



**City of Davis
Tree Commission Minutes
Remote Meeting
Thursday, May 19, 2022
5:30 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Colin Walsh-Chair, Jim Cramer, Tracy DeWit, Tony Gill, Larry Guenther-Vice Chair, W. Allen Lowry, John Reuter

Commissioners Absent:

Council Liaison(s) Present: None

Staff Present: Stan Gryczko, Director, Public Works Utilities and Operations
Adrienne Heinig, Assistant to the Director
Charlie Murphy, Urban Forestry Manager
Chelsea Becker, Administrative Aide

Also in Attendance: (names voluntarily provided) Tina McKeand and Tim Moran, Davey Resource Group
Jessamyn Lett, HELIX Environmental Group
Alan Hirsch, Collen Zern

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson Walsh called meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

J Reuter moved to approve the agenda, seconded by L Guenther. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent:

3. Brief Announcements from Staff, Commission Members, and City Council Members

- S Gryczko introduced Tim Moran, an on-call arborist from Davey Resource Group, working with the City and Charlie Murphy, the City's new Urban Forestry Manager.
- L Guenther noted the 30th anniversary of Tree Davis, and extended welcome to C Murphy, as did J Reuter and T DeWit.

4. Public Comment

Prior to the start of public comment, the Commission made the following motion:

MOTION: The time limit for public comment for general public comment only will be extended to five minutes.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by J Cramer. The motion passed by the following votes:

Ayes: Cramer, DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter, Walsh

Noes:

Absent:

One member of the public provided public comment:

- Alan Hirsch: He indicated that staff did not report on the public hearing on the trees at the mixed-use project on Olive Drive, and that the project included upzoning the property and planting 6 new trees, but also included the removal of trees. He said the guarantee was reduced to 5 years, and did not include the DiSC maintenance and enforcement. He also spoke to the mitigation plan, which allowed the owner to plant fewer trees, didn't require them to break pavement in the parking lot, and ignored other apartment complexes owned by the same owner. He stated that the mitigation plan could have required that the other properties be brought up to a better standard. He said the City granted the developer \$1 Million and more in benefits, equity was ignored, and that the electric vehicle charging infrastructure would not meet the needs of the residents looking to purchase electric vehicles.

5. Consent Calendar

A. Tree Commission Meeting Minutes – April 21, 2022

B. Tree Removals List (*Informational*)

C. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update

D. Tree Davis 30th Anniversary Recognition

Prior to the approval of the Consent Calendar, Item 5C (Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update) was pulled for discussion.

J Cramer moved to approve the consent calendar minus Item 5C, seconded by L Guenther. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent:

Item 5C – Climate Action and Adaptation Plan: J Cramer provided an update on the continuing discussion of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) effort underway with the Natural Resource Commission. He indicated that what was most recently discussed was the work of City staff and consultants on analyzing the contributions that each action would make (GHG emission reductions, cost benefits, etc.) He indicated that much of the discussion focused on transportation items. He said the action item to expand the urban forest was not mentioned by the NRC, except by him in the role of liaison for the project, and the only benefit listed for trees was carbon sequestration. He indicated that the item hadn't attracted the attention of the NRC, they were rather focused on the transportation issues, where the GHG emissions are the most serious problem.

Commission discussion on the item included the following:

- The suggestion that the Commission request that the CAAP encourage the City to focus placing trees in new development agreements.
- The clarification that the action item related to trees included in the CAAP appears to only refer to City and street trees, and the hope would be a reference to the entire urban forest (which would also include incentives for private trees).
- The request that the Commissioners suggest how the Tree Commission might make a request to append the action item to include not just trees on streets and in parks.
- The current timeline for the CAAP process.
- The importance of the comments and feedback coming from the full commission.
- Some concern that the action items in the CAAP are finalized and not open for revisions, as they've are being assessed for benefits, which could mean that there would not be an opportunity to change the item in the wording.
- The need to ensure that any action taken by the Commission would be included in the agenda.

The item was opened for public comment and one comment was received:

- Alan Hirsch: Urged the Commission to take the appropriate action, and stated that trees are needed for complete streets, as you want people to be able to walk by providing shade. He indicated that trees do more than sequestering carbon. He encouraged the Commission to act by writing a letter and addressing it to Council.

MOTION: Receive Item 5C.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by J Reuter. The motion passed by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent:

6. Regular Items

A. Street Tree Removal Requests.

The item was introduced by Tim Moran, from Davey Resources Group, who provided brief presentations on the requests for a street tree removal.

Location

Tree Species

1. 916 La Coruno Street

Aristocrat Callery Pear

Motion: Follow staff recommendation to retain the tree and prune end weight for reduction.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by J Cramer. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent:

The item was opened for public comment, and one comment was received:

- Alan Hirsch: He indicated that it was great for the City to have a guest arborist, and said that trees are an art, not a science. He said that it was important to include the history of the tree and complaints in the discussion, and how keeping an eye out for comorbidity is important, as well as responding to things proactively. Trees should be watched that are a higher risk to the environment.

Location

Tree Species

2. 1874 Imperial Avenue

Shamel Ash

Motion: Follow staff recommendation and retain the tree. However, if the owners want to repair the driveway and the inside of the garage, have the City come in to see if the roots under the driveway can be mitigated. If at the time it is not possible for the arborist to assure the homeowner that the root issue can be abated, the tree should be removed and replaced.

Moved by T DeWit, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent:

The item was opened for public comment twice, and four comments were received:

- Colleen Zern: She indicated that there is structural damage from the tree, and pruning the roots has been done before. She asked how would the issue would be handled if there are significant problems uncovered under the driveway and garage. She added that they were seeing issues on the neighbor's side, if the plan was to continue to cut roots, she didn't want the kids to play in the front yard. She stated that to penalize homeowners doesn't seem fair if the wrong tree was picked for the spot, and that asking homeowners to spend \$10K to fix something that could reoccur, won't help the community feeling.
- Unnamed: Stated that they were not sure how many of the Commissioners have kids, but the tree appears to present a terrible hazard to kids, and that the discussion made them feels like in Davis trees treated as having the same value as animals and humans. They stated that if the Commissioners felt so strongly about trees, they shouldn't walk on the grass. They stated that the tree looks ugly, the neighbors don't want it, and it appears the only people that want the tree is the Commission. They concluded that the safety of children is much more important than a tree.
- Alan Hirsch: Voiced appreciation for the guest arborist, and said his comments were impressive, the opinions offered were careful, and that if anyone would know if the tree was safe it would be the arborist.

(Public Comment was opened by the Commission a second time for the item)

- Colleen Zern: Stated that she is a new owner, and the removal request was filed by previous owners of the property. She indicated that the key is what standards the Commission is being held to, that the Commission has a report from a structural engineer that has indicated structural damage, there is no guarantee is that the root issue can be removed, there is evidence that the tree has been a hazard to structures, no guarantee that the roots will not continue to cause an issue, and that the property owners should not be fighting this battle every five years. She concluded that it was not fair to base speculation on records that are not maintained.

B. Urban Forest Management Plan-Public Engagement Plan Draft.

The item was introduced by A Heinig and Jessamyn Lett of HELIX Environmental Group. They provided a brief background on the process of starting up the Urban Forest Management Plan so far, the planned public engagement process, and the goals associated with the public engagement. J Lett also provided a presentation outlining each section of the draft public engagement plan.

L Guenther assumed the role of acting Chair for the discussion of this item.

Prior to the start of public comment, the Commission made the following motion:

MOTION: that the Commission hold public comment after clarifying questions, and a second public comment period after commission discussion, followed by commission deliberation and motions.

This was a substitute motion moved by L Guenther, seconded by J Reuter. The motion passed by the following votes:

Ayes: DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Reuter, Walsh

Noes: Cramer, Lowry

Absent:

Commission discussion included the following:

- The experience that the public will comment more readily when there is something to comment on, when there is a draft plan. In response to a question about when the draft plan would be ready for review, J Lett indicated that there would be specific questions that will be provided before the draft plan will be ready, to elicit specific questions and would provide graphics and information on the plan. The public would have specific things to comment on that would change over time.
- In response to a question about advertising, staff included that the advertising would be coordinated by the City and Tree Davis, and would include in-person events, fliers, targeted fliers, social media, the City's webpage, the Greener Davis newsletter, the Davis Enterprise and other opportunities.
- The importance of including educational information in the outreach for the plan. J Lett indicated that there was an educational component of the outreach focused on the process of developing the plan, and staff indicated that the City's focused increase on urban forestry education and information would continue.
- Discussion about key stakeholders, including City staff, non-profits and schools, and the importance of including outreach to homeowners as well.

- In response to the question of whether or not the outreach would be brought to the Commission prior to being released, staff indicated that the outreach was being prepared by City staff and the consultant, and would not go before the Commission prior to being released. Staff further indicated that if the Commission had comments, questions or concerns on the outreach they could reach out to staff at any time.
- Concern that the lack of information to comment on in the initial stages of the plan development would hinder the ability to gather comments and feedback from the public. It was suggested that the City consider a survey.
- Support was expressed for town hall-format events, as it helps focus the public on the feedback they would like to provide.
- Concern that the outreach is focused on the summertime, when the college students are not in town.
- Suggestions that the City reach out to departments at UC Davis, homeowners, homeowner associations, and to focus on areas of town with poor tree canopy coverage. Additional suggestions included postcards to target renters, and services for the unhoused population in the community.
- Encouragement for the City to reach out and work with the Tree Commission during the outreach process.

The item was opened for public comment twice, and three comments were received:

- Alan Hirsch: Stated that he was wondering why he was the only individual to prepare slides for the meeting. He asked the Commission what problem the Urban Forest Management Plan was looking to solve: public policy and standards, internal resources and methods, or to get the Plan done by the grant deadline. He indicated that the discussion had yet to include the full scope of the problem. He stated the commission needed to understand the end result prior to initiating the outreach. He expressed concern that there is a standard template for the Urban Forest Management Plan, and highlighted issues with the Plan developed for Woodland. He emphasized that Davis' plan needs to be focused on how to get things done. He provided a list of problems that needed to be addressed, including public tree maintenance, drought tolerance in the canopy, shade for transport, downtown trees, private tree maintenance concerns, social equity and climate justice, methods and tools, and funding. He suggested outreach be targeted to Commissions, neighborhoods, students, retailers, developers and landlords. He expressed concern that the plan was too rushed.
- Unnamed: They asked if there would be an option for more than one open-forum event, and indicated the appreciation for the discussion of

outreach and communication as a two-way street. He was concerned that rather than community input, the discussion was focused on key stakeholder input. He suggested that if community input was desired, having City staff talk less and offer an open forum at the beginning or end of the discussion to allow for the commenters to build off of each other, in an open meeting, rather than submitting comments online.

- Alan Hirsch: Stated the Tree Commission was being treated like the tree removal commission rather than the Commission engaged in the Plan. Expressed his concern that a cookie-cutter plan would not be what Davis really needs. He stated that more time was needed for the plan, and staff should request more time with the State. He indicated that a steering committee could be formed that could work together. He concluded that a step-by-step plan would be needed to get to the tree canopy.

At the conclusion of this item, C Walsh resumed his role as Chair.

C. Consideration of the Establishment of a Subcommittee on Lessons to Inform Urban Forestry Planning Efforts.

The item was introduced by the Chair, who asked for the Commission to consider moving quickly with the item.

Brief discussion included:

- A friendly amendment to add “*recommend any areas of the tree ordinance that should be prioritized for revision sooner.*” This was not accepted by the mover.

Motion: that the Commission form a subcommittee to look at what we have learned from the past and use that to instruct how we are going to manage the future, by creating a subcommittee that gives recommendations to the City Council on how to manage development projects, and the trees related to them as an interim measure before the tree ordinance is finalized.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by J Reuter. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent:

Motion: to appoint John Reuter, Jim Cramer, and Larry Guenther of the subcommittee.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by J Cramer. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent:

No public comment was received on the item.

7. Commission and Staff Communication

A. Subcommittee Updates.

- a. A report was provided that the Urban Recovery Subcommittee has met, and has the contact info for district supervisor for West Coast Arborist – the subcommittee would reach out talk to them how they deal with trees once removed and what value they have.
- b. The Charter subcommittee has been meeting and will be presenting at the next meeting.
- c. A question was raised on the status of 2x2 parking lot recommendations – staff indicated that the interim recommendations need to be brought forth to Council, once goes to council, the discussion will reaffirm other items that the 2x2 has been tasked to look at, and will get those moving again. Staff stated that moving forward the City should have additional staff resources.

B. Workplan and Long Range Calendar

The item was introduced by the Chair.

Brief discussion included:

- A request that the next meeting would include an item on the CAAP discussion, and the opportunity for the Commission to work with the liaison to the NRC to prepare a letter that could be sent to the NRC and Council in their deliberation of the CAAP.
- The suggestion that the establishment of a subcommittee for the Urban Forest Management Plan to be able to assist with the effort.
- Appreciation was expressed for Tim Moran and Charles Murphy attending the meeting.

The item was opened for public comment, and one comment was received:

- Alan Hirsch: spoke to three items. 1. The Commission should frame everything as a possible action; 2. Biggest thing for the new Urban Forest Manager in the next month will be orienting to the City, the City should share his application and resume with the Commission; 3. Issues: you should develop a list of issues that you would like to discuss

in the urban forest management plan, so you can act, the issues as part of the UFMP are so important, Woodland is not addressing the issues. Read the last UFMP and see what's going on.

No formal action was taken.

8. Adjourn

Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 10:11 p.m.

Moved by J Cramer, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Gill, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: