

**CITY OF CORVALLIS
MINUTES OF THE CIVIC BEAUTIFICATION AND URBAN FORESTRY
COMMISSION
MARCH 11, 2010**

Attendance

Helen Ellis, Chair
Bill Johnson
Ross Parkerson
Angelica Rehkugler, Vice Chair
Mike Riddle
David Sandrock
Kent Daniels
Joel Hirsch, Council Liaison

Absent/Excused

Joe Majeski, OSU Liaison
Barbara Weber

Staff

Jacqueline Rochefort, Park Planner
Becky Merja, Urban Forester
Karen Emery, Director
Mark Lindgren, Recorder

Visitors

Steve Rogers, Dir. Public Works
Liz White, Downtown Commission
Mary Steckel, Public Works
Tom Cook, 2520 NW Hayes
Larry Passmore

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
II. Review of Minutes	X		
III. Visitors' Propositions	X		
IV. Staff Reports	X		
V. Sustainability Initiative Fee			Motion passed that CBUF lend support to the entire Sustainability Initiative Fee package as presented. Commissioners ranked the initiatives by priority.
VI. Downtown Commission Overview- Liz White	X		
VII. City Council/OSU Liaison Reports	X		
VIII. Committee Reports	X		
IX. Adjournment	X		The next CBUF meeting will be at 8 a.m. April 8, 2010, at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room.

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Helen Ellis called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. She introduced Larry Passmore, who'd been appointed by the mayor but not yet confirmed. She noted he received a CBUF Beautification award last year. Kent Daniels related that he'd previously planted street trees with Passmore. Parkerson added that Passmore had won a Historic Resources Award last year. Passmore

related that he attended Forestry School for two years; he eventually graduated from OSU with a degree in landscape architecture. He then developed a business renovating derelict historic buildings.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES. Mike Riddle noted that Paul Ries name was misspelled in the fourth paragraph on page 5. Sandrock noted that Frank Mauldin was incorrectly listed as being in attendance. Parkerson moved and Rehkugler seconded to approve the February 11, 2010 minutes as corrected; motion passed.

III. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS. None.

IV. STAFF REPORTS. Director Emery related the Budget Commission met last night and upheld the City's current methodology for budget reductions; each department will be reducing their budgets through a similar percentage of property taxes that they receive. The Parks and Recreation department must reduce its budget by about \$420,000; initial reductions include not contributing to the vehicle reserve; deferring maintenance; reallocating half of a park supervisor position and half of a management assistant position; and deferring training. The budget for next year will include roughly \$420,000 in reductions and a \$74,000 supplemental option for the Budget Commission to consider (out of a \$6 million budget). Staff are looking at reductions that impact the community the least; staff reductions may be necessary. Many decisions will be made before the next CBUF meeting.

Ellis asked about filling the management assistant position formerly staffed by Alice Renner; Emery related that if it is not refilled, the position would be lost, so she is proposing funding it for six months next year; the revised budget next year can revisit it. A Parks Supervisor is currently performing part of the work of that position. Daniels suggested it was a personnel policy that could be changed by the Council.

Daniels stated that the last time there were big cuts, there was a levy to prevent those cuts, though it failed; he asked if the Council was considering a levy, perhaps for May 2011; Hirsch replied that no one on the Council was talking about a levy. Daniels said it was important to give the community to give feedback on big cuts. Emery related the Council hadn't felt there'd been time to discuss revenue this year; the community does have the opportunity to weigh in on upcoming cuts at the public hearing on May 11. Daniels said that the current Council needs to get a revenue process started now. Riddle objected to the use of the word "enhancement"; it is just trying to get back to before cuts. Emery clarified that the word "enhancement" means asking for additional money; Riddle noted the word sounds like asking for fluff.

Merja distributed factsheets on the Sustainability Initiative Fee for Urban Forestry; it is a condensed version of what the UFMP proposes to be priorities for the first five years. Rehkugler praised the power of the photos in telling CBUF's story. Merja said there will be an insert in the City newsletter with some of the information, especially regarding tree care. It highlights that tree maintenance would be taken off homeowners' list of responsibilities; there would be an aggressive structural pruning program for the many new street trees. Hirsch suggested listing "increased property values" first among the bullet points.

Merja said the photo of a tree crushing a house occurred at Tyler & 8th Street. Merja suggested commissioners ask their neighbors to weigh in on the fees; including taking the web survey. Rehkugler suggested adding reducing maintenance costs to the option under the left photo of the white sheet. Sandrock added that success in the program will be dynamic, in responding to reoccurring situations. Rehkugler added that made the Urban Forestry fee would seem more nebulous and less tangible than the other initiatives; the handout helps make the problems seem more tangible to the public. Sandrock

related that a successful Urban Forestry program will be a system that can respond to changes. Hirsch noted the right side of the white sheet seemed stronger; Riddle agreed, noting that sustainability and the long-term benefits of an urban forest is harder to visualize than a tree crushing your house. Merja said that funding would allow the City to respond to tree situations and the homeowner wouldn't have to pull out their checkbooks. Merja agreed that outreach needed to more clearly articulate that the program would relieve homeowners of that maintenance.

Merja said that at the noon April 5 City Council meeting (during Arbor Week), the City will receive a Tree City USA award, as well as a Growth Award (for development of the UFMP and tree planting standards that CBUF reviewed that Engineering adopted). Rehkugler asked that commissioners wear their T-shirts.

Jackie Rochefort related Gwen Kubeck stated that the Green Street Program was being launched on Beca Street with raingardens; it will be the responsibility of the adjacent homeowner to care for that landscaping. Sandrock asked if the design was being done in-house; Rochefort replied it wasn't clear yet. The pilot program would require the support of adjacent landowners; Sandrock stated that how it is being presented to adjacent homeowners was critical.

Rochefort highlighted grant applications for re-doing pavers at Central Park Plaza; re-surfacing tennis courts; and buying recycling bins for all activities and facilities. The last of the Avery Park Rose Garden pavers were installed this week.

- V. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE FEE.** Public Works Director Steve Rogers related the City Council was considering five new fees to implement different pieces of community-wide sustainability. He said he and Mary Steckel were present to get commission's input or recommendations. He highlighted information in the commission packet. He said the Council's Administrative Services Committee (ASC) was scheduled to review them beginning April 21 at 3:30 pm. at the Madison Avenue Meeting Room; the ASC will get public testimony, then deliberate on May 5 and make a recommendation to the whole Council.

He stated that all five initiatives were supported by the Council's Energy and Transportation Strategies; some are also supported by the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition's Action Plan; for example, free transit. One of the initiatives supports implementation of a portion of the Urban Forest Management Plan. The Sidewalk Safety Program initiative was mostly driven by staff, to change how the program is funded and administered in order to make it fairer to the community and to reduce administrative impact.

Kent Daniels asked if the transit fee were funded, if it would replace all other sources of revenue; Rogers replied it would only replace property tax portions of revenue and fares (60% of ridership get on *without* paying any fares when they get on) and replaces in some way how OSU funds transit through the City.

Daniels stated he was in favor of the Sidewalk Safety Program, as the current program is an administrative nightmare. Rogers related that Bicycle, and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) and the Citizens Advisory Commission on Transit (CACOT) both expressed full support, and prioritized all five packages, in case the Council decides not to propose all five. Rogers encouraged members to encourage everyone they could to get feedback to the ASC; there will be an online survey regarding the proposal.

Parkerson noted that Urban Forestry is more complex and people tend not to think about it. Daniels asked about the current amount of the Street Maintenance Fee; Rogers said it was just re-authorized at the current rate: \$1.36 for a single-family home; commercial properties would be higher for two of the fees. Daniels said that the total would be about \$7, which for him, would increase his total bill in winter to about \$45.

Riddle asked about energy conservation/renewable energy initiative; Rogers replied the concept is that a pool of local dollars would be available for a City grant program to private individuals or City operations; for example, it could help partially fund replacing furnaces with ground source heat pumps, or solar roof panels to heat water.

Hirsch asked what the City liability would be regarding sidewalks under the change; Rogers replied the City attorney would have to review it and the Council could craft a re-write so that the City would not have to undertake full responsibility; for example, the city would not have to take liability for removal of vegetation or ice and snow. Rehkugler asked whether any consideration had been given to changing sidewalk materials to be more sustainable; Rogers replied that it was another topic, though it would be easier for implementation of solutions if the city had the maintenance responsibility for sidewalks, though it would involve negotiation with a property owner; Rehkugler said that was a plus for sustainability.

Rogers related the transit fee had been championed by Councilor Brauner, who has advocated the concept of free transit; Rogers said his own view is that if the community was being asked to pick up a cost to replace the general fund portion of transit funding, then they should get something for that, such as free transit. Until Measure 47-50, there was a separate source of funding that this replaces; that transit funding was well supported by the community over the years. Hirsch asked if there was evidence that ridership would increase significantly; Rogers replied that while a CACOT discussion anticipated a rush in ridership, there was capacity in the system to take more riders. Ellis related when transit is free to students in summer, busses are packed.

Rogers stated that the Alternate Modes Program was concerned with installing things such as pedestrian crossings and bike boulevards (most streets are supposed to have bike lanes).

Forester Merja related that the Urban Forestry Management Plan included a five-year implement plan with cost estimates; the biggest aspect was getting a tree care program, including getting the city on a pruning cycle; doing structural pruning of the 14 miles of recently planted trees in new developments in order to reduce risk for future hazards; and vegetation clearance for pedestrians. Comments from other groups included that sidewalks and trees appear to be interwoven.

Rogers said that three of the fees are for new programs: Urban Forestry, Alternate Modes and Energy; Transit and Sidewalks are existing programs that would be funded differently. The Council could decide to expand transit funding in order to provide more transit service. Daniels stated that he supported all the initiatives. Riddle said CBUF could declare support for the entire package, then do the rankings.

Riddle moved that CBUF lend support to the entire Sustainability Initiative Fee package as presented; Parkerson seconded; motion passed unanimously. Rogers said that Ellis could provide verbal testimony to the ASC. Rogers said he anticipated that there would be a number of staff reports for the first and second ASC meetings, with the second round of reports providing more detail on the pros and cons of the fees. Ellis suggested all members show up at the ASC meeting. Hirsch related that in two commission meetings and a neighborhood meeting, he heard only very little opposition to the

proposals. Emery related hearing positive feedback. Daniels said he'd heard a little opposition, mostly related to the non-graduated form of the fees having a bigger impact on low-income residents. Liaison Hirsch asked if the fees were enacted, whether the money would be dedicated; Rogers related dedicated fees for each program would be shown individually on each utility bill.

Commissioners ranked the fees: Sidewalk Maintenance and Urban Forestry tied at #1; Transit Service #2; Alternate Modes #3; Add Transit Hours #4; and Energy Conservation #5.

VI. DOWNTOWN COMMISSION OVERVIEW. Downtown Commission member Liz White related that the group's mission was to support the strategic plan written for the commission. It has looked at (or will be looking at) revisions of the Land Development Code (LDC) as it relates to the central downtown; downtown parking; streetscapes; the sign ordinance as it relates to downtown; farmers market; and sidewalk café regulations.

Riddle asked if the Downtown Commission was the same as the Downtown Corvallis Association (DCA); White replied the DCA was tied to merchants; Ellis added the DCA promotes programs that get people downtown. White clarified the Downtown Commission was more focused on regulation. Emery added the DCA was not a City board or commission; it is intended to promote business in the downtown. White said the DCA was funded by fees from merchants.

White described the commission membership. Parkerson highlighted Madison Avenue improvements; he asked if there had been any consideration to doing similar work to other streets, related to slowing traffic and beautification. White related that not all plans for the Madison Avenue Plan have been implemented yet; efforts have so far focused on signage and wayfinding. She said there is an ongoing problem with 3rd and 4th Streets not really being under control by the city; the state regulates what can or can't be done with state highways; Parkerson said work could be done on improving side streets. Sandrock said the Downtown Commission was unique in being place oriented and would benefit from working with other boards and commissions.

Riddle asked whether staff was attending Downtown Commission meetings; White replied that Planning Department staff support the meetings. Parkerson suggested the Downtown Commission present to the Madison Avenue Task Force, too. Ellis related that Dave Livingston made an interesting presentation to CBUF last month and suggested the Downtown Commission would also benefit from it.

Merja related that when the CBUF presented to the BPAC and the DC, there were questions about the old Streetscape Plan, which was adopted in 1988. The DC will probably review this in the future to see if it still fits their picture of downtown. Merja related that she was asked at the presentations if she had a plan for downtown trees; she said that while the Streetscape Plan is no longer part of the ordinance (it was very difficult to implement) she still considers it as she makes changes in the area. Rochefort related that staff attend DC meetings when necessary.

Rehkugler and asked if the DC was involved in the Verizon application regarding signage (she said it was a beautification issue); White replied the DC was only involved in the sign code; there are currently many illegal signs, banners, and sandwich boards, but the city only responds to complaints. Daniels related that the Verizon application was currently before the City Council.

Merja asked what area of town the DC was concerned with; White replied that the commission's purview included the Central Business District, from 1st to 6th Street, down to Washington; the Central Pedestrian Core and The Fringe. The Riverfront is different. Daniels said the proposed Urban Renewal

included parts of south Corvallis; White replied the commission's mandate only extended to the Mary's River bridge.

VII. CITY COUNCIL/OSU LIAISON REPORTS. Council Liaison Hirsch highlighted the DaVinci Days Film Festival this weekend.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS. David Sandrock, for the **Education/Outreach/Volunteers Committee**, said that several members and Forester Merja made a presentation to BPAC, using nine PowerPoint slides. He said that Merja was able to add history on how CBUF came to be. There were lots of good questions, including homeowner and policy questions. He and others also presented to the Downtown Commission last night. He said that both groups were pleased with the outreach; Merja added the outreach has broadened commissions' horizons. Ellis added that this should help make it easier for the groups to work out disagreements. Emery related that staffers often don't have a good understanding of what CBUF does, so she suggested having a presentation made to an all-staff meeting.

Sandrock related that CBUF was seen as setting the example for boards and commissions in regards to being proactive. Riddle said the presentations seemed to be an effective form of outreach; Rehkugler emphasized the need for also doing outreach to the public. Hirsch added that the Sustainability Initiative Fee was another opportunity for outreach. Rehkugler said the next step was determining opportunities to make public presentations and to develop another CBUF brochure that can be used in booths.

Rehkugler highlighted planning for the April 17 Earth Faire; she had two meetings regarding enhancing the CBUF booth. There were suggestions for a children's interactive game regarding trees; Merja highlighted a spinning "Wheel of Fortune" approach, intended to be compact, quick, simple, providing instant gratification and not requiring a lot of time of a single booth staffer to administer. Rochefort added there were other good ideas, too, but they would've required too much space in a booth. Rehkugler added there was discussion of developing one new interactive display each year. She asked commissioners leave space in their schedules to help staff that booth.

Daniels related the **Planning/Ordinances/Partnerships Committee** met, along with Merja and Rochefort; there was discussion of the Sustainability Initiative Fee.

Parkerson reported attending the 9th Street Improvements Committee meeting; there was disagreement regarding the proposed installation of medians. He said some business owners don't see a link between reducing excessive speed on 9th Street and dangers to pedestrians and bicyclists; they don't want changes and like 9th Street the way it is, so the outcome regarding medians seemed uncertain. Parkerson added there was no discussion regarding planting trees on 9th Street.

Daniels said the Sustainability Initiative Fee proposal would fund some pedestrian improvements on 9th Street, including crosswalks and islands.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:02 A.M.