



City of Davis
Tree Commission Meeting Minutes
Remote Meeting
Thursday, February 16, 2023
5:30 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Colin Walsh-Chair, Larry Guenther-Vice Chair,
Jim Cramer, Ann Daniel, W. Allen Lowry (*Joined at 6:15pm*),
John Reuter

Commissioners Absent: None

Council Liaison(s) Present: Will Arnold

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

Also in Attendance: Tina McKeand & Rachael Sitz, Davey Resource Group
(names voluntarily provided) Thomas Rost, Julia Mouat, Cheryl Essex,
Elaine Roberts Musser, Jessica Jacobson,
Todd Edelman, Alan Hirsch, Josh Jones, Torin Dunnivant

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson Walsh called meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

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

Noes:

Absent:

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

- Tom Rost of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) noted that he would be filling the role of substitute liaison from the NRC for the UFMP discussion. He noted that the regular liaison sent comments, and that he had reviewed the webpage.

- L Guenther noted that Tree Davis held a strategic planning retreat to look at what Tree Davis is going to look like moving forward.
- Jessica Jacobson of the Bicycling, Transportation and Street Safety Commission (BTSSC) introduced herself to the Tree Commission.

4. Public Comment

Two public comments were received:

- Todd Edelman: Spoke to the importance of tree canopy coverage at arterial, signalized intersections and at unsignalized turns where people should be shaded as they wait for traffic. Stated that canopy in these locations should be prioritized. Was concerned that the GIS mapping tool had incorrect information, although noted that some of the information was correct. Stated the information should be corrected in the very near future, as the tool was important and needed to be accurate.
- Alan Hirsch: Indicated that although the City would be moving away from Zoom public meetings, all participants in the meeting should be visible. Indicated there were no standards, as different meetings had different formats. Requested public gallery view.

5. Consent Calendar

A. Tree Commission Minutes - December 15, 2022

B. Information Tree Activity from December/January Storm Events

L Guenther moved to approve the consent calendar, seconded by J Cramer.

Approved by the following votes:

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

Noes:

Absent:

6. Regular Items

A. Urban Forest Management Plan: Draft Questions and Comments.

The item was opened by C Murphy, who discussed the previous meeting on the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) draft on February 8, which provided an overview of the website and addressed clarifying questions. He also outlined the intent of the item discussion, to take the comments submitted via email in between the meetings to speak to what was been addressed so far, and address other questions and comments that came up during the initial review.

Commission discussion included the following:

- At the start of discussion, L Guenther moved, seconded by A Lowry, to recommend the Urban Forest Management Plan be approved by City Council. After further discussion with the Commission, the motion was withdrawn by the mover.

- Additional navigation comments, and reiteration of concerns regarding the History of the Urban Forest and Tree Species Selection pages.
- Expected timing of updates to the “Benchmarks” sections (including the tree canopy and land cover assessment, and City tree resource assessment). Staff indicated every 5-10 years.
- What Council will actually approve with an online, dynamic plan. Staff indicated the approval would likely be for the Implementation Plan, and approach set forth by the UFMP, with updates to the UFMP approved by City Council if necessary.
- Appreciation for the inclusion of the comments from participating commissioners and commission liaisons.
- Inclusion of an action item to discuss the Tree Commission role in development reviews with City Council.
- Concern about the lack of priorities set forth in the UFMP. It was noted by staff that the intent of the UFMP is driving goals and objectives, and to return to the Commission with a plan for next steps with better understanding of the resource allocation supported by Council.
- Appreciation of the UFMP as an innovative tool, rather than a static plan, and an important opportunity to try something new.
- How the work to develop the UFMP will inform the updates of the City’s municipal code chapter on trees.
- A motion to approve the UFMP as a dynamic framework that will continue to evolve over the next 40 years, with the caveats that sections of the UFMP be removed until corrected, that continuous improvements would be made to the data tools, and priorities would be established was motioned and seconded, however after discussion the second withdrew and there was no motion.
- It was encouraged that the Commission make a single motion for the approval of the UFMP, and speak to concerns individually.

MOTION: To provide one additional minute for public comment.

Moved by C Walsh, seconded by A Daniel. Approved by the following votes:

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

Noes:

The item was opened for public comment and three public comments were received.

- Josh Jones: provided comment on the history of the urban forest section of the Urban Forest Management Plan. Indicated two changes would be helpful: second paragraph, notes: “used by Patwin for ... while never deliberately planting trees...” the language should be removed, as it comes

from older language in older studies, and it's not clear that the plantings were not intentional. Additionally, adding "...having been moved by American military" after paragraph three, the sentence "Patwin natives forced to leave in 1830" would be more clear, and more historically accurate. He noted UC Davis is on the grounds of the original orchard. He stated that the many objectives listed as high priority didn't leave a lot of room for differentiation, and suggested the development of a 5-year workplan for focused next steps.

- Torin Dunnivant: said it has been a great opportunity for Tree Davis to participate in this process. Stated he had been able to participate in the development of a number of different plans, and the City Urban Forest Management Plan group has so much positive energy, which speaks to the spirit of the City and how much love has gone into the planning. Outlined comments from the Tree Davis board, including an apparent discrepancy in budget numbers, requested the City clarify the actual cost to pay to maintain an individual tree in the population, include greater clarity in the future plans for tree care (goal minded vs. short term), and if the City would consider adopting private trees within the City's residential property easement.
- Alan Hirsch: Stated it was an amazing plan, and that the revolution of the City's tree program is amazing, with compliments to staff. Of concern is the implementation plan, as the lack of priorities is a problem (the City can't do everything all at once). Stated concern about distraction and burn-out of staff, did not want a website, emphasized the need to focus on giving people the power. He said if there is no priority and no deadlines there is no accountability. He indicated staff needed to include a list of prioritized next steps.

MOTION: Tree Commission strongly recommends that local indigenous people be actively engaged in rewriting the historical section UFMP to make a more complete and accurate narrative and this update take place within three months of Urban Forest Management Plan adoption.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by C Walsh. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Guenther, Cramer, Daniel, Reuter

Noes: Lowry

MOTION¹: The Tree Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the Urban Forest Management Plan as a dynamic framework with consideration of further recommendations by the Tree Commission.

¹ Prior to the vote on this motion, it was tabled by a unanimous vote of the commission to be taken up after the motion recorded before it.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by J Cramer. Approved by the following votes:
Ayes: Walsh, Guenther, Cramer, Daniel, Lowry, Reuter
Noes:

A Lowry left the meeting at 8:10pm

MOTION: The Tree Commission recommends local indigenous people and other experts in traditional ecosystem management, be engaged with the Urban Forestry division to improve alignment between future management practices and precolonial management practices and natural processes.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by C Walsh. Approved by the following votes:
Ayes: Walsh, Guenther, Cramer, Daniel, Reuter
Noes:
Absent: Lowry

The Commission recessed from 8:22 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

MOTION: to take up the remaining items on the agenda.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by J Reuter. Approved by the following votes:
Ayes: Walsh, Guenther, Cramer, Daniel, Reuter
Noes:
Absent: Lowry

B. Chair/Vice Chair Elections.

This item was opened by C Murphy. He outlined that the Chair and Vice Chair roles are for one year, however the prior Chair and Vice Chair's terms had been extended to shift the vote in line with the other City Commissions. As outgoing Chair, C Walsh indicated the role was a taxing job, with its challenges, and he was happy to pass the torch of the chair role. L Guenther, the outgoing Vice Chair, noted the many transitions in the Tree Commission over his tenure.

Brief discussion included:

- A nomination for Jim Cramer for Chair, which was respectfully declined.
- A nomination for L Guenther for Chair, which was also respectfully declined.
- Appreciation for staff in supporting the work of Chair and Vice Chair.

MOTION: Elect John Reuter as Chair, and Colin Walsh as Vice Chair for the Tree Commission in 2023.

Moved by C Walsh, seconded by J Cramer. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Guenther, Cramer, Daniel, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Lowry

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

- Alan Hirsch: complimented the outgoing Chair (C Walsh) on an excellent job chairing the commission through a challenging, rich times. Stated the Tree Commission was off to a new start, and he is excited about the future.

7. Commission and Staff Communication

A. Subcommittee Updates

B. Long Range Calendar

Brief discussion included:

- The March meeting being the first meeting to be held in person. It was noted that one of the beneficial things to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic response was the accessibility of commission meetings, which has been a benefit. It was asked if there were intentions to continue with recording and broadcasting meetings. Staff responded that Council had instructed staff to test different processes throughout March meetings, to report back on possibilities.
- It was requested that the March meeting have an item to request that Council direct staff to continue to broadcast and record commission meetings.

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

- Alan Hirsch: stated that the Council is on board for a downtown tree plan utilizing ARPA funds, and that the plan needs to be on the list of projects. He added the projects should be ranked based on cost, and how many hours of staff time can be saved. He indicated that a streamlined tree removal process could save time moving forward.

8. Adjourn

Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m.

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

Ayes: Walsh, Guenther, Cramer, Daniel, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Lowry