

Urban Forestry Tree Committee Meeting

January 14, 2009 Wednesday 7:00 A.M. Manito Meeting Room

Present:

Barry Russell – The City of Spokane Parks and Recreation Director
Steve Nittolo – The City of Spokane Urban Forestry Horticulture Supervisor
Elizabeth Schoedel - Park Board Representative
Angel Spell – Citizen Advisory Board Chairman
Melissa Burt – Pacific Garden Design
Phillip Lindstrom - School District 81
Janis Saiki – The City of Spokane Urban Forestry Program

Absent:

Jim Quigley – Park Board Representative

The Meeting was called to order by Chairman, Elizabeth Schoedel. This was the first official meeting of the UFTC as a subcommittee of Park Board so there were no minutes to approve from a previous meeting.

The Urban Forestry Tree Committee will be meeting the second Wednesday of every Month, (except in May) at 7:00 A.M. in the Manito Meeting Room. Barry Russell pointed out that it is important for the UFTC to meet at the beginning of each month before the scheduled second Thursday monthly Park Board Meetings so decisions on recommendations can be made promptly. It is important for senior members of the UFTC committee to be present for all meetings.

Major topic discussed: Which department should The Urban Forestry Program be under The Parks and Recreation Department or The Public Works Department?

In October 2008, Steve Nittolo and Barry Russell, developed a four-year plan for the program. The plan included an organizational chart, budget requirements, and goals to be accomplished. It would elevate Urban Forestry from a program to a division with an Urban Forester Director within the Parks and Recreation Department. This plan was given to Mayor Mary Verner and Dave Mandyke, Director of Public Works.

Barry Russell talked about the mid-December city staff meeting when Mayor Verner assigned David Steele, of Public Works and Jeff Perry, of the Urban Forestry Program to work together to determine a place in the city hierarchy and funding for the UFP. David Steele shortly afterwards presented a proposal to the Mayor recommending the Urban Forestry Program be moved from the Parks and Recreation Department to the Public Works Department. The implications of such a move were discussed by committee members. Melissa Burt motioned that the Urban Forestry Program remain within The Parks and Recreation Department. The motion was seconded by Angel Spell and was unanimously approved. Both the Parks Department proposal and the Public Works proposal would require increased funding for the Urban Forestry Program. It was discussed how sources of funding are impacting the decision where the UFP will reside.

Other Business:

Barry Russell said 2009 will be a year of charter review, planning and change. He mentioned article 5 will be drastically changed to reflect the changes in the City of Spokane Parks and Recreation Department in the last century. Each subcommittee will have the opportunity to be included in this course of action.

Steve Nittolo said the Citizen Advisory Committee to Urban Forestry is in the process of revising the Vegetative Management Plan, planning more public education like “Reforest Spokane”, involving the CAC and the UFTC in the Arbor Day celebration and developing a Heritage Tree resolution. Commercial Tree licensing requirements are also being reviewed in the ordinance. Phil Lindstrom mentioned that the public school communications would be a good venue for getting an Urban Forestry message out.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 A.M. The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 11, 2009 at 7:00 A.M. in the Manito Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted by Janis Saiki