

Urban Forestry Board (UFB)
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 11, 2024
FINAL – approved April 8, 2024

Board Members Present:

Patrick Burke, Chair
Therese Kollerer, Vice Chair
Avery McChristian
Cheryl Pellerin

City Council Representative Present:

Gary Ross, Councilor

Staff Present:

Paul Bertagna, Director, Public Works
Dan Galecki, City Forester
Jackson Dumanch, Project Coordinator, Public Works

Guest Speaker:

Emme Shoup, Associate Planner, Community Development

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Burke called the Monday, March 11, 2024, regular meeting to order at approximately 3:00 PM. Staff confirmed a quorum was present.

2. Approval of Minutes

Chair Burke directed the Board to the February 12, 2024, draft meeting minutes. Vice Chair Kollerer noted two spelling errors and directed staff to those mistakes. Staff made note of corrections. Board Member Pellerin made a motion to approve the minutes, Kollerer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Visitor Communications

Chair Burke called for visitor communications.

- Monica Tomosy, Sisters, addressed the Board regarding old City Code regarding urban forestry. Tomosy suggested looking into other city's codes. Chair Burke asked Tomosy what code they were referring to. Bertagna stated that the Urban Forestry Board falls under the Municipal Code and highlighted the difference between private and public trees in the code. Burke asked if Board Member McChristian was able to hear Tomosy's question, McChristian stated they were unable to hear the question. Burke stated the question was about considering trees from both Municipal and Development Code as a whole. Councilor Ross noted that the Urban Forestry Board has jurisdiction over trees in the public right of way or on City property and added that Tomosy should submit a letter or speak to the City Council about their concerns. McChristian stated that they were happy to see community interest in urban forestry policy.

- Susan Cobb, Sisters, addressed the Board about nominating a tree on their property as a Heritage Tree to test the process. Chair Burke noted that Heritage Trees would be a topic of discussion for the meeting.

4. Board Business

A. Consideration of recommendation to remove leaning 19-inch Ponderosa Pine in Creekside Campground.

Chair Burke read the agenda item into the record and called on City Forester Galecki. Galecki stated that the tree has leaned more since last visited adding that soft soil may be the cause and the tree leans over the camp site. Galecki stated that surrounding trees will help preserve visual appeal. Board Member Pellerin asked why the tree would lean when others nearby would not. Galecki stated that surrounding trees also lean but this tree has soft soil around the base is the likely cause. Vice Chair Kollerer stated that it was sad to see a healthy tree be removed but acknowledged the safety concern. McChristian agreed with Kollerer. Burke also agreed that the tree should be removed. Burke asked for a motion from the Board. Kollerer made a motion to remove the tree. Pellerin seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Review of a Request for Proposal for City Forester.

Chair Burke read the agenda item into the record and called on Director Bertagna. Bertagna acknowledged Galecki's resignation to a new employment opportunity and asked for comments from the Board regarding the request for proposals (RFP). Bertagna noted the proposal evaluation date to April 5th as well as interviews so that the Board could review a recommendation during the Monday, April 8th meeting. Bertagna asked for a Board representative to join the selection process. McChristian offered to join, Kollerer stated they thought it would be good to have him involved as they are professional experience, Burke agreed. Pellerin asked how the RFP would be communicated to those interested. Bertagna stated that it would be posted on the City Website, an existing list of certified arborists in the region, as well as being advertised on a virtual plan center where other RFPs are advertised, and possibly the Bulletin. McChristian stated that it would be a good idea to open it up to Registered Consulting Arborists through the American Society of Consulting Arborists adding that it was one of the highest levels of certifications in the field. Councilor Ross asked if the organization had a local presence. McChristian believed there should be. Bertagna stated they liked listing Certified Arborist Municipal Specialists on the RFP as well as Certified Forester noting the tracts of forested land the City owns.

C. Heritage Trees.

Chair Burke read the agenda item into the record and called on Vice Chair Kollerer. Kollerer described the work they and McChristian had been doing in identifying potential Heritage Tree candidates in Creekside Park and Campground. Kollerer noted the code language relating to Heritage Tree qualifications. Kollerer noted the mention of a form in the code. Kollerer noted the information packet previously provided by City Forester Galecki on determining tree age, adding that Heritage Trees can help to preserve the urban forest and provide educational and awareness opportunities. Kollerer described the trees that they, McChristian, and Councilor Cobb had proposed as potential candidates for Heritage Tree status voicing their desire to have

nominations ready for the City's Arbor Day celebration as the beginning of public awareness for Heritage Trees. Kollerer noted that the second nomination was later confirmed by Project Coordinator Dumanch to be on State property but proposed exploring options on the state level. Kollerer continued with their review of candidate trees before stating that they wished for the Board to engage with City Council on approving the candidate trees as soon as possible. Kollerer then asked for further discussion from the Board. McChristian asked City Forester Galecki if the trees with lightning strike scars had been previously observed. Galecki stated that those characteristics were reflected in the City's inventory. Councilor Ross stated that it was too late for this to be brought to Council for consideration. Bertagna stated that any formal nomination would need to be brought before the Board prior to Council. Bertagna stated that staff would need to look into the calendar for Council and consult the City Manager about how to best go about the process, suggesting Council may want to hold a workshop for this topic. Board Member Pellerin stated they supported the idea of a heritage tree program and thanked Kollerer and McChristian for their time and efforts in preparing the material and voiced support for a defined process. Pellerin asked if an arborist should be consulted in conjunction with individuals submitting nominations, further suggesting that the Board could work on defining what the best process would be. Ross stated that Council workshops are meant for this type of work and described how the process might work. Bertagna stated that Council last worked on tree code in 2021 and it may be time to revisit the code. Kollerer asked what could be done to expedite the process and when a workshop could be scheduled. Bertagna stated that staff would need to check the Council agenda calendar. Pellerin asked who should develop the nomination and approval process. Bertagna stated that nominations first go to the Board and then to Council. McChristian asked if Arbor Day could be used as a kick-off for the discussion of Heritage Trees. Pellerin stated that they liked that idea and hoped that the program could be shared on the Explore Sisters website so that individuals can visit the trees. Bertagna stated that he and Dumanch could work on a nomination form and have it ready for the Board to review at the April meeting along with a simplified explanation of the process that nominations would follow. Kollerer liked the idea. Kollerer asked if there were any other questions. Burke stated that the item will be added to the agenda for next month.

5. Other Business

A. Arbor Day

Chair Burke called on Associate Planner Shoup to present. Shoup introduced herself and described her role in the City's Arbor Day Celebration and a brief history of the City's designation as a Tree City. Shoup shared details about the 2024 Arbor Day Celebration at Creekside Park. Upper Deschutes Watershed Council has partnered with the City to supply trees for planting in the riparian zone along Whychus Creek in the Park. Shoup stated that Board Member Kollerer had sourced 100 ponderosa pine seedlings from the Ponderosa Project in Sunriver for planting at the event as well. Shoup estimated around 200 trees being available for the planting event and invited to Board to attend adding that a class of about 20 students will join to plant some of the trees. Shoup stated that Kollerer had suggested a walkabout to observe the trees being considered for Heritage Tree status. Shoup stated that Upper Deschutes Watershed Council will share information about the history of Whychus Creek and the work they have been doing to improve the waterway. Shoup asked if there were any questions or comments. Kollerer asked if

some of the ponderosa seedlings would be given away. Shoup stated that the City would try to save some for giving away at the event. Councilor Ross asked when the Campground opened. Bertagna stated April 1st. Pellerin asked where the event was held last year. Ross replied Clemens Park. Shoup briefly described the prior year's event. Shoup thanked the Board for their assistance for helping to increase the scale of the event for 2024. Kollerer was happy that the City was able to work with Upper Deschutes Watershed Council for the event.

B. 864 S Pine St Follow-Up

Chair Burke called on City Forester Galecki to present. Galecki provided some background information before stating that the approved tree removal work was satisfactory, and the property owners were interested and engaged in preserving existing right of way trees. Galecki stated that the remaining stumps will rot and not adversely affect the neighboring trees.

6. Board Member Comments

City Forester Galecki provided an update to the tree preservation work regarding the new roundabout construction stating that preservation efforts were satisfactory though no physical tree protection was present. Galecki added that the slash from removed trees should not be allowed to remain on site for more than a month otherwise it will attract pine beetles.

City Forester Galecki described two old-growth and one medium sized declining ponderosa pines at East Portal adding their observations of dying tops indicative of Ips Beetle infestation. Galecki strongly urged for removal to prevent the spread of insects. Chair Burke asked if the trees needed to be evaluated. Bertagna stated that they may already have been evaluated. Galecki stated that they made a quick assessment and took photographs and restated their professional opinion that the trees be removed. Burke asked if Galecki could generate a report for Board review at the next meeting. Galecki stated that they could generate a report. Bertagna asked Galecki if the trees needed to be removed sooner to prevent the Ips Beetle from spreading. Galecki stated that Ips Beetle is present in the park and has concern about the potential for spread. Burke asked if this case required Board approval or emergency removal. Galecki restated their concern over Ips Beetle spreading. McChristian asked when the beetles spread and are active. Galecki stated that it was a critical time because pine beetle species are active in March, April, and May. Burke asked if it would be best to remove the trees as soon as possible rather than wait until the next Board meeting. Galecki agreed. McChristian asked how the wood is used after a tree is removed. Bertagna stated that the wood is used as firewood. Bertagna stated that Galecki should prepare an emergency report to share with the Board for their acknowledgment. Bertagna stated that two trees designated to be preserved had declined rapidly within the past two weeks and could not discern a cause of decline. Galecki encouraged members of the Board to look at the trees themselves if possible.

McChristian asked about some trees that appeared to be declining near the High School. Bertagna stated that this was Forest Service property where a prescribed burn had occurred. Chair Burke stated they believed the burn was 2 or 3 years ago. Bertagna stated that is occurred

last year. Councilor Ross commented that residents were concerned about the extent of the burn on the trees.

Board Member Pellerin asked when City Forester Galecki would be leaving the City. Galecki stated that there was no specific date adding that they would like to help with the transition and continue to act as the City Forester though physically not being in the region. Kollerer thanked Galecki for their time with the City.

7. Adjourn

Chair Burke adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:08 PM.