

**GRANTS PASS URBAN TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes – July 12, 2021 6:30 PM**  
**Ridge Conference Room**

**Committee Members:**

Doug Tripp, Chair  
Dan McBerty, Vice Chair  
Michael Holzinger - Telephone  
James Love - Absent  
Jeff Soash - Absent  
Logan Werner  
Tami McBerty  
Chris Rudd - Absent

**City/Staff/Council Liaisons:**

Joel King (City Councilor)  
Tony Mecum (Parks) – Absent  
Brad Clark (Director of Community Development)

**Guests:**

Chris John (Ashland Tree Commission)

**AGENDA:**

**1. Roll Call:**

- a. Chair Tripp started the meeting at 6:30pm and then took roll call at 7:03pm.

**2. Introductions:**

- a. None

**3. Ashland Tree Commission Discussion – 6:30pm**

- a. Chris John spoke about the Ashland Tree Commission and its responsibilities. Some of the responsibilities of the Commission include the review of development plans and tree removal permits. The Commission holds meetings to review removal permits – applicants must present to the Commission.
- b. Ashland is complaint-driven for code compliance. People must call into the City for certain ordinances to be enforced.
- c. Commission also engages in tree inventory and plantings.
- d. Chair Tripp asked about tree removals and when permits are required. Chris John provided the following information:
  - 1. Only certain removals: single family residential requires no permit to remove a tree.
  - 2. When a residential property is large enough to be subdivided, a removal permit is required for a tree to be removed.
  - 3. Commercial properties and street trees are highly regulated and require permits.
  - 4. Commission engages in conversations with developers to see if a tree can be retained, but if a building construction/footprint does not allow for the retention of the tree, the tree can be removed.
  - 5. Trees over 6” in diameter are for review.
- e. Chair Tripp brought up trees and sidewalks and asked what Ashland is doing. Chris John provided the following information:
  - 1. Some projects involved the placement of decomposed granite around trees, replacing some of the sidewalk, with selective pruning, but this is not widespread.
  - 2. There are few options available to the Commission/City to fix sidewalk issues while preserving a tree. Because the street trees are not the sole responsibility of the City, management options are limited.
- f. Chair Tripp asked about outreach and planting projects. Chris John provided the following information:
  - 1. Watering, proper tree planting, and mulch awareness are promoted.

2. No budget to plant trees in the right-of-way. Earth Day is used to plant a tree and promote information.
- g. Chair Tripp asked how the information is shared with the public. Chris John provided the following information:
  1. Pamphlets in City Hall and on the website.
  2. Staff time is a limiting factor. There is no staff arborist or forester.
- h. Vice Chair McBerty asked about the ramifications if a person removes a tree without prior Commission authorization. Chris John provided the following information:
  1. Commission has no teeth, but a code compliance officer can issue a fine.
  2. The fine is based on size of trees. Can be paid or a certain number of trees are to be planted. 3-4 annual complaints come into the City, but the Commission does not review such complaints.
- i. Ashland Tree Commission meets at 6pm every 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday after the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month.
- j. Committee thanked Chris John, who then left the meeting at approximately 6:50pm.
- k. Committee discussed the conversation with Chris John.
  1. Chair Tripp discussed the reality of how trees can be removed during development in Grants Pass.
  2. Vice Chair McBerty stated his hope for the Committee's recommendations to Council (sent over 6 years ago) to be approved to increase the planting space and canopy coverage of areas like parking lots.
  3. Vice Chair McBerty mentioned how Eugene is losing 1% of its tree canopy each year and stated his concerns for Grants Pass's canopy and how much might be lost annually, especially considering Eugene brings in planting funding through their utility bills – something Grants Pass does not do.
  4. Councilor King shared the experience of his children who live in the Tigard and Beaverton area and how they are outdoing Grants Pass in number of trees, especially in commercial areas.
  5. Councilor King stated that the Landscape Amendment process is on track and that the Committee should be strategic in next proposals to Council.
  6. Member Holzinger said that the last three properties he sold lost over 30 trees.
  7. Chair Tripp read a section of Development Code Article 11 that illustrates a potential issue: trees to be preserved *when feasible*.
4. **Items from Public:**
  - a. None
5. **Approval of Minutes:**
  - a. Approval of Minutes from June 14, 2021.

#### **MOTION/VOTE**

**Vice Chair McBerty moved and Member Werner seconded the motion to approve the minutes as submitted. The vote resulted as follows: "AYES": Chair Tripp, Vice Chair McBerty, Members Holzinger, Werner, and McBerty. "NAYS": None. Abstain: none. Absent: Members Love, Soash, and Rudd. The motion passed.**

## 6. Action Items:

- a. Update on Landscape Amendments
  1. Director Clark discussed the history of the Landscape Amendment, which was compiled into a memo for City Council.
    - i. September 2015 is when it all began.
    - ii. Council reviewed the issues at a few workshops.
    - iii. Donna Rupp of the Planning Division is working with the urban forester to finish the specific language. Donna will be done in about 5 weeks with the language.
    - iv. Director Clark said that Council will be reviewing the update in August.
    - v. Councilor King said he will send an email to the Committee when the amendment is again before Council.
- b. Tree Protection Policies
  1. Chair Tripp mentioned that he met with the urban forester to review Municipal and Development Codes.
    - i. Brought up “Tree Professional” in Article 11 and how the definition is broad. This could be amended to only include a certified arborist. Proposed that this could be a City staff arborist.
    - ii. Vice Chair McBerty brought up possible pushback from property owners.
    - iii. Committee and Director Clark discussed the public right-of-way and zoning as they relate to tree preservation efforts.
- c. Preserving trees in green strips and during development – update on policies/codes from staff.
  1. Member Werner asked how the City hired Grayback to clear out brush in a wetland when his company was not able to remove the cottonwood trees.
  2. Director Clark said it could have been county jurisdiction, but Member Werner stated that the property is before Lincoln and within city limits.
  3. Director Clark said he will investigate the matter.

## 7. Matters from Committee Members and Staff:

- a. Vice Chair McBerty said there are about 70 areas along 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> that could use trees. McBerty has photos.
- b. Committee discussed the failed trees along Rogue River Highway.
- c. Committee briefly discussed Arbor Day in October and Councilor King recommended a press release on the topic.
- d. Member Holzinger brought up a dead tree at the water filtration plant.
- e. Committee discussed how some local nurseries and landscapers are providing poor quality trees and planting practices. This can contribute to tree mortality, even ten years after planting.

## 8. Future Agenda Building for Next Meeting

- a. Potential Planting Locations
- b. Tree Preservation Policy Discussion

## 9. Adjournment

- a. Chair Tripp adjourned the meeting without objection at approximately 7:50pm.

**Next Meeting: August 9, 2021 at 6:30 PM**

*Minutes prepared by Tony Mecum, Urban Forester, Community Development & Public Works*