

**TUMWATER TREE BOARD
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
APRIL 14, 2025 PAGE 1**

CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

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

Absent: Brodrick Coval.

Staff: Sustainability Manager Alyssa Jones Wood.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
JANUARY 14, 2025:**

MOTION: **Boardmember Sedore moved, seconded by Chair Grantham, to approve the minutes of January 14, 2025 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

TREE BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:

Boardmember Sedore reported on a book recommended through the American Gardener magazine containing an article about urban landscaping, residential landscaping, the use of native plants, and the value environmentally and different perspectives justifying forms of any landscaping. To combat climate change, humans need to develop mechanisms and techniques to solve problems caused by humans. Some options include reducing the population or setting aside larger green spaces and wilderness areas. He cited the level of expertise existing in staff and his intent to become more aware of current issues related to urban planning and urban forest management. He recommended that Manager Jones Wood and Chair Grantham should consider some training sessions during bi-monthly meetings from Manager Jones Wood and other boards, committees, and the tribes as a way to increase the Board's knowledge and understanding of the issues of urban forestry. He encouraged feedback from Boardmembers on the proposal and whether training could be included on the meeting calendar.

Chair Grantham supported any new educational opportunities; however, there are likely many continuing education credits for a variety of topics offered during a training session.

Boardmember Nazawa shared that she participated in a recent class at the new Watson's Bark and Garden business on Native Plants for Bees and Butterflies. The one-hour class could be offered during a Board meeting. She supports the suggestion to receive more training.

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Boardmember Sedore commented that in the interest of not utilizing meeting time, members could receive expert information by listening to podcasts on urban forestry.

Manager Jones Wood offered to develop a foundational list of suggested reading materials, podcasts, and training opportunities.

Chair Grantham inquired about any opportunities to attend an association conference related to urban forestry. Manager Jones Wood advised of a May conference of the South Sound Climate Convention sponsored by the Thurston Climate Action Team. The conference is at The Evergreen State College on Saturday, May 17, 2025. Invitations have been sent to a mailing list as space is limited. She offered to work with the Board to seek other attendance opportunities.

Boardmember Chapman added that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Urban Communities Forestry Program has access to information that would be relevant to the Board. He offered to follow-up with information. The programs include in-person workshops, seminars, and online options, as well as reading materials. DNR also has urban forestry technicians for western Washington who provide assistance to municipalities.

Boardmember Sedore noted the Arbor Day Foundation also offers an online orientation class for boards.

Manager Jones Wood said the National Wildlife Federation offers training on habitat steward training. She participated in the training in Florida and in Washington. The training is at no charge and is open to the public.

**MANAGER'S
REPORT:**

Manager Jones Wood reported on the selection of the City's Urban Forester, Brian Caughlan. He is scheduled to begin working on May 1, 2025. Mr. Caughlan previously worked for the City of Lacey as the Source Control Inspector for stormwater and previously worked as the City arborist working in parks as well as a journey-level maintenance technician working in parks and landscaping for Thurston County. He has a degree in English and provided useful information during his interview about cabling prices for the Meeker Davis oak tree.

Manager Jones Wood shared information about the status of funding from the federal government, which funds a portion of the Urban Forester's position. If grant funding is no longer available, it is likely the City would be unable to proceed with some designated programs while still maintaining the position to implement the Urban Forestry Management Plan with action items that do not require funding.

The City Council is scheduled to consider a resolution at its meeting on April 15, 2025 establishing the Council's intent to allocate funding to enable the

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Mayor to perform necessary and appropriate measures to reduce public safety risks and retain the Davis Meeker Garry oak tree in a safe condition. The first step is authorizing the spending of resources to move forward with detailed work planning for implementation of the consultant's recommendations (second consultant review of the tree) and additional administrative steps prior to any specific work proceeding on the tree. The consultant recommended pruning the tree.

Boardmember Sedore mentioned that he read information suggesting that the Tree Board should identify a source of funding for maintenance of the tree. Manager Jones Wood said the action would require a direct request from the City Council.

Boardmember Nozawa commented on citizen efforts to raise funds to preserve and protect the tree. She asked about the timeframe for the maintenance work to begin. Manager Jones Wood advised that the timing at this point is uncertain as the funding source requires approval and the City would likely need to release a competitive bidding process for an arborist to perform the work. The work requires a licensed, reputable, and bonded and insured arborist who has the training and availability to prune and cable the tree.

Boardmember Chapman recommended the consultant completing the recommendations should be present on site when work is initiated on the tree. Manager Jones Wood advised that the contract with the consultant includes their presence during the work.

Manager Jones Wood advised of no update on the status of tree ordinance amendments with work scheduled to begin in late summer.

The Climate Element second draft is undergoing legal and department director review and is scheduled for presentation to the City Council in July. The Conservation Element draft is scheduled for a presentation to the Board in June to receive feedback.

Manager Jones Wood reported on a meeting with Parks and Recreation Director Denney to discuss the distribution and planting of approximately 50 Davis Meeker Garry oak seedlings. The intent is for the Parks and Recreation Department and the Tree Board to evenly share the seedlings. Recipients of a seedling are required to ensure protection and provide adequate care. The Parks and Recreation Department plans to retain four of the 25 saplings for future plantings at the golf course and Trails End Park. The remaining trees will be donated to Wolf Haven International for a restoration project of open prairie habitat in Tenino. Staff prepared a recommendation for the Board's seedlings based on previous suggestions from the Board. One seedling will be donated to Capitol Campus, approximately 10 seedlings will be donated to Olympia Ecosystems, and some seedlings will be available to members of the community willing to commit to the care of the trees, with any remaining trees

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to be distributed to interested parties within the Cascadia Prairie Oak Partnership.

Boardmember Chapman suggested exploring the appropriateness of offering some oak seedlings to the tribes and the school district.

Discussion ensued on potential areas in the City to plant oak seedlings, which requires specific habitat. Kevin McFarland and the Parks and Recreation Department collected many of the acorns with the Parks and Recreation Department growing the seedlings. Boardmember Sedore commented that Cascadia Prairie Oak Partnership has a map of Garry oak tree habitat in the Puget Sound area.

Manager Jones Wood requested several volunteers to draft planting and care instructions for distribution with the tree seedlings.

Boardmember Jackson noted a number of existing mature Garry oaks located off Capitol Boulevard. Several large Garry oak seedlings were also planted in the Pioneer Cemetery.

It was noted that Oak Harbor Garry Oak Society has developed a planting guide.

Manager Jones Wood reported on the resignation of Alex Chacon because of his recent relocation to Olympia.

Manager Jones Wood presented the approved street tree and right-of-way tree list that was converted to enable filter and search options. She identified some of the query options for selecting a tree for the right place. The list as recommended by the Board is comprehensive and some trees may be difficult to locate in local nurseries. Boardmember Sedore advised of three nurseries that would like to receive a copy of the list as well as the prohibited plant list. Manager Jones Wood noted that staff removed Oregon White Oak (Garry oak) from the list of approved street trees. The tree is a protected species and likely would not be a good choice as a street tree considering the limitations and protections associated with the species.

Boardmember Sedore encouraged consideration of more plantings of Garry oak trees and other native species, such as in open spaces and parks rather than as a street tree.

Chair Grantham advised that he would attend the Council meeting to accept the Arbor Day proclamation on behalf of the Board.

**PUBLIC
COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

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**ARBOR DAY
EVENT:**

Manager Jones Wood briefed members on the status of preparations for the Arbor Day event and tree giveaway. Setup is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. The event starts at 10 a.m. in conjunction with Earth Day activities. City advertising was combined for both the Arbor Day event and Earth Day as both events will be held at Historical Park. Several Boardmembers advised that they plan to attend and participate in the set-up. A limited number of posters will be available; however, securing more posters was too expensive at \$20 per poster. One hundred trees of different species were ordered for the plant giveaway. Manager Jones Wood reviewed other materials available for giveaways and plant/tree information. She also plans to promote information on the Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative's Energize Thurston Program and a WA DOT electric bike rebate on a lottery basis until April 22, 2025.

Manager Jones Wood shared information on several species of plants donated to the City. The Parks and Recreation Department is planting many of the plants. The City was able to purchase a water trailer for restoration plantings.

The Board discussed the possibility of creating an online database with tree and plant information. Manager Jones Wood advised that the Urban Forester would be working on a tree canopy assessment with a briefing to the Tree Board scheduled in September.

Boardmember Sedore commented on a candidate running for Tumwater Mayor with a platform promoting the planting of more trees in Tumwater. Boardmember Nozawa reported she met with the candidate as part of the save the Garry oak tree movement. One of the first things he wants to achieve in office is to require developers to retain 20% to 25% of existing trees as well as saving and protecting the Garry oak tree.

Boardmember Sedore inquired about City prohibitions for members to speak individually with political candidates running for Tumwater positions. Manager Jones Wood advised that since members were appointed by the Mayor, the Tree Board cannot endorse any candidate; however, as a community member, members are able to meet with candidates as long as the member is not acting on the behalf of the Tree Board. She offered to follow-up with legal staff on the proper protocol and follow-up with information to the Board.

Boardmember Jackson inquired about the status of the planned removal of trees along Linderson Avenue near the high school. The trees are encased in grates. Manager Jones Wood said she spoke to staff recently and learned that the City plans to remove all existing street grates in the City. Boardmember Jackson noted the efforts for removing the trees will be expensive and when the grates are removed it will likely impact existing sidewalks.

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NEXT MEETING: The Board agreed with the recommendation to cancel the May 12, 2025 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Boardmember Sedore moved, seconded by Chair Grantham, to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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