

## **URBAN FORESTRY TREE COMMITTEE OF THE SPOKANE PARK BOARD**

**February 4, 2009**

The Urban Forestry Tree Committee of the Spokane Park Board met February 4, 2009 at 7:00 a.m. in the Manito Park Meeting Room. Members present: Elizabeth Schoedel, Chairperson, Angel Spell, Melissa Burttt, and Phillip Lindstrom. Also present: Gary Lawton Park Board President, Barry Russell Director of Parks & Recreation, and Steve Nittolo Horticulture Supervisor Parks & Recreation. Gary Lawton stated that Kimberly Morse would be added to the committee.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 a.m., by UFTC Chairman, Elizabeth Schoedel.

The UFTC minutes from the previous meeting of January 14, 2009 were approved.

**Major Topic discussed:** Mayor Verner has instructed that a full-time Urban Forester Position be hired non-exempt on a fast track. This position will be reporting directly to the City of Spokane Mayor at least temporarily.

Mayor Verner asked the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the Urban Forestry Program at the January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, to put forward a recommendation as to where the Urban Forestry Program ought to be, with two possible choices; the Parks and Recreation Department or the Public Works Department. The Park staff developed a proposal to move the program to a division level within the Parks and Recreation Department. Public Works later produced a proposal moving the Urban Forestry Program to the Public Works Department. In the Public Works proposal the Urban Forestry Program would reside within the Real Estate and Facilities Department. The CAC conducted an E-mail poll and found that 9 members were in favor of moving the UF to Public Works, one was for Parks, and two were undecided. Several members also mentioned in their

responses that they would like to see it under the Mayor's direction. This possibility was also discussed at the CAC meeting.

The UFTC discussed the reasons the Citizen Advisory Committee voted the way they did:

- Lack of confidence in Parks - personalities, history, lack of resources, no expansion of program
- For Public Works- funding available, closer working relationship with other departments, a seat at the table (greater influence)

The question of how the work of the Urban Forestry Program would be accomplished under these different scenarios was discussed.

Barry Russell stated his concern that Urban Forestry could be moved from the Parks and Recreation Department only because the Public Works Department already has a funding source in place and not where Urban Forestry should logically be located, and that funding can be directed to Urban Forestry no matter where it is.

There was dialogue about whether to vote on the issue of moving the Urban Forestry Program. Melissa Burt made the motion to delay the vote until the March UFTC meeting, when all 5 committee members will be present. The motion was seconded by Angel Spell. The motion was carried.

**Other Business:** The Citizen Advisory Committee to Urban Forestry asked Angel Spell to make an inquiry about the status of the proposed Heritage Tree Resolution. It was given to the City of Spokane attorney's office. The CAC is frustrated over the lack of progress after approximately three months.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

The next Urban Forestry Tree Committee meeting will be Wednesday, March 11, 2009 at 7:00 a.m. in the Manito Park Meeting Room.