



**City of Davis**  
**Tree Commission Minutes**  
**Remote Meeting**  
**Thursday, August 18, 2022**  
**5:30 P.M.**

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Council Liaison(s) None  
Present:

Staff Present: Jeremy Ferguson, Deputy Director  
Adrienne Heinig, Assistant to the Director  
Charlie Murphy, Urban Forestry Manager  
Chelsea Becker, Administrative Coordinator

Also in Attendance: Rachael Sitz & Tina McKeand (Davey Resource Group)  
(names voluntarily provided) Jacob Byrne, Cheryl Essex, Sara Geonczyk, Michael Guss,  
Elaine Roberts-Musser  
Jim Daniel

---

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

Chairperson Walsh called meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

L Guenther moved to approve the agenda, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

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

Noes:

Absent:

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

- C Murphy had two announcements:
  - Tracy DeWit resigned from the Tree Commission
  - Jeremy Ferguson joined the City as a Deputy Director in Public Works Utilities and Operations

- L Guenther mentioned that the Tree Davis tribute tree program for the memorial grove continues to be successful, and Tree Davis is scouting for new places as they are in need of new sites. He said they are also looking at turf conversions, and expanding the planting of climate ready tree species across the City.

#### 4. Public Comment

One member of the public provided public comment:

- Jim Daniel: Spoke to the Commission about a project at the University Retirement Community (URC), where he lives. He said that he had emailed the Commission with a concern about a management plan to remove 36 trees from the property. He had learned from staff that there was no record of an application for the removal or permission from the City, and was told by the URC management that 7 trees would be removed starting on Monday. He concluded with the hope that staff would ensure that the URC complies with the City's ordinance.

#### 5. Consent Calendar

##### A. Tree Commission Minutes – July 21, 2022

##### B. Informational Tree Removals

L Guenther moved to approve the consent calendar, seconded by A Lowry.

Approved by the following votes:

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

Noes:

Absent:

#### 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. 3040 Prado Lane

London Plane

**Motion:** Follow staff recommendation to retain the tree.

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

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

Noes:

Absent:

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

- Did not state name - Indicated that they had sent in a PDF file to the Commission which illustrates a crack that was noticed a year ago (in exhibit C). Stated that they moved into the house in 2018, and there was a crack that was noticeable (shown in exhibit G), in the walkway that has increased in size and has lifted the walkway. Stated that with children at the property, they want to make sure there are no hazards and everyone is safe.

**Location**

**2. 4103 Tallow Place**

**Tree Species**

**American Sycamore**

*Motion: to put the decision on hold, to await further discussion between urban forestry and the homeowner, and once we have that information we can reconsider the removal request*

*Moved by J Reuter, seconded by T Gill. Motion failed by the following votes:*

*Ayes: Gill, Reuter*

*Noes: Walsh, Guenther, Cramer, Lowry*

*Absent:*

**Motion:** To remove the tree, and that the City work with the homeowner to replace with a tree more suitable to xeriscape landscaping.

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

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

Noes:

Absent:

*No public comment was received on this item.*

**B. Urban Forest Management Plan: Summary of Challenges and Opportunities Learned & Identified to Date.**

The item was introduced by C Murphy, who provided clarification in the memo from staff related to the data contribution to the Urban Forest Management Plan, and introduced Tina McKeand and Rachael Sitz of Davey Resource Group, who presented on the work so far related to the UFMP, next steps, and more detail on the plan's components. The presentation also included a snapshot of the UFMP layout for the webpage, as well as opportunities and challenges from

conversations with key collaborators, Tree Davis, and City staff. Commission liaisons from the Finance and Budget and Planning Commission were introduced.

Commission discussion included the following:

- Clarification that the plan focus was on City trees. In response to a question about work underway from the Lessons Learned subcommittee on how the City engages with private trees, staff indicated that ideas on how the City can be engaged with trees on private property could be part of the plan.
- In response to a question about canopy goals, the consultant indicated that a canopy goal would likely be an outcome of the process. Further discussion on the data output of the plan included the concern that City staff receive the appropriate training to be able to utilize the plan and data moving forward.
- In response to a question about shade calculations, the consultant indicated that the plan data would be able to calculate the necessary trees to produce a chosen percentage of shade.
- Concern that the City is collecting the right data to be able to answer the important questions.
- In response to a request that the City's inventory data be made public, staff indicated that the data is not currently accessible, but staff are looking to provide the information in a usable form online.
- Confirmation that the revision of the City's tree ordinance would be conducted concurrent to the development of the plan.
- In response to a question about using volunteers to perform tree inventories, staff indicated that there are mixed results with volunteer efforts, with significant staff time necessary for training, and the importance of working with arborists to collect data to use an inventory as a management tool (condition of the trees is a key component volunteers may not be able to address). Additional benefits of professional inventories include the ability to perform ongoing comparative analyses.
- Parking lot shade data, and the ability to undertake higher level analyses of parking lots to direct "on the ground" efforts to see how parking lots may or may not be meeting shade goals.
- In response to a question about involvement of the University in the planning effort, staff responded that the non-profit Tree Davis is the primary partner, but staff could reach out to University staff to see if they might assist beyond participating in the collaborator interviews.
- A request that the consultant provide an overview of the plan's online format and the tree keeper canopy software at a future meeting.

- In response to a question about water use, GHG emissions and fire mitigation being a part of the plan, the consultant responded that GHG emissions and fire mitigation are included. Data on water use is not specific enough in current form for the plan to use.
- Concern that the public are unaware of the responsibilities for property owners that are included in the City's Tree Ordinance. More education for the public on their responsibilities with City trees, and guidelines for the tree removal process were mentioned as priority focuses.
- A set of criteria for removing trees was encouraged to be established, with findings from the Commission on the removal requests based on those criteria.
- The Natural Resource Commission indicated a shared interest in looking to quantify the electricity savings that could be acquired from tree shade. It was suggested that the request could be placed in the plan as a future priority or done with existing data, with the emphasis that the plan needs to be sure the City is taking into account the benefits that can be achieved for active and transportation infrastructure.
- An important focus of the plan should be looking at collecting more and comprehensive data moving forward, including a focus on equity issues in planting locations, or tree maintenance.
- It was encouraged that information on the public events for the plan be shared on all media platforms.

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

*The Commission recessed from 8:03 p.m. to 8:12 p.m.*

### **C. Downtown Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Review and Comment, Consideration of a Subcommittee.**

The item was introduced by A Heinig, who provided a brief background on the recent release of the Downtown Plan EIR, and the timing of the public comment period, which closes on September 16. C Walsh provided additional background on the involvement of current and former Tree Commissioners on the Downtown Plan, and work with the Downtown Plan Committee.

Commission discussion included the following:

- Appreciation for the comments of the Tree Commission on the Downtown Plan in 2020, and the noted lack of attention to trees despite references to trees in the plan.

- The suggestion that the Commission consider comments specific to the EIR (e.g. what is the impact of not planning for trees, despite references in the EIR to trees).
- The unfortunate overlook of the EIR around trees given that the canopy in the downtown seems to be one of the most important aspects of the downtown area.
- The discussion in the planning process to focus on the buildings and place making, and infrastructure. The discussion did not include sociology or behavioral psychology, despite trees being a fundamental component of making the downtown bearable, bringing people downtown.
- The focus of the consultants on the plan on zoning and economic development, not transportation studies and affordable housing during the Downtown Plan efforts.
- Concern that the Commission not spend time on the EIR if there are not specific comments on the EIR itself (rather the Plan instead), given that concern is less about what the EIR says and more of what the plan doesn't include. It was remarked that generally an EIR is not a guideline for implementation efforts.
- Encouragement for the Commission to submit comments on what the EIR needs to accomplish, within the time and resources available, both to offer feedback on the importance of considering trees in the Downtown Plan, and cautioning future plans from neglecting discussion on trees (such as the General Plan).
- Work on the lessons learned subcommittee, urban forest management plan policy updates ties in closely with the Commission providing comment on the EIR, specifically around the absence of trees in the downtown as mitigation measures.
- A request that the subcommittee consider whether comments from the Tree Commission on the EIR would be useful and/or necessary, and if so, to suggest the comments the Commission may want to share prior to the deadline for public comment.

**Motion:** to create a subcommittee to make comments on the Downtown Plan EIR from the Tree Commission.

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

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

Noes:

Absent:

**Motion:** that the Downtown Plan EIR Subcommittee be composed of Tony Gill, Jim Cramer and Alan Lowry.

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

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

Noes:

Absent:

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

The item was introduced by J Cramer, who introduced the revised draft of the resolution presented to the Commission in July, and outlined how comments and feedback from the Commissioners were addressed, including the definition of infrastructure, the need to be explicit about what was being asked of the City, and the uses of property types.

Commission discussion included the following:

- Appreciation for the work of the subcommittee.
- Clarification on the intent of the language for commercial and non-residential lands requiring canopy coverage and the connection to parking lot shading guidelines.
- When asked about specific recommendations related to the draft resolution under consideration, subcommittee representatives indicated that specific recommendations would be included in a document to be presented to the Commission in the coming months.
- Adjustment to the language of the resolution to clarify the intent of the document.
- The importance of calling out enforcement to maintain the health of City trees.

The item was opened for public comment twice, and two public comments were received from the same individual:

- Elaine Roberts Musser: indicated that she agreed with a Commissioner on the language in the second bullet not being clear, and encouraged that the language needs to match on paper. She indicated that the City has been neglectful in enforcing the parking lot mandate (and provided examples of Target, and the Marketplace) and indicated the need for clarity as to what the Commission is talking about.
  - In her second public comment: she indicated she was not sure how to modify the language of the resolution off the cuff, but said

editing the language shouldn't be difficult. She said there was a need to separate the tree cover for parking lots and tree cover for landscaped areas.

**Motion:** to reopen the public comment period on the item.

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

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

Noes:

Absent:

**Motion:** to accept the resolution as edited during the meeting.

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

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

Noes:

Absent

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

### **A. Subcommittee Updates.**

- a. The Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) liaison J Cramer let the Commission know that the draft CAAP had been released by the City, and the action item related to trees was modified in the draft version released. He stated that the CAAP now acknowledges that trees reduce heat islands as well as providing shade.
- b. The Urban Wood Reclamation Subcommittee indicated nothing new to report.

### **B. Workplan and Long Range Calendar**

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

Brief discussion included:

- A report from the Downtown Plan EIR subcommittee was added in September, as the comments are due to staff by September 16 (the day after the September meeting)
- To include the lessons learned subcommittee update on the meeting in October.

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



**8. Adjourn**

**Motion:** to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

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

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

Noes:

Absent: