City has received one application. An initial review of applications is scheduled in February with the goal to fill the position by the end of the first quarter in alignment with the grant timeline. In response to the position's compensation level, Manager Jones Wood offered to share a link on the position's job posting.

Manager Jones Wood advised of the release of the draft Climate Element of the Comprehensive Plan for public review. Other opportunities outside of the 30-day comment period will be available to engage and provide feedback. The Planning Commission is scheduled to receive a briefing on the greenhouse gas emissions sub element. The goals and actions within the draft plan comprise 60 pages of the element. She encouraged the Board to share information about the element with friends, family, and neighbors. An open house was held in August 2024 at the ASHHO Cultural Community Center on the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The City Council and the Planning Commission is scheduled to participate in a field trip for the Transportation Element. The update of the Comprehensive Plan continues to move forward. She encouraged the Board and the community to become engaged in the update.

Manager Jones Wood shared information on the sections within the Climate Element that are related to mitigation aspects of trees and vegetation of interest to the Board. She advised members to avoid communicating with one another to avoid any potential conflicts with the Open Public Meetings Act. If more than two Boardmembers discuss any matters pertaining to the Board, it is considered a quorum and in violation of the Open Public Meetings Act. The Climate Element overlaps with many other elements in the Comprehensive Plan as well as with other boards and commissions in the City.

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Manager Jones Wood reported the Tree and Vegetation Protection Ordinance has been included on the 2025 Long Range Work Plan. Associate Planner Dana Bowers with the Community Development Department is serving as the primary lead with efforts anticipated to begin in July or later.

Boardmember Sedore asked about the possibility of receiving an update on topics of interest to the Board each month, such as the status of the Davis Meeker oak tree, amendments to the Tree and Vegetation Protection Ordinance, and Urban Forestry Management Plan actions. Manager Jones Wood advised that an update could be a standing item on the meeting agenda each month. She noted that the 2025 Work Plan does not include a review of the landscaping ordinance. However, the Board can provide guidance on the street tree list, which could entail an administrative review and update.

Manager Jones Wood reported that the arborist for the second assessment on the Davis Meeker oak tree completed fieldwork and analysis with the report anticipated to be received by the end of January. She participated in a zoom meeting with the consultant who provided an overview and general findings of the analysis. The consultant is pursuing a peer review of the findings with other arborists to ensure all techniques and methods used in the analyses were appropriate.

Boardmember Chacon asked whether the results of the tree analysis would be shared with the public. Manager Jones Wood responded that following receipt of the arborist's report, the next step would likely include a review of the report by the City Council during a worksession. The report will be shared with the public.

Boardmember Sedore noted that since the City Council has not involved the Tree Board, he assumes the Board has no role with respect to the review of the oak tree. Manager Jones Wood advised that the Board would receive a copy of the report. She referred members to the ordinance that established the Tree Board outlining roles and responsibilities. Powers and duties of the Board include:

- A. The tree board shall advise the city council regarding the development, updating, and facilitation of a plan and implementation strategy for the advancement, conservation, and care of the urban forest in the city.
- B. The tree board will apply its resources to various other related projects and tasks that the city council may identify and request assistance.
- C. The tree board will provide a vigorous program to educate and outreach property owners and assist them in urban forestry matters.

**PUBLIC
COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

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**BRAINSTORM
TREE BOARD 2025
WORKPLAN:**

Manager Jones Wood referred to the Board's powers and duties as a guide for development of the Board's 2025 workplan. She spoke with Councilmember Swarthout advising her of the Board's ability to address trees if directed by the Council. She is working on potentially scheduling a joint meeting with the City Council sometime during the year to review the Board's workplan and other issues of interest.

Manager Jones Wood reviewed the project narrative of a scope of work with River Network, the pass-through agency for the City's U.S. Forest Service grant funding the Urban Forester position and other activities. Two programs scheduled for launching in mid-2026 include planning and launching the Canopy Equity Program, an improved Arbor Day Tree Giveaway to areas that are deemed disadvantaged. The giveaway includes not only trees, but also compost, watering bags, and other materials to assist in the tree's survival. The goal is to distribute 250 trees. The Tree Board could assist in specifying the types of trees based on growing conditions. The work may entail utilization of the Arbor Day Foundation tool enabling the input of specific addresses and the species of trees for those locations.

The second activity is to plan and launch Tree Assessment Assistance. The Board could consider ways to promote the opportunity in 2026. The Urban Forester would provide free health tree assessments to approximately 50 individuals living within disadvantaged areas to assist in maintaining and retaining trees.

Boardmember Chacon asked whether the Urban Forester would also address tree risks. Manager Jones Wood said the position description includes risk assessments as a preferred qualification but it is not included within the minimum qualifications. Any assessments may be limited by the applicant's accreditation. Boardmember Chacon asked about the possibility of tracking risk assessments for individual trees if the applicant selected for the position is accredited. Manager Jones Wood welcomed additional feedback on issue.

Chair Grantham asked about the availability of a parcel map of disadvantaged areas within the City. Manager Jones Wood advised that the program specifics would need to be defined, such as first come, first serve, and other guidelines. Additionally, the grant limits the position's ability to pursue other tasks. It will be dependent upon available time. The assessments are not intended to be part of any development project but for existing homeowners, housing land trust properties, and others. The process would identify whether the property qualifies for assistance as a disadvantaged property.

Manager Jones Wood affirmed the Board's interest to provide suggestions on the program related to Milestone 4. No work has been completed to date on the milestone other than securing grant funding.

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Boardmember Sedore said there likely would be interest in using the existing recommended tree list. Manager Jones Wood advised that the City has an approved tree list and a prohibited tree list posted on the City's website. Updating the approved street tree list could be added to the workplan.

Boardmember Sedore advised of his difficulty to locate the information on the City's website despite using the search feature numerous times. He suggested including the item on the workplan as an earlier project, as the list is a work in progress and continually updated.

Boardmember Chacon questioned the difference between the approved tree list and the recommended tree list. Manager Jones Wood advised that the approved list serves as Tumwater's Street Tree List for plantings in City rights-of-way. Manager Jones Wood clarified that there is currently no recommended tree list. Boardmember Chacon expressed concerns as the recommended tree list speaks to right tree in the right place but does not specifically identify a recommended species for different circumstances.

Boardmember Sedore commented on the confusing terminology and titles and recommended field testing different terminologies.

Discussion ensued on the limitation of time by the Urban Forester with 50% of the position's time allocated to the requirements of the grant. The employee will track hours by logging time on different activities. Funding of the position is for a three-year period.

Boardmember Chacon reported that his role in the Conservation District is to assist rural forest landowners. He asked how Milestone 4 would align with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) technical assistance for urban forestry as the department's urban forester provides similar assistance to landowners. Manager Jones Wood invited Boardmember Chacon to discuss the issue with her in more detail in the near future.

Boardmember Sedore commented that there could be other resources in county, state, and city governments that have similar responsibilities and it could be important to learn about ways to optimize those different resources to complement mutual efforts. Manager Jones Wood suggested consideration of a map tool to help community members identify resources dependent upon where they live.

Boardmember Sedore suggested adding a "private consultant" to the list to avoid exclusion of that particular resource.

Boardmember Chacon commented that DNR's urban forester might be able to poll residents and engage community interests to solicit grant applications for DNR's grant programs. Manager Jones Wood said she monitors the

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DNR's grant program and could be included as a funding source.

Boardmember Chacon asked about any other assistance that could be provided to landowners other than for hazardous trees. Manager Jones Wood advised that Milestone 5 is specific to street trees and is not scheduled until 2027. The small grant program is for low and moderate-income households living in disadvantaged communities to receive free street tree trimming.

The Board discussed timing of specific topics on the workplan. Chair Grantham recommended including a review of the tree list beginning in February. Several Boardmembers questioned the possibility of the City tracking the number of visitors to the City's online tree list. Boardmember Sedore asked about the possibility of including hyperlinks or references associated with the tree list for residents seeking information about trees on their property, the neighborhood, or on the streets rather than only featuring information about the species of trees to plant. Manager Jones Wood advised of the City's web policies limiting links on the website. She added that contacting the City is another avenue for seeking different information related to trees because different departments are responsible for different trees dependent upon the location of the tree and any specific conditions, such as trees falling or hazardous trees.

Discussion ensued on the date of the City's celebration of Arbor Day. She will confirm the date with the Parks and Recreation Department. She reviewed the Board's planning dates to prepare for the event.

The Board recommended adding a review of the Urban Forester's outline of Milestone 4 to the workplan in October 2025 and a review of Board position terms expiring in 2026 as an update within the Manager's report with elections scheduled in March 2025. Discussion ensued on whether to schedule a field trip later in the year. Some suggestions included touring the areas designated by the EPA as disadvantaged in the City Manager Jones Wood responded to questions on how disadvantaged communities were identified by the City for the Urban Forester's time. The City utilized a federal tool that considers areas from a big picture perspective. It is based on an index and weighted equally across the country. The incentives funded by the grant are not intended for large commercial developments but for people who are experiencing difficulties. When the position is filled, she anticipates staff will work through how the position charges time and how much time will be devoted to grant requirements. The Tree Board can assist in publicizing information for Milestone 4 and help design suggestions for Milestone 3 as to the appropriate trees. The Board is asked to provide expertise based on knowledge of the community and the unique trees issues existing in the City to ensure a rollout of better programs. The programs are intended to benefit people who need it the most geographically and properties designated within the "orange" areas on the map.

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Boardmember Sedore recommended adding presentations by different departments to the meeting calendar. Manager Jones Wood recommended scheduling Eldon Newell with the street crew, who is well versed on street trees and sidewalks. He works in the Transportation and Engineering Department.

Boardmember Sedore asked how the City's tree inventory is maintained, as he perceives problems. Manager Jones Wood responded that the street tree inventory was initially updated based on data collected by volunteers. The inventory has not been integrated into the City's system at this time due to difficult software conversion timelines.

Boardmember Sedore questioned actions the Board could pursue to encourage the City and the community to increase the diversity of trees in the City. Discussions have recognized the impacts of climate change and the impact on trees. It is important to review and continue discussions at least annually to ascertain any needs or changes to current actions. He would like those discussions included on the meeting calendar as a reminder of the importance of the inventory and ongoing changes.

Chair Grantham reported that inventorying was a component in the development of the Urban Forestry Management Plan, which is scheduled for an update on a specified timeline. Manager Jones Wood advised of a five-year schedule for the canopy assessment due in 2026. The budget includes funding for the canopy assessment. The Board's meeting calendar could include an update in September. A 90-day work plan has been developed for the Urban Forester to assist the individual to become acclimated with the City as well as creating a work plan based on the status of the Urban Forestry Management Plan. If the Urban Forester is hired at the end of the first quarter, a September timeline could include a review of the workplan by the Board.

Boardmember Nozawa recommended adding a joint meeting with the City Council to the calendar. Manager Jones Wood recommended revising the field trip in May to July and coordinating a joint meeting in May, if possible.

Other recommendations to both the meeting calendar and workplan included planting a tree during the Arbor Day celebration on City property. Manager Jones Wood noted that the Tree and Vegetation Protection Ordinance includes provisions on authorized funding from the Tree Fund. Although the Board has sufficient funding for the tree planting, funds are lacking for irrigation and other site preparation requirements. Chair Grantham suggested the option of planting a tree in the location of trees that were removed 20 years ago near Michael T. Simmons Elementary School. The fire station at one time was interested in planting a large tree to screen the facility's patio. Manager Jones Wood requested the Board forward

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additional information on the area for planting the tree.

Boardmember Nozawa asked about the status of planting the garry oak tree seedlings. Manager Jones Wood replied that she would follow up as the seedlings are with the Parks and Recreation Department.

Manager Jones Wood reviewed the proposed 2025 calendar/workplan:

February:

- Arbor Day Plant Selection
- Review Draft Street Tree List
- Update on Board Position Expiration Dates

March:

- Review Arbor Day Handouts
- Annual Elections
- Street Tree Review (tentative)

April:

- Arbor Day
- Urban Forester Hiring Update

May:

- Tentative Joint Meeting with City Council or
- Field trip focused on disadvantaged communities

June:

- Introduce Urban Forester

July:

- Tentative Joint Meeting with City Council (if not held in May)
- Field Trip (disadvantaged communities, if not conducted in May)

August:

- Summer Field Trip (location to be determined)

September:

- Urban Forester Workplan Review
- Tree Canopy Assessment Update

October:

- Discuss Milestone 4 with Urban Forester on Goal, Outcomes, and an Outline for Implementation

November:

- Urban Forestry Management Plan Implementation Update

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- Tree Fund Discussion

December:

- 2026 Calendar/Workplan

Boardmember Sedore shared that as he learned more about the issues surrounding the Davis Meeker Garry Oak Tree, he is curious about the tribal perspective on trees, management of trees on tribal properties, tribal processes for valuing trees, and tribal perceptions of heritage trees. Tribes have a history surrounding trees and it would be helpful to learn how that might impact trees in Tumwater and information the City should be aware of to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings. He asked for feedback from Boardmembers.

Boardmember Chacon advised that the Chehalis Tribe recently hired a forester. The Chehalis Tribe manages forestland in south Thurston County and could offer some perspectives.

Chair Grantham said he recently attended the Thurston Economic Development Council meeting. The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation attend the meetings and have vocalized their intent as to the type of development of their lands that were previously stolen.

Boardmember Nozawa pointed out that during a City Council meeting in June, several members of different tribes testified about how upsetting it was to learn about the pending removal of the garry oak tree as the tree is important to the tribes. Several tribal members walked the Cowlitz Trail and testified to the importance of the tree.

Boardmember Sedore said his interest is whether local tribes have any type of plan for addressing hazard trees in the public right-of-way through tribal land. Chair Grantham offered that the tribes likely work with the Washington Department of Transportation on those types of issues.

Boardmember Chapman questioned whether tribes are exempt from following the requirements of the City's tree regulations. Manager Jones Wood advised that tribes are sovereign entities and are not required to follow municipal requirements. The proper protocol for communication with tribes is through the Mayor contacting the tribal chair to ascertain any interest in pursuing any conversations. The three identified tribes with traditional relationships with the City include the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, Squaxin Island Tribe, and the Nisqually Indian Tribe, which could be expanded to include the Cowlitz Tribe based on interest in the garry oak tree. The structure of the discussions could focus on the impact of colonization on forestry and forest relationships, forest issues, and interaction between tribes and cities when tribal lands are located in the City boundaries. Any future discussion would need to be initiated by Mayor

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Sullivan contacting the chair of the tribe.

Discussion followed on the importance of tribal communication protocols and narrowing the focus of any discussion. A suggestion was offered to defer any action as the Board's workplan is at capacity.

Boardmember Chacon communicated some discomfort of phrasing the field trip as a tour of "disadvantaged communities." He suggested phrasing the tour more respectfully, such as any particular community that might welcome a tour. Boardmember Jackson added that the tour could also include the Habitat for Humanity project in an area that contained many large trees, which have been removed. Manager Jones Wood offered that the Board could also visit and door knock to obtain feedback and share information.

Chair Grantham asked about any park or open space in those areas that could be toured instead of specific properties to ascertain any issues within City properties. Manager Jones Wood said the grant is intended to benefit communities. Trees could be easily added to park property; however, the goal is to improve the quality of life for those communities. She cited an example of a community in Florida that experienced a tree planting campaign of street trees in a large low-income neighborhood. The trees eliminated parking for residents. Because of the lack of communication with the community, the city had to remove the trees because they installed the tree without the benefit of input from residents. She suggested door knocking as an option to initiate conversations with residents to ensure any type of assistance would be successful.

Boardmember Coval cited his experience with underprivileged communities and indicated the preferable method of outreach is meeting with residents where they live. He asked about the possibility of exploring existing community meetings that might be scheduled in affected neighborhoods that could include attendance by the Board to share information.

Boardmember Chacon asked about the existence of any homeowner associations within the designated communities to contact for a potential briefing during an association meeting.

Boardmember Sedore questioned the reasoning for selection of some areas versus other areas. Manager Jones Wood offered to contact the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff responsible for creating the map to obtain more information. Boardmember Chacon said he supports contacting the agency because the City is a grantee that deserves an explanation as to the selection of the disadvantaged communities in the City. EPA staff could share information on the methodologies. It is likely the information exists online, but is often incomprehensible. Manager Jones Wood responded that the assumption is that the Urban Forester would pursue

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contacts with the communities.

Following further discussion, Manager Jones Wood said it is likely contact with the technical advisor through River Network could provide information on the model.

Boardmember Sedore questioned how the project affects or involves the Tree Board. Chair Grantham advised that the goal of the grant is to benefit poor and disadvantaged communities that have a tendency of having fewer trees through the legacy of redlining and other institutional and systemic racism. Manager Jones Wood added that it also important to acknowledge that the disadvantaged area maps from the program are areas identified using a federal level tool. There could be some other disadvantaged areas in the City that were not designated on the map. She reminded the Board of its responsibility to provide a vigorous program to educate and outreach property owners and assist them in urban forestry matters.

Boardmember Sedore asked about any efforts to change the name of the Tree Board to Urban Forestry Advisory Board, which would require some efforts. He questioned whether action to rename the Board could be initiated during the year. Manager Jones Wood advised that the process would involve her and City Attorney Kirkpatrick. A name change requires an amendment to the ordinance establishing the Tree Board, which normally requires public engagement that could unexpectedly expand the focus of the request. Next steps, if the Board desires, is to draft a request to the City Attorney for approval to move forward through the process.

MOTION: **Chair Grantham moved, seconded by Boardmember Chapman, to pursue a name change of the Tree Board to Urban Forestry Advisory Board. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is scheduled on March 10, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Chair Grantham adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
Puget Sound Meeting Services, psmsoly@earthlink.net