



EDMONDS CITIZENS' TREE BOARD

APPROVED MINUTES

May 7, 2015

The Edmonds Citizens' Tree Board Meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chair Steve Hatzenbeler in the Brackett Room, 3rd Floor City Hall, 121 5th Avenue North, Edmonds.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Steve Hatzenbeler, Chair
Anna Heckman, Vice Chair (arrived 6:22 p.m.)
Ronald Brightman
Barbara Durr
Rick Zitzmann

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Manager
Jeannie Dines, Recorder

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Renee Travis (Alternate)

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT

Joan Bloom, City Councilmember

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hatzenbeler called the meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL

See above.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Hatzenbeler requested the following changes to the agenda:

- Postpone Item 7c, Street Tree Plan, to a future meeting (rescheduled on Council agenda)
- Reschedule Item 7b, Moratorium Against Street Tree Removal Downtown, to the June 4 meeting
- Add agenda item regarding an update on Tree Board Vacancies

Board Member Brightman moved to approve the agenda as amended; seconded by Board Member Zitzmann. Motion carried unanimously.

4. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Kris Webb, Edmonds, referred to an Edmonds Beacon article about the tree code, expressing concern that the cost to prune two trees would be \$250 and \$820 if a tree was 24" or larger. She also pointed out:

- The need to prune fruit trees annually
- Many trees are over 24"
- Pruning all the trees on her property would cost \$5800
- Danger caused by unpruned trees
- Rodents attracted by spoiled fruit from unpruned trees
- Views blocked by untrimmed trees

- Reduced property values from untrimmed trees
- Need to remove dead/diseased trees
- Trees on her street were last trimmed in 1989/1990 when the street was paved

Chair Hatzenbeler clarified the fees have not yet been established; the dollar amounts used in discussions are hypothetical. If/when the tree code is adopted, staff will determine an appropriate permit cost. Removal of a tree on private property will require a permit; the permit is likely to be inexpensive for a dead tree. No permit is proposed for pruning on private property. Pruning or removal of a tree in the right-of-way requires a permit due to potential safety issues in the right-of-way.

Discussion followed regarding diameter at breast height, interest in retaining old trees, how views are addressed in the proposed tree code, differences of opinion regarding what constitutes a view and the impact of trees on property values. Chair Hatzenbeler encouraged Ms. Webb and the public to attend the Planning Board's public hearing on May 27.

5. PRESENTATION

a. **Streamside Land Owners Project by Chrys Bertolotto, Natural Resource Programs Manager, Snohomish City – Camano Island ECO Net Coordinator, WSU Snohomish County Extension**

Chrys Bertolotto, WSU Snohomish County Extension, explained the project was intended to help people with small yards along water bodies plant more native trees. She described the background and methodology:

- Project goal: Have 200 small yard (less than 1 acre) landowners from South Snohomish County that live along stream plant two native trees
- Research methods: two focus groups from South Snohomish County urban/suburban areas about 1 month apart. Reached 22 people (average age 60ish living along streams more than 10 years, fewer children in household, highly educated)
- Focus group goals – to learn attitudes and thoughts:
 1. Toward native trees and preferred native tree characteristics
 2. About living by a stream
 3. On desirable yard characteristics
 4. About ways to encourage native tree planting
 5. On how to reach them and their neighbors
 6. Regarding possible messaging or language

She reviewed the project findings:

- What they liked about their property:
 - Low maintenance
 - Small
 - Beautiful with everything blooming
 - Park like with creek in front yard
 - Peaceful
 - Streamside sounds and wildlife
 - The act of gardening in it
- What they disliked about their property:
 - Leaves fall on the ground/dirty roofs and decks
 - Flooding
 - Too small
 - Dogs fall down and slip into creek

- Steep and hard to maintain
- Nasty glacial soil
- Mountain beavers
- Too shady from neighbor trees
- Moles
- Moss
- Attitudes:
 - Wildlife is attractive
 - Water can be troublesome with flooding
 - Living by stream limits property use
- Attitudes toward native trees
 - Barriers:
 - Yard full already
 - Covenant communities
 - Right plant, right place
 - Danger
 - View
 - Roots
 - Shrubs better than trees
 - Messy
 - Motivators:
 - Color and beauty
 - Erosion control
 - Wildlife attraction
 - Shade and privacy
 - Retains water to prevent flooding
- Preferred trees/characteristics
 - Most important selection factors
 - Erosion control potential
 - Hardiness through windstorms
 - Edible
 - Tactile
 - Maintenance
 - Size/height especially
 - Wildlife use and flowering
 - Safety to children
 - Beauty
 - Other issues to consider
 - Fairness
 - Septic systems
 - Neighbors
 - Cost
 - Shade
 - Demographics
- Knowledge: a lot is missing:
 - Wrong tree wrong place
 - Base choice on information at nursery
 - Don't consider mature size
 - Unaware of undesirable tree characteristics
 - Planting know-how exists:
 - 20 of the 22 focus groups members have planted tree before, 16 planted native trees

- Mailed postcards to all landowners, very low response even though gave away trees. Only 11 requested site visits. Hard to follow-up calls to remind people.
- Surveys showed that those that came:
 - Learned about how to select trees
 - Planted native trees
 - Now see more value for native trees in landscapes than before

Ms. Bertolotto suggested future efforts should include:

- Open workshops to anyone interested in trees not just people living along streams
- Widely publicize workshops
- Engage people where they are and for less time (farmers markets, libraries, etc.)
- Use GIS to identify landowners that need trees and reach out to them in a more targeted way
- Keep giving away trees for small yards

Ms. Bertolotto distributed a booklet, "Plant Native Trees on your Property: Attractive Wildlife and Create Privacy, A Guide for Native Trees for Small Yards." She offered a PDF for the Tree Board's website. Discussion followed regarding next steps for their project and benefits of native trees.

6. OLD BUSINESS/DISCUSSION

a. Heritage Tree Program – Next Steps

Board Member Zitzmann suggested tabling the Heritage Tree Program, citing Senior Planner Kernen Lien's indication that there was no staff time available to work on it until at least October.

b. Marina Beach PAC – Update

Board Member Brightman reported staff is briefing the Planning Board on May 13 and the City Council on May 19 and the PAC's next meeting is May 21. He summarized the three options under consideration, advising Option A that cut through the dog park has been abandoned. Options B and C have a longer stream corridor more suitable for salmon and do not impact the dog park. The City hopes to reduce the buffer to 50 feet with the agreement of Department of Ecology. Recent public input includes protecting/maintaining the dog park and that parking does not need to be increased. The estimated cost of the project is \$4 million; grants and funding from other agencies will be required. Decisions regarding vegetation are in the future. Washington State Ferries is retaining their option to build a dock in that location.

c. Street Tree Plan Update

This item was postponed to a future meeting.

d. Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation

Chair Hatzenbeler relayed plans for a fall Arbor Day event. Dawna Lahti has expressed interest in assisting the Tree Board with community outreach such as partnering with the Edmonds School District on tree planting at College Place or Seaview Elementary Schools. There may be opportunity for input from the Tree Board regarding appropriate tree species.

e. Proposed Tree Code Progress; Planning Board Review Update, Public Hearing May 27

Chair Hatzenbeler relayed the tone at Planning Board meetings has been somewhat negative. The most common comment is the tree code needs to be updated within the framework of an Urban Forest Management Plan. He noted such a plan would take time to develop as well as to gather public input which would table the tree code for a number of years. The Planning Board is also concerned with establishing minimum tree units by zone without a policy to back it up. The Planning Board will make recommendation to City Council based on input at public hearing; the tree code likely will be presented to the Council in June/July. He relayed Mr. Lien's assumption that some form or portion of the tree code will be adopted by City Council.

Chair Hatzenbeler encouraged board members to attend the public hearing and to invite people who support the tree code to attend. He plans to publish 1-2 articles in the Edmonds Beacon and My Edmonds News before the public hearing to increase support in the community; he requested board members send him their thoughts/ideas for the articles. He referred to misinformation in a recent Edmonds Beacon article by Planning Board Chair Neil Tibbott with regard to pruning on private property and fees.

Mr. Chave relayed the Planning Board's discomfort with the tree code is lack of a policy basis and a one size fits all approach. He suggested describing the reasons for the code when testifying at the Planning Board public hearing.

Discussion followed regarding an Urban Forestry Management Plan, the proposed tree code compared to other cities' tree codes, funding available for planting trees, fines for cutting trees in critical areas, fines versus fees, future effort to establish fees, citizens' concern with regulating trees on private property, and education/outreach regarding benefits of trees and planting the right tree in the right place.

Vice Chair Heckman advised of a WSNLA presentation on May 12 at Edmonds Community College by Cass Turnbull, Plant Amnesty, "Cut to Extinction: the Plight of Urban Trees." Leif Fixen, Snohomish County Conservation District, will also discuss the Tree City USA program. Board Member Durr expressed interest in attending. Board Member Brightman suggested determining a topic and date for Ms. Turnbull to make a presentation to the Tree Board.

Councilmember Bloom advised development of an Urban Forest Management plan is in Street Tree Plan as an implementation action by the end of 2017.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Tree Board Staff Support – Tasks, Job Description, 8-10 hours/month

Chair Hatzenbeler relayed there is support from the Council and Parks & Recreation Director Carrie Hite for Tree Board staff support. Councilmember Bloom relayed Ms. Hite's suggestion to the Council subcommittee that the Tree Board develop a scope of work and job description for a contract person to support Tree Board.

Tree Board Members identified the following scope of work (priorities are in italics, others are nice to have):

- *Attend Tree Board meetings*
- *Be liaison between Tree Board and City staff including address issues raised by the public at meetings and direct to appropriate staff for follow-up*
- *Pursue and manage grants*
- *Central contact for Tree City USA application (submitting, gathering data)*

- *Organize Arbor Day and other events*
- Coordinate outreach and education including presentations to Tree Board
- Assist chair with preparing agendas and noticing/advertising meetings and events (assume Jana will continue to provide)
- Advertise events
- Update website and post educational materials

Discussion included priorities for achieving the Tree Board's mission, concern 8-10 hours was a very small amount, and potential for Tree Board Members to do education/outreach when the tree code is finished. Councilmember Bloom offered to present the scope of work to the Council subcommittee.

b. Moratorium Against Street Tree Removal Downtown

This item was rescheduled to the June meeting.

c. Tree Board Vacancies

Chair Hatzenbeler reported the City has received five applications. Mr. Chave said the City Council typically makes the selection.

Councilmember Bloom said a Council subcommittee is discussing consistency in the way appointments are made to boards and commissions.

8. TREE BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Zitzmann said he plans to attend the Planning Board public hearing.

Board Member Durr said she will urge Master Gardeners to attend the Planning Board public hearing. She requested the table configuration for Tree Board meetings be altered as she has difficulty hearing the proceedings.

Vice Chair Heckman announced the May 20 University of Washington Urban Forest Symposium includes "Valuing the Urban Forest" as well as a discussion about communicating the value of trees.

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. April 9, 2015 Minutes

Vice Chair Heckman moved to approve the April 9, 2015 minutes, seconded by Board Member Brightman. Motion carried unanimously.

10. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the Edmonds Citizens' Tree Board adjourned at 8:11 p.m.