

TUMWATER TREE BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

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CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Trent Grantham and Commissioners Brent Chapman, Joel Hecker, Michael Jackson, Tanya Nozawa, Jim Sedore, and Dennis Olson.

Staff: Planning Manager Brad Medrud.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: A discussion on increasing the City's tree canopy was incorporated within the existing agenda items.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - DECEMBER 13, 2021 AND JANUARY 10, 2022

MOTION: Chair Grantham moved, seconded by Commissioner Chapman, to approve the minutes of December 13, 2021 and January 10, 2022 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**TREE BOARD
MEMBER REPORTS:** There were no reports.

**MANAGER'S
REPORT:** Manager Medrud reported the interviews for the Sustainability Coordinator position were completed last week with the list of candidates narrowed to two individuals. Dan Smith, Water Resources and Sustainability Director, plans to interview both candidates with a decision on the selection following shortly by early March. The position will be responsible for leading the City's efforts on the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan implementation at the City level and regional coordination, working on the Urban Forestry Management Plan, and supporting the Tree Board. Manager Medrud said he plans to work closely with the Sustainability Coordinator because of the number of pending code changes.

Commissioner Chapman asked whether the candidates are from the local area. Manager Medrud advised that both candidates reside in other states and they both would bring a wealth of experience on all aspects of climate mitigation. The position is a regular position and not a project-specific position.

Commissioner Olson joined the meeting.

Manager Medrud reported staff met earlier in the day with other jurisdictional staff members from Olympia, Lacey, and Thurston County to discuss and review a number of climate mitigation actions and to identify a process to complete a regional tree canopy calculation. LIDAR

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versus aerial methods for capturing tree canopies was also discussed with a preference leaning to the aerial method because of access to materials and the cost. The selected method will be important because the outcome will be reflective of canopy changes throughout the county in comparison with finer detailed measurements included within the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Commissioner Jackson joined the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no public comments.

2022 ARBOR DAY DISCUSSION:

Manager Medrud reported on the status of actions for the 2022 Arbor Day celebration. The Arbor Day proclamation is scheduled as a special item during the City Council's April 5, 2022 meeting. He invited the Commission to review and offer any suggestions on the draft proclamation. The celebration will be joint event celebrating both Earth Day and Arbor Day at Tumwater Historical Park on Saturday, April 23, 2022 from 10 a.m. to noon. The event will be held at the same location as last year with setup scheduled at 9 a.m. The Earth Day event is scheduled from 9 a.m. to noon.

Commissioner Chapman recommended including language within the proclamation recognizing that this year is the 150th year anniversary of Arbor Day. Manager Medrud acknowledged the request.

Manager Medrud reviewed details of the Arbor Day event signage, drive through format, and giveaways of tree seedling/plants/goodie bags. Commissioner Chapman suggested hanging the Arbor Day street banner on Capitol Boulevard to promote the event. Manager Medrud noted that the City also has an assortment of Arbor Day banners that could be erected throughout the City and near City Hall. He plans to follow up with staff to determine appropriate locations for the banners. He is also working with communications staff to publicize the event as well as working with the school district to advertise the event. Because the City continues to operate under COVID-19 restrictions, Manager Medrud advised that he would confirm any necessary requirements for the event. He anticipates limiting occupancy at the picnic shelter to 50%, maintaining distancing requirements, and requiring masks.

Manager Medrud reported the Board's budget is \$2,000 for the biennium. The Board has approved the expenditure of \$360 with a remaining balance of \$1,600 available to spend.

Commissioner Chapman supported ordering either gallon or quart-sized trees/plants as the plant giveaway to increase survivability of the plant/tree.

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Discussion ensued on the purchasing source for plants and trees. Commissioner Sedore reported on his recent visit to the Department of Resources (DNR) Webster Nursery where he was advised to follow-up with DNR staff by April 15, 2022 to receive any unclaimed tree seedlings. The seedlings would be bare root or plug, similar to what was distributed last year during the Arbor Day event.

Commissioners recommended ordering 150 tree seedlings/shrubs. Commissioner Sedore offered to provide an informational sheet on the plants. Manager Medrud said dependent upon the direction by the Board, he plans to follow up with Communications Manager Cook about the possibility of taking photographs of community members receiving trees/shrubs. Commissioner Sedore recommended revising the proclamation to reflect 150 tree seedlings rather than 60 seedlings. Manager Medrud recommended revising the proclamation to reflect free plants without referring to a specific quantity. Commissioner Chapman recommended adding, “while supplies last” to avoid stating a specific number of plants.

Manager Medrud reviewed the existing inventory of giveaway bag items. Last year, approximately 58 bags were distributed with seedlings and other items. Manager Medrud reviewed a potential list of giveaway items contained either in a small giveaway container or in small paper bags. The items include an assortment of printed materials, crayons, coloring books, coloring sheets from Arbor Day Foundation, temporary tattoos, Arbor Day patches, wristbands (right tree, right place), animal stickers, plant tree pens and pencils, and three-gallon compostable bags for the seedlings. Chair Grantham recommended not purchasing the three-gallon bags until the Board determines the size of the plants. Manager Medrud confirmed staff would place the order for giveaway items.

Commissioner Sedore asked about the status of a map reflecting the location of heritage trees. Manager Medrud said he plans to coordinate with the GIS team on developing a map as a potential item to add to the Day giveaway packets.

The Board discussed advertising options for publicizing the Arbor Day event. Commissioner Sedore asked about the possibility of taking photographs of the Arbor Day giveaway to post on the City’s website. Commissioner Chapman asked about the possibility of the City featuring a live Facebook post during the event. Chair Grantham suggested posting a QR code for posting pictures or creating a hashtag. Commissioner Sedore added that the event might present an opportunity for a group photo of the Tree Board. Manager Medrud said he would follow up on the suggestions with Manager Cook.

Manager Medrud reviewed some other suggestions:

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- Include a tag for social media with information on uploading pictures of tree plantings
- Identify participants to interview and photograph them as they plant their trees
- The City could follow-up with the families a year or two later to observe the condition of the tree to create a storyline for the Arbor Day event
- City communications staff could conduct interviews and publish an article in the City's newsletter
- Establish a relationship with a local nursery to raise tree seedlings as a source of trees for the City's Arbor Day tree giveaway
- The survivability of the trees would be increased if the giveaway offered quart or gallon stock
- Provide a variety of plant species of compatibility with smaller lot sizes

Suggestions offered by the Board included:

- Provide QR codes on the tree seedling or giveaway bag to enable participants to scan via a smartphone to provide them with the ability to add pictures that could be emailed to the City.
- Ask for names of participants to receive reminders for the next Arbor Day event.
- Puget Sound Native Plant website advertises a variety of one-gallon shrubs.
- Obtain some tree plugs for participants with larger lots who want to plant a native conifer.
- Consider a parallel planting event of native conifers with the Parks and Recreation Department at a City park.

Manager Medrud suggested deferring the discussion on staffing by the Board during the event until the March meeting. He continues to work on scheduling a Tree Board sponsored tree planting by the Mayor and the City Council before Arbor Day on City property with the Parks and Recreation Department. Next steps include finalizing the proclamation by the Board's March meeting and details of the event. The Board will receive an update on the tree seedling/shrub order at its March meeting.

URBAN FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN – STREET TREE PLAN SCOPE OF WORK:

Manager Medrud shared a draft scope of work for inclusion in the application for the urban forestry grant through DNR due on March 4, 2022. He invited feedback and any comments on the scope of work outlined in the application by February 25, 2022. The grant application requires a description of the scope of work and the budget.

ORDINANCE NO. O2022-008 URBAN FORESTRY

Manager Medrud reported the next step in the implementation of the Urban Forestry Management Plan is preparation of an update to the City's landscaping and buffering regulations. The process includes contracting

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MANAGEMENT PLAN – TREE PRESERVATION REGULATION UPDATE, SCOPE OF WORK:

with a consultant to work with staff, stakeholders, Tree Board, Planning Commission, and the City Council to update the City's landscaping and buffering regulations and review and update other relevant regulations, plans, and handouts. Funding for the consultant was approved through the general fund. Implementation activities this year within the Urban Forestry Management Plan included three items:

- Complete the update of the Street Tree Plan
- Update the Tree Preservation Regulations (Tumwater Municipal Code 16.08)
- Update the Landscaping Regulations (Zoning Code, Title 18)

The consultant will have the technical expertise and the ability to assist staff in working with a variety of stakeholders to complete the update.

Manager Medrud reviewed the staff report, which includes background information, purpose of the regulations, scope of work, and identification of the stakeholders:

Draft Scope of Work

1. Define the stakeholders for the update process, different information needs, and their role in the update process:
 - a. Residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional developers
 - b. Property owners
 - c. Homeowner associations
 - d. Professional consultants, such as landscape architects, foresters, and arborists
 - e. Landscaping and irrigation installation and maintenance companies
 - f. City permit review staff, including planning, building and development engineering staff
 - g. City maintenance staff
 - h. City code enforcement staff
2. Prepare project schedule, including the following:
 - a. Staff stakeholder meeting schedule
 - b. Tree Board meeting schedule
 - c. Community and stakeholder meeting schedule
 - d. Draft work product delivery schedule for review by staff, stakeholders, and the Tree Board, Planning Commission, and City Council
 - e. Tree Board, Planning Commission, and City Council meeting schedule for review and approval of the ordinance
3. Prepare scope for work products needed
 - a. Determine type and content of work products
 - b. Stakeholder Outreach Plan and Schedule
 - 1) Supporting materials for stakeholder engagement

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- c. Staff Reports updated throughout the process as the discussion of the ordinance goes through the Tree Board, Planning Commission, and City Council – One document with the following:
 - 1) Introduction
 - 2) Stakeholder Outreach Process and Findings
 - 3) Required Changes to Regulations Explained
 - 4) Public Approval Process for the Ordinance
 - 5) Public Notification Process
 - 6) Applicable Urban Forestry Management Plan Goals and Actions
 - 7) Applicable Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies
 - 8) Conclusions
 - 9) Recommendations
 - 10) Effects of the Proposed Amendments
- d. Amendments to the following, as needed, in the final form of an ordinance:
 - 1) Municipal Code in Title 18 Zoning (TMC 18.47 Landscaping and Buffering)
 - 2) Other relevant sections of the Tumwater Municipal Code as identified during the process
 - 3) Tumwater Development Guide, text and details as needed
 - 4) Citywide Design Guidelines, text and details as needed
 - 5) Comprehensive Plan and Subarea Plans as needed
 - 6) The Capitol Boulevard Community Zone Design Guidelines as needed

Proposed Schedule:

- January 18, 2022 – City Council approved 2022 long range planning work program
- February 14, 2022 – Tree Board input on draft scope of work
- February – March 2022 – RFP process and consultant selection
- March 2022 – Consultant work starts
- June 2022 – Submit Notice of Intent to Commerce
- June 2022 – SEPA Review

Tree Board

- March 14, 2022 – Tree Board briefing
- June 13, 2022 – Tree Board worksession
- July 11, 2022 – Tree Board worksession

Manager Medrud asked the Board to provide any feedback or recommendations on the proposed outline by February 25, 2022.

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Commissioner Sedore referred to the chapter on *Protection of Trees and Vegetation* and noted that the proposed scope of work does not refer to vegetation and only focuses on trees. He asked about the vegetation component of the update. Manager Medrud explained that based on previous discussions by the Board, the urban forest includes trees, undergrowth, and other vegetation that support the entire urban forest system.

ORDINANCE NO. O2022-007 URBAN FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN – LANDSCAPING AND BUFFERING REGULATION UPDATE, SCOPE OF WORK

Manager Medrud reported that concurrently, the Tree Board would also review landscaping and buffering regulations. Sites that are under development that have existing trees and vegetation are required to preserve a specific amount of the landscape. Landscaping and buffering regulations are intended to apply to the site after development and infrastructure improvements are completed. Landscaping serves as a buffering function between different types of uses to buffer noise, light, and different types of activities between two incompatible uses, as well as landscaping within parking lots to promote low impact development to benefit stormwater runoff. The landscaping code has not been updated since the City adopted the new versions of the low impact development codes in 2014 and 2017. This section of the code is reviewed by permitting staff. The proposed scope of work is similar to the update to tree preservation regulations. Generally, the provisions ensure landscaping criteria to curtail soil erosion, reduce the hazards of flooding; absorb carbon dioxide and supply oxygen; reduce the effects of noise, glare, dust, heat, and other objectionable activities generated by some land uses; buffer and screen adjacent properties; provide shade; and promote the pleasant appearance and character of neighborhoods and the City.

Commissioner Chapman recommended adding the protection of wildlife habitat.

Manager Medrud responded to a question about the difference between single-family dwellings versus multifamily residential explaining that the difference primarily relates to density. Single-family dwellings are typically located on individual lots owned by different owners with most homes having street-facing landscaping. The City's codes address the sidewalk and the street but not the individual lot. Multifamily residential is typically a set of dwelling units owned by one property owner. Multifamily landscaping typically is located in parking areas or in concentrated areas designated for the site. The City requires a landscape plan for the entire multifamily development. Single-family subdivisions are also required to provide a percentage of open space and usable open space. Residential short plats consist of nine lots or less. Because the plats are smaller, the percentage of open space is often small. Large preliminary plat subdivisions provide more opportunities for larger open space either as parks for active use or as space for buffering or aesthetics.

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Commissioner Sedore commented that infilling within the City is creating situations of housing with no yards resulting in hardscaping entire sections of a property that previously housed one dwelling unit with a lawn/garden. It appears the practice is nibbling away at open space or parks. Manager Medrud responded that new developments are required to pay transportation impact fees, park impacts, and school impact fees. For smaller developments where it is not possible to create an active recreation space, such as a nine-lot subdivision because of the size, staff is exploring additional park space by using impact fees to construct community parks serving more developments. Another issue is the timing factor for constructing parks as it takes time to accumulate sufficient funds to acquire and develop parkland. Additionally, the Growth Management Act concentrates growth in the urban areas to protect the rural areas outside the City. The trade-off is the loss of green areas within the City.

Manager Medrud requested the Board review the draft scope of work and provide any suggestions and comments by February 25, 2022. The schedule is similar to the tree preservation and vegetation update.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Chapman updated members on Commissioner Jackson's efforts to secure trees/shrubs for Arbor Day. Commissioner Jackson advised that he would be unable to attend the March 14, 2022 meeting, as he is traveling outside the area. The proposal for tree giveaway is to provide 50 native conifer plugs and 100 one-gallon mix of native small maturing sized trees and shrubs. Based on availability, the mix could include 25 each of vine maples, 25 each of crabapple trees, 25 red twig dogwoods, and 25 mock orange shrubs. Commissioner Chapman offered to work with Commissioner Jackson to check out local nurseries for availability of one-gallon plants.

Commissioner Sedore said he would follow-up with the DNR Webster Nursery for availability of the native conifers.

Chair Grantham noted that the review of both sets of regulations would likely address many of the concerns surrounding increased hardscaping in the City. He asked whether the tree canopy calculation completed of the City excludes private properties. Manager Medrud said the inventory includes all tree canopies in the City. The intent of the plan is to retain existing canopies to the extent possible on privately owned properties through increased focus on education and cooperation with local landowners.

Commissioner Hecker asked about the City's process for code enforcement violations. Manager Medrud said the current process is based on a complaint-driven process. The Police Department is responsible for code enforcement with support from other City departments for specific types of violations.

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Commissioner Sedore commented that his concerns surround large development occurring on land near the Black Hills High School formerly used for agricultural or grazing land for cattle. Much of the area was forested. According to information on the recent school levy, the Tumwater School District is planning for an additional 2,100 homes in six new large developments to justify the addition of a new school. Within the Urban Forestry Management Plan, the goal is to increase canopy cover; however, the new proposed development east of Black Hills High School logged all existing Douglas Fir and cedar trees on the property and constructed water retention ponds and streets. The landscape code addresses efforts to maintain mature trees and native groundcover; however, it appears no efforts were pursued to preserve those features for that particular subdivision. He referred to other similar situations occurring in other developments in the City and the lack of any efforts to preserve existing trees. Manager Medrud advised that during the review of the tree protection and landscaping ordinances, he plans to provide information on the development review and application process. The Board's exercise of reviewing the development process will answer many questions in terms of development regulations, the review process, and what the City requires and cannot require for a proposed development. For all development projects, the City requires preservation of a portion of existing trees on a site. Often, because of the geography of a property, development and infrastructure requirements, and the location of existing trees, it necessary for the developer to remove existing trees. In those instances, the developer must replant trees at a ratio greater than 1:1.

Commissioner Sedore noted that he visited the new Skyview development and observed how the property has been planted with a Chinese pear tree, which is much different from native Douglas fir and cedar trees previously on the property. Although the property has been planted with trees, the planting will not produce habitat that previously existed two years ago. Additionally, during a recent drive through the Preserve subdivision, he observed how the west side of the subdivision is under development. That area abuts an industrial area of warehouses and he assumes the developer would be responsible for adding a buffer between the houses and the warehouses. It is incredible that the developer is building homes to the extent that homes will consume as much of the property as possible while removing all trees that had existed on the property for hundreds of years. He is struggling with how those practices are compatible with the City's Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Manager Medrud acknowledged the concerns and noted that during the discussions on the tree canopy for the City, it was acknowledged that there would be areas of the City that would be developing, such as the commercial, industrial, and the residential areas. The tree canopy table in the Urban Forestry Management Plan does not anticipate a dramatic

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increase in tree canopy but rather a goal to retain existing canopy and add new trees over the 20-year period to account for development occurring today. Other areas with larger lots will help compensate for the loss of other trees. However, the issue continues to exist between the City's goals to ensure some level of affordable housing exists within the City while trying to preserve forested areas within the City. It essentially requires a balancing of the two priorities.

Commissioner Chapman commented that one successful development is the Sequoia apartment complex on the corner of Tumwater Boulevard and Littlerock Road as the development retained many larger trees along the edges of the property in addition to planting more trees. The development is a good example of dense development while retaining native vegetation around the perimeter and adding new trees. Manager Medrud noted that the retention of the trees could likely be attributed to the Thurston County Housing Authority, the developer of the property. Other developments completed by the Housing Authority in other cities and in other areas in the City have exceeded code requirements. He encouraged the Board to consider other developments that effectively retained trees as examples the Board could discuss to determine why some were successful while other properties were clear-cut of all trees and vegetation.

Commissioner Chapman asked about the possibility of receiving some data from the consultant that speaks to the amount of loss of tree canopy specific to new development and what the City would gain over the next 20 years in terms of required tree plantings to determine if the City lost or gained tree canopy. Although tree canopy is one variable that was used as a measure in the Urban Forestry Management Plan, another variable that is just as important is the loss of habitat, which may not be recovered over the next 20 years. Saving as many stands of older trees is important to ensure habitat is also saved in those areas. He cited a new development off Littlerock Road that included Douglas firs over 100 years old that could have been retained even with the requirements necessary to develop the property. It is important to consider the all or nothing scenario moving forward particularly when a portion of old, mature and healthy trees existing either individually or in stands could have been saved without creating a safety hazard.

The Board discussed the importance of not focusing only on tree canopy, as the biological world is complex and should include all aspects of the environment moving forward.

Discussion ensued on some of the new apartment complexes under development in addition to new residential subdivisions.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting is scheduled on March 14, 2022.

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ADJOURNMENT: **Commissioner Sedore moved, seconded by Chair Grantham, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

Prepared by Puget Sound Meeting Services, psmsoly@earthlink.net