

MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2015

Board Members:

Patrick Burke

Jerry Bertagna

Dave Magaret – City Parks Advisory Board Representative

Marcus Peck (Absent)

Dave Moyer (Absent)

Dan Galecki – Spindrift Forestry/City Forester

Kiera McCarthy – Spindrift Forestry/Consulting Arborist

City of Sisters:

Patrick Davenport – Community Development Director

Darcy Reed – Assistant Planner

Paul Bertagna – Public Works Director

Meeting was opened and Board Member Patrick Burke introduced himself.

Previous minutes couldn't be approved, a quorum is needed (Marcus Peck and Dave Moyer were absent).

Review of Development Code: Chapter 3.2 – Landscaping:

City Council asked the CDD department to take a look at the Landscape chapter of the Development Code for text amendments. Patrick Davenport and Darcy Reed identified some items in this chapter and asked the UFB for assistance. Patrick Davenport explained that City Staff has to do what the code says. Therefore it is necessary to improve the language and to make sure the language is clear and worded correctly.

Planting new trees/size:

CDD department is asking whether a 1 ½ inch caliper tree is a better buy/replacement tree than the 2 inch caliper trees currently listed. Ciara McCarthy mentioned that 1 ½ inch trees will establish better. The 2 inch trees are often standard or required because that size tree can better withstand vandalism. Pat Burke noted that from a transport point of view, 1 ½ inch caliper trees are easier to transport and are considerably cheaper and often more available. The size difference between the two sizes of trees in twenty years is minimal. The size, price and handling is easier with 1 ½ inch caliper, car damage and vandalism is not an issue in Sisters. The UFB agrees with the recommendation to change the caliper of replacement trees from 2 to 1 ½ inch trees.

Landscaping: 1880's Theme

Briefly discussed. Per Jerry Bertagna this item should be in a different chapter. Not really an item for UFB, but for CDD to decide.

Significant Trees:

Council asked CDD to look at significant trees once more. Jerry Bertagna explained that the UFB was asked to come up with the definition for significant trees. The UFB changed the definition to include ALL trees with an 8" diameter or larger to be significant trees (Before, only 8" Pine trees were considered significant trees). Patrick Davenport asked if the board is sure they want to include Junipers? Jerry Bertagna said they discussed this. Removal of a significant trees within people's yards will require a permit from the CDD department and removal of a significant tree in the city right-of-way will require approval of the UFB. There are many people in Sisters that like Junipers. The Board wants to keep the definition the same, and include ALL trees. Per Patrick Davenport, listing exceptions is difficult. It will be easier to keep the language as is.

Replacement Ratio:

Patrick Davenport asked the question if the ratio of 3:1 for tree replacement should remain the same. Or, should the city tighten the requirements? Cut down 2, plant 1, cut down 1, plant 1. Other cities, like the City of Redmond do have a 1:1 ratio. Darcy mentioned that the City of Redmond has more space. Dan Galecki would like to retain the 3:1 ratio, it seems fair. Ciara McCarthy asked for clarification of the definition. Paul Bertagna explained that it is the ratio of trees removed to trees planted. All agreed to leave the 3:1 ratio.

City Tree Fund for in lieu monetary fee:

Per Patrick Davenport the City Tree Fund doesn't exist. Darcy Reed checked with Lynne. There is no tree fund, but fees paid would be added to the General Fund. Money is the "in lieu" amount (if someone is required to plant a tree and doesn't want to, they can choose to pay a fee which would go to the tree fund). Is there a method of calculating how much someone has to pay? Jerry Bertagna mentioned they talked to the Planner last fall, and that they were told the money goes to the Tree Fund. Paul Bertagna explained that Lynne can create a revenue line item in the streets department under revenue for street trees. It hasn't happened often that people don't replant trees when they remove one or more trees. However, a rate needs to be set. Pat Burke - \$80.00 is the price of a 1 ½ inch tree so that could be the fee people would pay in lieu if they choose not to plant. Everyone agreed to the \$80.00 fee.

Significant Trees Identified/Protected Trees on vacant land:

Darcy Reed is asking how to track the significant trees. For new construction activities, rules for removing trees are different. What do we do if someone wants to build a house after ten years on an empty lot with a significant tree? Would we know that tree is there?

Per Jerry Bertagna: Even if there is new construction on that land, if the tree is 8" and significant, 20 years down the line, that tree is still a significant tree and larger then it was before. The home owner would still need a permit for removal. Home owners that have a dead tree or danger tree in their own yard, don't need to ask for approval.

Patrick Davenport said that CDD will ask Public Works to check and make sure that when home owners come in to ask for a tree removal permit, that tree is not in the city right-of-way.

Patrick Davenport also mentions Title 8, which requires dead and diseased trees to be removed. CDD Director cannot always make the determination whether or not a tree is sick or dead, that should be the City Forester. The language mentions that the CDD Director or designee has to

make the determination. That language can actually remain the same. The City Forester can be the designee.

Street Trees:

Darcy is asking if the street tree ratio is 1:1 and not 3:1? If someone has to remove one street tree in the city right-of-way, do they only have to plant one back? Per Paul Bertagna, yes, that is the way I read it.

Street Tree Maintenance:

Per Paul Bertagna: If a contractor has to plant street trees, the contractor will be responsible for the care of the new street trees. If the city plants street trees, the city will maintain them. Old trees that have naturally grown are not considered to be street trees per Paul Bertagna.

Section D:

Patrick Davenport would like to add language to mention the City Forester, to show that the City Forester plays a role in advising and recommending to the City of Sisters, the UFB and CDD and Public Works Department. Dan Galecki mentioned he has been operating according to the language in the RFP. Patrick Davenport will use text from the RFP and the City Ordinance to add the role of the City Forester.

Section C– Removal & Pruning and attachment of Holiday lights to trees:

Per Patrick Davenport, this section is a bit “wordy” and a lot of language is unnecessary and it would be good to condense it. Dan Galecki asked if Holiday lights are fairly routine in Sisters. Are there any big issues every year? Paul Bertagna answered that this has not been an issue. He asked if this section refers to decorating and pruning for private citizens. Per Darcy Reed, this is meant for public trees in the public ROW. Paul Bertagna said that the city doesn’t want anybody to do anything to public trees. People that work on trees in the public right-of-way need to be licensed and bonded. Patrick Davenport suggested to add wording like “if you have an issue with a tree adjacent to your property, contact the City of Sisters”. Don’t do anything to trees in the public right of way without obtaining permission from the City of Sisters first. Public Utility companies should probably be notified, but they usually know they have an obligation to notify the city if they do tree work.

Dan Galecki asked if the city ever denied a request from home owners to take down significant trees. Patrick Davenport answered that a handful of people have come in to obtain a permit. The city hasn’t denied permits. As long as everyone stick to the rules, it’s permitted.

Screening/Buffers:

Patrick Davenport indicated he would like to eventually take a closer look at screening and buffering between different zones (Industrial/Commercial/Residential). When do you need to add more trees, or create a berm? There are buffer tables, there is a type of matrix. The city needs that. Buffers are required for example if an industrial zone ends up next to a residential zone. There currently are some concerns with the mini storage going in next door to a tourist commercial.

Street Tree Placement:

Paul Bertagna is wondering what the typical spacing of street trees is. Is there a standard? Where does the 35 ft. spacing we use come from? Dan Galecki answered and said that 35 ft. is a good number. Many municipalities have spacing standards and per Ciara landscape architects use standards, which vary according to tree species, zoning, etc.

UFB Management Plan Update:

City Forester - Dan Galecki:

The City of Sisters Tree Inventory is a Pilot Project and for now has been concentrated in the downtown area. Over 200 trees were inventoried. There is an orange * for every tree on the two maps: east and west side of town. Attributes are: species, diameter, the look of the tree (with a severity rating of 1-5). 1 is a good tree. We need information on how a tree looks. We have to identify what is going on with a tree. Disease or bug infestation, or scarring from physical handling while planting, scarring from deer, etc.

First Impression: lots of scarring – but look at the severity rating which tells that the tree is good or fair – 4 and 5's are trees that are really in trouble and that need immediate attention. 3's need some sort of attention and can go either-way, and 1 and 2 are good trees. D is dead tree. The rating can be changed to a more user friendly system by changing the numbers to words to indicate the shape a tree is in. For example: good /bad /fair, etc.

Paul Bertagna asked what the tallest tree in the downtown core is. Dan Galecki answered it is approximately 108 ft. tall and that there are three (3) trees that break the 100 ft. record. Dan wanted to collect as many attributes as possible. While doing an inventory you want to capture as much as possible in a short amount of time. Ciara and Dan discussed the inventory and Ciara has observed several ways to make changes.

This is an active and dynamic inventory. Everyone can use while sitting at a desk and look at the problem areas. Look at the photo, the trees are all mapped (GPS). You can physically visit the tree to take a look at it. If there is a problem, you can use the information available to address the issue and make a decision. Dan Galecki would like to expand the inventory into other areas of town.

Ciara M. explained how to make the inventory easier to use, by using remedial word specification, add priority, to see what work needs to be done, when it needs to be done and what the time frame is. This will also help with budgeting for health and safety reasons as well as creating a maintenance schedule. Columns to prioritize can be added (work needs to be done within 3, 6, 12 or 18 months). Adding age, class and species is important for pest and disease management. Which species do you need to plant to make the town more diverse (the rule is to not plant more than 10% of one particular species) and less susceptible to loss. What types of trees are resilient to disease and pests. For long term management it is nice to know the age & size of the trees so you can budget for care and plan the maintenance better. Juvenile trees need more management, more pruning, check-ups, more maintenance.

Patrick Davenport asked if any city properties were inventoried and mentioned the big Ponderosa tree at the corner of the City Hall building. Dan Galecki does still want to add this to the inventory, hasn't been done yet. However, staff is at City Hall daily and can keep monitor that tree and ask for help any time. Patrick Davenport also mentioned we can use help with the campground. Paul Bertagna mentioned that the campground is already done. Dan Galecki did work at the campground, but did not inventory and just focused on the bad trees. Per Patrick Davenport, it may be good to do an inventory or some type of overall report. Dan Galecki can certainly go back to the campground and concentrate on areas in question.

Dan Galecki is open to suggestions – would like to complete the rest of the city before creating an overall management plan. A complete inventory will create a base-line. Ciara mentioned this management plan is a great tool. It is not just there for tree removal but will help indicate where new trees can be planted. The plan is there for ongoing tree management and tree replacement is part of that too.

The board members are asked if they like the inventory so far:

Paul likes the “good”, “fair”, “poor” severity rating but would like to add recommendations to re-inspect (re-inspect in 6 months, or...) and add a time frame for removal (red flag). Liability is always an issue for the city.

Jerry Bertagna agrees that when a tree is a number 5, it may need a bit more information. Remove within a certain period of time (or needs to be removed). Exposed roots – needs additional comments so the city (PW) can create a work plan. A tree that has an issue and higher probability for getting worse needs a work plan. Jerry dealt with similar projects for campgrounds in his district. A management plan was made for resource officers to direct the work crews. High Risk areas also need to be indicated.

Paul Bertagna asked the Board and Dan Galecki how to proceed. What will be next? Downtown is done. City Parks can be looked at, even though they are in pretty good shape and are on a regular maintenance schedule. He suggested to break up the city in quadrants.

Dan Galecki asked if another 2-3 week commitment would be approved. Paul Bertagna and the board agree with this approach, but Paul Bertagna indicated he would like the budgetary numbers first.

Board Member Comments:

Jerry Bertagna mentioned a tree problem at 644 S Elm Street. Large Ponderosa Pine (36 inch diameter) in ROW with dead branches leaning over the driveway that can hit vehicles. There appears to be a 6 ft. top, hung up in the tree. The tree itself is a split top and has been damaged by vehicle traffic. Property owner has embedded street signs in it. The tree is high risk. It looks like there is rot in the top. Biggest concern is the widow makers/lower branches that are dead and can hit vehicles in driveway. Paul Bertagna said that Dave Moyer looked at that tree. He called Paul to say that tree has been like that for a long time. Unsure if Dave Moyer looked at this particular tree. The immediate concern for Jerry Bertagna is the widow makers. Per Paul Bertagna, Dan Galecki will check out the tree and will write a report.

Paul Bertagna also mentioned two trees at the corner of Jefferson and Larch, southeast corner, next to Tewalt's house. These two pine trees show the same characteristics as the three you see on a drive to Suttle Lake. All the Ponderosa trees look terrible. It seems to affect the trees close to the road. This section starts right past Ray's and all the way up to Suttle Lake. Thousands of trees, every size, are in bad shape. The trees on the corner of Jefferson and Larch need to be checked out.

Per Dan Galecki, as of last week, Three Creeks Brewery tree is also bad and worse than before. Ciara is asking if we water any trees. Per Paul Bertagna, the native trees don't get water. Ciara said that in Melbourne Australia, after a 10 year drought, they watered trees with tanks they placed under the tree for 48 hours, so water could seep into the ground. Maybe something to consider if the drought continues for some of the big old trees?

Ciara also asked if there is a measurement for the ROW areas to help when they continue the inventory in other areas of town. Paul Bertagna explained that Dan and Ciara can obtain information at Deschutes County. They offer interactive maps, you can zoom in and it will show the tax lots. The city has some pretty wide ROW's in the southern end of town (up to 80 ft. in places). Dan Galecki asked what to do if there are places where the ROW area is hard to find and Paul suggested to look at fence lines, meter boxes, sewer clean-outs, etc.

No other comments. Meeting Adjourned.