

## Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 2, 2015  
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
Town Hall Meeting Room

*Note: The Action Minutes represent a summary of presentations given and actions taken. For a more detailed record, the audio recording of the meeting can be accessed through the City Clerk's Office, City of University Place. Contact Emy Genetia at (253) 460-2511.*

1. **Call to Order (7:00)** Chair Quisenberry called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. **Roll Call (7:00)**

**Planning Commission Members Present**

Mr. Cliff Quisenberry – Chair  
Mr. Frank Boykin – Co Vice Chair  
Mr. Steve Smith – Co Vice Chair  
Mr. Chris Barrett  
Mr. Diogenes Xenos  
Mr. Morry Stafford  
Mr. Tony Paulson

**Planning Commission Members Absent**

**Staff Present**

Jeff Boers, Principal Planner  
Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant

3. **Approval of Minutes (7:00)**

Amendments to the minutes of August 19, 2015 were suggested by Commissioner Stafford as follows:

- On page 2 of the draft minutes, under item 6 in the paragraph that begins "Consensus among the Commission", replace the word "change" with the word "increase"
- In the same paragraph, add "from 6" to the end of the paragraph.

**MOTION: by Commissioner Stafford and seconded by Commissioner Paulson to approve the amendments. Motion passed.**

**MOTION: by Commissioner Paulson and seconded by Commissioner Stafford to approve the minutes of August 19, 2015 as amended. Motion passed.**

4. **Public Comment (7:02)**

There being no public comment on any item not appearing on the agenda for this evening's meeting, Chair Quisenberry stated the Public Comment section of the meeting was closed.

## **5. Discussion: Tree Retention Code Amendments (7:03)**

Principal Planner Boers provided background on and a summary of this item. He stated that the goal is to bring this topic forward to a public hearing in October.

Commission discussion and comments included:

- Portland's options for determining tree retention do not address trees that are located within the proposed footprint of buildings. A suggested revision on page 5 of the tree retention code amendments discussion draft would limit the exception of building footprints to new construction of a single family dwelling on an existing lot of record that is not located within a subdivision or short subdivision approved by the City.
- Tree retention plans are maintained by the City in the files kept for development projects. Staff will check regarding the retention period for these plans.
- Commissioner Stafford identified four purposes included in Portland's Tree Preservation Zoning section that should be included in the City's code. They are:
  - Protecting public health through the absorption of air pollutants, contamination, and capturing carbon dioxide
  - Providing visual screening and summer cooling
  - Reducing energy demand and urban heat island impacts
  - Enhancing property values
- If the six Portland options are used, make sure there are exemptions available for instances where only one or two trees exist on a parcel.
- The Portland options seem complex. Option 6, retaining 35% of the total tree canopy, seems excessive for University Place. Staff has adjusted this to 25% on page 19 of the tree retention zoning code amendment recommendations.
- More options provides more flexibility.
- The ordinances have no teeth for enforcement. Penalties and the City's ability to enforce requirements need to be discussed.
- There needs to be a reasonable use provision.
- The City's code does provide for fines, and they have been levied in certain cases.
- Separate tree retention sections for developers and single-family home-owners may provide more realistic guidelines.
- It would be interesting to have information from Portland as to how these options work out in implementation. Staff will pursue feedback from staff in Portland.

At this point, a citizen in attendance was asked if he would like to address the Commission. *Mr. David Harrowe, 4616 79th Ave Ct W.*, regrets seeing a loss of trees. He spoke about the definition of "tree". He stated that the current code does not define what an invasive tree is. He suggested referring to "nuisance" trees rather than "invasive" and explain why the trees identified as such are a nuisance.

- The Portland options appear to be intended for developers, not single-family home-owners.
- On Item 19.65.270 of the UP tree retention code – what is the interplay between items A, B and C? The section is a bit complicated and should be re-written. Identify which items apply to homeowners and which apply to developers.
- It would be best to provide one simple straightforward option, but also provide alternatives with other options that may be more complex but perhaps more beneficial to a property owner or developer.
- Current requirements are difficult to administer and don't always result in the desired solution. The current proposal will not significantly increase the amount of trees retained because of the increased size threshold. The result may be the retention of better trees, although maybe fewer trees.

- Slight majority of commission is interested in exploring all of the options provided by Portland and there is interest in hearing feedback from Portland regarding topics including enforcement, tree trades, impacts on existing property owners, and considerations for maintaining the trees.

The discussion then moved to Heritage Trees. Topics discussed included:

- Approaches used by other jurisdictions.
- Identifying a tree on private property should be a volunteer program. What is the purpose of a forestry commission in a volunteer program if property owners have veto power?
- Should identifying a tree on City property as a heritage tree be a public process? Perhaps require a commission to evaluate and recommend to Council.
- Motion by Commissioner Stafford and seconded by Commissioner Quisenberry to table the heritage tree discussion for this evening. The motion was defeated.

**6. Staff Comments (8:56)**

None.

**7. Commission and Liaison Comments (8:56)**

None.

**8. Adjourn**

**MOTION: by Commissioner Xenos, seconded by Commissioner Paulson to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. (8:57)**

Submitted by:

Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant  
Community and Economic Development

Approved as submitted: September 16, 2015