



**City of Davis**  
**Tree Commission Minutes**  
**Remote Meeting**  
**Thursday, July 21, 2022**  
**5:30 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Colin Walsh-Chair, Jim Cramer,  
Larry Guenther-Vice Chair, W. Allen Lowry

Commissioners Absent: Tracy DeWit, Tony Gill, John Reuter

Council Liaison(s) Will Arnold  
Present:

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

Also in Attendance: Rachael Sitz & Allison Serafin Steere, Davey Resource Group  
(names voluntarily provided) Jacob Byrne, Sara Geonczy, Marcus Marino,  
Elaine Roberts-Musser

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**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

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

**2. Approval of Agenda**

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

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, Guenther, Lowry

Noes:

Absent: DeWit, Gill, Reuter

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

- S Gryczko announced that during the budget discussions at Council, an additional Urban Forestry Technician position was authorized for the Urban Forestry Division.

#### 4. Public Comment

No members of the public provided public comment.

#### 5. Consent Calendar

##### A. Tree Commission Minutes – May 19, 2022

##### B. Tree Commission Minutes – June 16, 2022

##### C. Informational Tree Removals

##### D. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update

Prior to the approval of the Consent Calendar, a note was made on a small correction to the May 19, 2022 (to indicate the item on the agenda in which L Guenther acted as Chair).

L Guenther moved to approve the consent calendar as amended, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, Guenther, Lowry

Noes:

Absent: DeWit, Gill, Reuter

#### 6. Regular Items

##### A. Street Tree Removal Requests.

The item was introduced by Charlie Murphy, the City's Urban Forestry Manager, who provided brief presentations on the requests for a street tree removal.

##### Location

##### Tree Species

1. 641 Amherst Drive

Aristocrat Pear (2)

**Motion:** Follow staff recommendation to remove and replace the trees.

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

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, Guenther, Lowry

Noes:

Absent: DeWit, Gill, Reuter

##### Location

##### Tree Species

2. 1830 Rushmore Lane

Flowering Pear

**Motion:** Follow staff recommendation to remove and replace the tree.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, Guenther, Lowry

Noes:

Absent: DeWit, Gill, Reuter

*No public comment was received on this item.*

**B. Urban Forest Management Plan: Resource/Land Use Analysis.**

The item was introduced by A Heinig, who provided a brief introduction to the presentation from Davey Resource Group on the City Tree Resource Analysis. The presentation was provided by Rachael Sitz of Davey Resource Group. Commission liaisons from the Historical Resource Management, Natural Resources, Open Space and Habitat and Utilities Commissions were introduced.

Commission discussion included the following:

- In response to the question of how the City urban canopy compares to nearby communities, R Sitz indicated that the canopy was higher relative to neighboring cities, but would follow-up with more information. The data gathered on the canopy was called out as useful for monitoring and evaluating what is happening in the City over time. As a follow-up, staff indicated Sacramento reported 19% canopy coverage in 2018.
- It was suggested that the analysis include newer developments to see how the trees age. A Steele indicated that the analysis could include census block group data.
- In response to a question it was noted by staff that the presentation slides had been posted online.
- When asked if the analysis would include trees located outside of the urban canopy, in open spaces maintained by the City, R Sitz included that the resource analysis did not include those trees.
- The request to include the landmark trees in the report.
- The request to include a future trajectory to see how the trees will fair in the future in the UFMP, as climate change is having impacts right now. The consultant indicated the resource analysis includes valuations on the current status of trees included in the inventory.
- When asked if the analysis of the trees would include the benefits to wildlife, R Sitz indicated that the habitat review would include a fragmentation analysis, not a suitability analysis.
- The concern that tree coverage in the community is low, and none of the parks reach the level of canopy coverage required, with an overall feeling that the City has it good, but it could be better.
- Having a plan with no metrics would be pointless, appreciation was voiced for suggestions for metrics included and could be used in decision making.
- Appreciation for having a member of the Natural Resources Commission included in the discussion to look at heat islands, and inclusion of trees in

the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), as well as the Commission's Council representative.

- Statements on how the maintenance of trees can equate to an investment in the community, and how the investments should be broadened to all areas of the City.
- A request to compare neighborhoods developed around the same time and corresponding canopy.
- John Barovetto Park, and the absence of trees related to wildlife habitat preservation, and the benefits of focusing on the urban canopy for habitat value.
- Developing a GIS tool to identify locations of landmark trees.
- In response to a question about fruit trees, R Sitz indicated that the second table in the appendix provided a summary of the number of fruit trees.
- How the point in time analysis is important to developing policy moving forward, and how it would be good to conduct the analysis again to see trends. The heat map was called out as a very useful tool.
- The importance of a public/private partnership in the expansion of the urban forest (called out as an action in the draft Climate Action and Adaptation Plan).
- Councilmember Arnold suggested he would be interested in the City Council receiving the information provided by the City Tree Resource Analysis.
- The suggestion that the City could look to remove asphalt in public areas, replacing it with trees and stormwater swales in the roadway, which could have the added benefit of traffic calming.

*No public comment was received and no formal action was taken on this item.*

*The Commission recessed from 7:22 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.*

### **C. Urban Forest Management Plan Subcommittee.**

The item was introduced by S Gryczko, who outlined the item before the Commission, to consider forming a subcommittee to work with staff on the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Brief commission discussion included:

- The request that the formation of the subcommittee be shared with the absent commissioners prior to the next meeting.
- Clarification that a new member could be appointed in the future if necessary.

**Motion:** to form a subcommittee to address the Urban Forest Management Plan in detail.

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

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, Guenther, Lowry

Noes:

Absent: DeWit, Gill, Reuter

**Motion:** to appoint Colin Walsh and Larry Guenther to serve on the Urban Forest Management Plan Subcommittee.

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

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, Guenther, Lowry

Noes:

Absent: DeWit, Gill, Reuter

#### **D. Lessons Learned Subcommittee Update.**

The item was introduced by L Guenther, who provided information on the work of the subcommittee so far, and outlined the items that were provided for the Commission to review in the meeting packet, including a summary of areas of focus for the subcommittee in the review (in finding gaps and opportunities in the City's existing tree policies) and a resolution from the Commission requesting that Council consider the City's urban forest as City infrastructure.

Commission discussion included:

- Concern about the care of trees on private property due to the drought conditions and property owners shifting to watering less or not at all. It was suggested that the City should consider greater efforts on outreach related to the maintenance of the trees on private property, especially rental properties. Concern was also expressed that absentee landlords and renters would disregard City messaging around watering trees. It was suggested that the City should target messaging to property owners and property management companies, with specific reference to the City's ordinance provisions related to private maintenance of trees.
- Clarification that the primary focus for the discussion at the meeting would be the goals of focus for the subcommittee.

- Suggestion to add “cooperation between the City and private property owners, both residential and commercial to increase our urban forest” as a focus of the subcommittee.
- Concern that benign neglect of trees would be no different than willfully cutting down a tree, and the maintenance of the City’s urban forest would have to prevent both to ensure an expanding canopy.
- In the resolution - the need to further define the suggested actions that the City would take if the urban forest were to be declared as infrastructure.
- In the resolution - the importance of defining the urban forest as part of the resolution proposed for Council.
- In the resolution - a request for clarification on the anticipated outcome of defining the City’s urban forest as infrastructure, and the possibility of determining that all private trees (including those not currently protected by the City’s ordinance) should be publically protected.
- A suggested first step in the public engagement to establish the fact that all of the trees in the community belong to and benefit the community.
- Action on the resolution was pushed to the August meeting for further refinement on the language.
- Appreciation was expressed for the work of the subcommittee.

**Motion:** to accept the Subcommittee categories as written, with the inclusion of the new Item E [**finding mechanisms (including education and outreach) for promoting cooperation between the city and private land owners in the care of trees**] as the general categories in which the Lessons Learned subcommittee will function.

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

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, Guenther, Lowry

Noes:

Absent: DeWit, Gill, Reuter

*No public comment was received on the item.*

#### **E. Informational Tree Removals in City Parks & Long-Term Planning Efforts**

The item was introduced by C Murphy, who provided a brief presentation on the background for staff actions related to informational tree removals in City parks.

Brief commission discussion included:

- The importance of discussing long-term plans for replacement of trees in City parks as well.
- Appreciation for the plan and outreach provided by staff.
- The importance of being proactive in noticing neighborhoods about tree removals, neighbors care greatly for their parks and being notified of what's going on is very important.
- The need to ensure that the public is aware staff are looking at tree assessments in City parks, as there is concern about safety in parks. It was noted that the public should be aware not to play under trees on windy days.

*No formal action was taken, and no public comment was received on the item.*

#### **F. Chair/Vice Chair Elections**

The item was introduced by S Gryczko, who updated the Commission on the last time an election was held for the Chair and Vice Chair positions (May 2021) and possible actions the Commission could take at the meeting to either conduct an election or defer the election to January 2023, to set the term of Chair and Vice Chair with the calendar year, a practice held by a number of Commissions and encouraged in the Commission Handbook.

Brief commission discussion included:

- Support to retain the current Chair and Vice Chair until the end of the calendar year.
- The willingness of the current incumbents to continue to serve in both roles.
- The reminder that the Tree Commission historically has elected a new Chair and Vice Chair each year, rather than support multiple-year terms.

**Motion:** to extend the current Chair (Colin Walsh) and Vice Chair (Larry Guenther) term until January 2023.

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

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, Guenther, Lowry

Noes:

Absent: DeWit, Gill, Reuter

*No public comment was received on the item.*

#### **7. Commission and Staff Communication**

**A. Subcommittee Updates.**

- a. The Urban Wood Reclamation Subcommittee member J Reuter updated the Commission on the request to get a number from West Coast Arborist (WCA) on how many trees from the City of Davis are reused.
- b. The Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) liaison J Cramer indicated that the last NRC meeting included an update on the CAAP process, however the draft document is anticipated to be available in August.

**B. Workplan and Long Range Calendar**

The item was introduced by S Gryczko, who outlined the calendar for the next few months of Commission meetings.

Brief discussion included:

- To include the lessons learned subcommittee update on the meeting in August.
- The inclusion of the Downtown Plan EIR on the August agenda, and the request to review the letter that was submitted by the Tree Commission on the Downtown Plan two years ago.

*No public comment was received and no formal action was taken.*

**8. Adjourn**

**Motion:** to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

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

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, Guenther, Lowry

Noes:

Absent: DeWit, Gill, Reuter