



**City of Davis
Tree Commission Minutes
Remote Meeting
Thursday, September 15, 2022
5:30 P.M.**

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

Commissioners Absent: Jim Cramer

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: Don Shor (Tree Davis), Emily Griswold
(names voluntarily provided) Jacob Byrne, Sara Geonczy, Elaine Roberts-Musser

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

2. Approval of Agenda

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

Ayes: Walsh, Guenther, Gill, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Cramer

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

- L Guenther had two announcements:
 - On August 20, 2022 there will be a Tree Davis Memorial Grove Maintenance Event, working on weeding the Grove, pruning overgrown shrubs and trees, and adding mulch, starting at 9:00am.

- Tree Davis is sad to announce that the Executive Director, Erin Donley Marineau, will be leaving the organization. Information on the search for a new Executive Director is online at www.treedavis.org
- A Lowry had one announcement:
 - The Yolo County Grand Jury is in session, and has received one or more proposed investigations on the subject of trees.
- C Walsh had one announcement:
 - Tree Davis is holding their Great Davis Tree Search Bike Tour on September 24, 2022.
- A Heinig had one announcement:
 - The second tabling for the Urban Forest Management Plan will also be on September 24, 2022 from 9:30-12:00pm.

4. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

5. Consent Calendar

A. Tree Commission Minutes – August 18, 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, Gill, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Cramer

6. Regular Items

A. Tree Davis Presentation on Successful Tree Establishment & the Oxford Circle Park Replanting Plan.

The item was opened by C Walsh, who introduced Don Shor of Tree Davis and owner of Redwood Barn Nursery who provided a presentation on the challenges with tree selection with a wide variety of issues including soil types, irrigation concerns, and the increases in frequency and magnitude of extreme weather. He outlined the work undertaken by Tree Davis to aid in the selection of trees most suitable for planting, and described the tree species selected for planting at Oxford Circle Park.

Commission discussion included the following:

- Concern about trees planted in front yards of properties with absentee landlords. In response to a question about how the City could inspire the community to take care of trees, D Shor indicated that explaining how to

water, and how to water easily is important, along with the consideration of incentives for property owners to water trees.

- In response to a question about the best frequency of updating master street tree lists, D Shor indicated that the lists should be updated every 5 years, and the list should also include trees not recommended for planting (and why).
- When asked how tree selection guidance might be incorporated into the Urban Forest Management Plan, D Shor indicated that the Plan should include trees vetted by professionals, and that the tree selection process should include arborists. Guidelines for best practices.
- A reminder that the Commission is responsible for the review and update of the master street tree list.
- Encouragement that the City provide a list that is simple, and easily digestible for the community. It was noted that education and outreach are key components of success, with the Commission, staff and Tree Davis.
- The importance of scheduling a check-in for the master street tree list at regular intervals so it is not overlooked.
- In response to a question about the replanting plan for Oxford Circle Park, staff indicated that the plan was evolving as there were challenges with placement in the park and park amenities.
- In response to a question about the Tree Commission looking to consider removals of trees that may not be actively dying, but could be replaced with healthier trees with greater resiliency, D Shor stated that it would be good to work with the urban forest manager to ensure there's a plan for gradual replacements, and to have a plan to improve species diversity and age distribution.
- Encouragement for larger and more discussions around all of the work being done around trees.
- The importance of completing an updated tree technical manual, with guidance on how to plant trees.
- The importance of getting neighborhoods to participate in tree care, with previous work completed by Tree Davis as a possible guide.
- A reminder of the webinar scheduled for October 6 from 2:00pm-4:00pm talking about principles of urban neighborhood canopies.
- Concern that upcoming developments have plans for tree planting of species that grow faster, and the importance of working with developers on tree selection. Davis Neighbors Night Out was suggested as an opportunity for folks to visit meetings to discuss trees.

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

- Emily Griswold – thanked Don Shor for his comprehensive presentation. Stated in update of the University’s Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, there are similar issues with the City of Davis, and there are plans to start an urban forest management plan process within the next year or so. She observed that the current canopy is not going to be the species of the future, and her excitement to partner with the City on upcoming work. She voiced her desire to not have conflicting or redundant tree list that can be shared with the public and help the nurseries identify what should be available, with more demand. She closed with a note of looking forward to work with the City on the master street tree list.

No formal action was taken on this item.

B. Urban Forest Management Plan: Review & Consider 2002 Community Forest Management Plan Goals & Vision.

The item was opened by A Heinig, who provided a brief introduction of the 2002 Community Forest Management Plan. C Walsh requested feedback from the Commission for the subcommittee to receive, review and bring thoughts back for Commission consideration.

Commission discussion included the following:

- Concern around no mention of climate change or action to mitigate, or adaptation or resiliency.
- The importance of mentioning role of urban forest as a public asset, and to address concerns with social equity and justice.
- The lack of clarity if the wording in the vision and goals is intended for the urban forest, or for the urban forest management plan.
- To make explicit the tie to climate adaptation and resilience, and speak to the equity piece more clearly.
- If a vision for what the plan will be and what it will do is needed.
- Concern that the vision is too highbrow, as the public needs to know the purpose of the plan, what will be included, what won’t be and why.
- That the vision statement should be visionary.
- The need to understand how pieces fit together, in the larger picture.
- The request to see the policies to speak to specifics.
- The request that a policy should include some kind of standardized monitoring program (outside arborist or City staff) to evaluate quality and improve the quality of trees where there are issues.
- For policy 1.3 – “have diversity mix of tree species” - need to say why it’s important.

- The request to have a policy to “create metrics and process for tracking those metrics, and schedule those metrics throughout the term of the plan.”
- A hope to see something on climate preparedness, and the importance of mentioning heat islands.
- The note that accountability fits well with metrics, and could deserve its own goal to underscore the need to have accountability and metrics to know that a follow-through has happened.
- That the Natural Resources Commission is looking for integration of the UFMP with Climate Action and Adaption Plan (CAAP), with a highlight on shading at active infrastructure; differentiation in areas around the City; the need for policy that speaks to increasing canopy coverage in under-represented areas of the community.
- Goals should include discussion of optimizing the general health and growth of all trees (contribute more than shade). There should also be a goal to maintain trees with best practices.
- The request for a goal to increase and improve the tree canopy.
- The importance of having and maintaining clear criteria for tree removal.
- Challenges with writing laws and enforcement. It was stated that each tree that comes forward to the Commission offers different variables, and creating an absolute algorithm is difficult. It was encouraged that the City consider more education for property owners on what criteria is used to remove the tree.
- A request that policy 2.1 include that the promotion of planting is important, and it should be called out as a policy under the goals.
- Enforcement should be pulled out and highlighted, with clear demonstration of the code violations.
- An observation that the City is more comfortable with the model of hiring an arborist for tree monitoring.
- The importance that there is a concerted effort to education the public on what their responsibilities are, especially in terms of the City trees. It was noted that citizens are confused about the responsibilities toward the maintenance of city trees.
- The request that for goal 1 or 5: a policy could be collaborating with non-profits and other institutions of higher learning to improve the quality of the forest, with the encouragement to reach out to unique resources.
- The importance of including a date in the policy to ensure that the plan is updated/assessed every 5 years.
- A reminder that an update to the City’s tree ordinance is necessary.
- The request to establish a new goal which gives policy for establishing metrics, evaluating and enforcing and updating the Plan.

- The request for a policy to ensure that in low water years, trees are watered. Important to emphasize the value of trees to the community and the need for watering

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

The Commission recessed from 8:48 p.m. to 8:55 p.m.

C. Downtown Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Review Subcommittee Recommendation.

The item was opened by subcommittee representative T Gill, who outlined the process of the subcommittee in their review of the EIR to identify gaps related to trees. In their discussion of the recommendations, the Commissioners made modifications to the subcommittee report by consensus.

Changes included:

Section	Original	Revision
<i>Recommended edits</i>		
Preamble	To whom it may concern, On behalf of the City of Davis Tree Commission we submit specific edits, comments, and recommendations to the City of Davis General Plan EIR.	To whom it may concern, On behalf of the City of Davis Tree Commission we submit specific edits, comments, and recommendations to the City of Davis General Plan EIR. The EIR should require a mitigation plan that includes planning for trees in the Downtown Plan itself. The omission of trees in the downtown plan must be addressed, without a plan to increase the urban forest and maintain it, the mitigations called for in the draft EIR will not be accomplished. The Urban Forest Management Plan and updated Tree

		<p>Ordinance are in the process of being developed and can be a counterpart to the Downtown Plan.</p> <p>Comments in green are included as edits to the language of the EIR.</p>
4.1.1.2 Existing Conditions	The statement about trees obstructing a view is subjective and contravenes the city values principle going back to the 1960s, to provide shade and aesthetics for our community.	The statement about trees obstructing a view is subjective and contravenes the city values principle going back to the 1960s, to provide shade and aesthetics for our community. The statement would benefit from the removal of the second sentence, as it is indicated that there are no views to obstruct. The Commission considers trees to be scenic.
4.2.3.2 Plans, Programs and Policies Downtown davis specific plan	The existing statement is less of a specific plan and more aspirational. At the very least, we recommend adding “maintaining trees” to the list.	The existing statement is less of a specific plan and more aspirational. At the very least, we recommend adding “maintaining trees” to the list. Would also recommend changing “shade strategies” to “canopy cover” and “feasible” to “possible.”
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Goal UD 2 Policy UD 2.2 Standards	We recommend adding the parenthetical example: (e.g., Tree Commission)	We recommend adding the addition language to the end of the sentence: including but not limited to the Tree Commission.
Goal ENERGY 1	Strike energy use and replace with drought tolerance	Call out trees specifically for their ability to contribute to energy conservation through

		their ability to shade and cool buildings.
Goal ENERGY 1 Standards	Strike energy efficient landscaping and replace with more direct language (i.e., drought tolerance).	Add “drought tolerant” after energy efficient. Would suggest the addition of “and plant new shade trees.”
Goal ENERGY 1 Standards Actions c.	Strike energy demand and replace with increase drought tolerance	Add “increase drought tolerance” after energy demand. Consider adding “The City, where possible, should provide trees.” “Property owners” should replace “residents” in the first sentence.
GOAL POS 5	Strike agricultural land and natural habitat areas and replace with urban forest	Include urban forest in addition to habitat, agricultural lands and open space.
4.1.1.2 Existing Conditions	Replace “street trees which contribute to a distinct pedestrian character” with trees which reduce heat island effects”	After “street trees which contribute to a distinct pedestrian character” include “trees which reduce heat island effects and provide habitat”
BIO-5 Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances pertaining to tree preservation.	We recommend additional language of benefits of trees to include reduce urban heat island effect and provide shade.	We recommend additional language of benefits of trees to include habitat, psychological and health benefits, and reduce urban heat island effect in addition to providing shade.
<i>General comments</i>		
Air Quality (pp. 69-109)	I’m not sure how much trees reduce pollutants or sequester them, but perhaps they do.	Trees reduce pollutants and sequester them.
Biological Resources (pp. 111-125)	This seems implausible but I don’t know if that’s sufficient reason to state that this impact has been neglected.	The potential removal of trees must be considered in the EIR.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (pp. 161-195) – first bullet	Neither the downtown plan nor the EIR explicitly connect trees to this design goal.	Neither the downtown plan nor the EIR explicitly connect trees to this design goal. The EIR should connect trees to this design goal.
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Commission discussion outside of the report modifications included the following:

- Caution not to worry about specific details.
- When asked to explain the recommendation on tree height to prevent street light blockage, A Lowry indicated that street lights and trees need to be coordinated to ensure adequate lighting at night.

Motion: to accept the comments as modified and submit the comments from the Tree Commission on the Draft Downtown Plan EIR.

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

Ayes: Walsh, Guenther, Gill, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Cramer

No public comment was received.

7. Commission and Staff Communication

A. Subcommittee Updates.

- a. It was reported that the Lesson’s Learned Subcommittee has met, and will have something by October’s meeting.

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 request that the discussion of the ordinance include feedback from HELIX, and a request to understand how the data gathered for the Urban Forest Management Plan will help staff and the City make urban forestry management decisions.
- A note that the master street tree list will be shared with Tree Davis to ask for recommendations.

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

8. Adjourn

Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 p.m.

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

Ayes: Walsh, Guenther, Gill, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Cramer