

**CITY OF CORVALLIS
MINUTES OF THE CIVIC BEAUTIFICATION AND URBAN FORESTRY
COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 10, 2011**

Attendance

Angelica Rehkugler- Chair
Kent Daniels, Vice Chair
Helen Ellis
Ross Parkerson
Bill Johnson
Larry Passmore
Joel Hirsch, Council Liaison

Staff

Karen Emery, Director
Becky Merja, Forester
Mark Lindgren, Recorder

Visitors

Vicki Wills

Absent/Excused

Dan Bregar
Joe Majeski, OSU Liaison

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
II. Review of Minutes	X		
III. Visitors' Propositions	X		
IV. Committee Reports	X		
V. Staff Reports	X		
VI. Commission Member Reports	X		
VII. City Council/ OSU Liaison Reports	X		
VIII. Adjournment	X		The next CBUF meeting will be at 8 a.m. March 10, 2011, at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room.

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Rehkugler called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.
- II. REVIEW OF MINUTES.** It was noted that the third sentence in the last paragraph on page 5 should read, "Merja related that Dave Eckert may work with school kids..". Ross Parkerson moved and Helen Ellis seconded to approve January 13, 2011 minutes as corrected; motion passed.
- Rehkugler related that commissioner Mike Riddle had resigned.
- III. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS.** None.
- IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

Goals- Forester Merja related that a subcommittee of Daniels, Bregar, Parkerson, Rehkugler, Parks Planner Jackie Rochefort and herself met to review work on goals and objectives; the results were sent out in the packet. She said a number of goals were simplified and consolidated. She said the group wanted feedback on revising the current CBUF Mission Statement (which seemed a little dated) to “Protecting and Enhancing and Expanding the City’s Public Landscapes and Urban Trees”. Ellis liked the word “Forest” in the existing statement better. Passmore advocated for “Expanding” rather than “Growing”. Merja related that Rochefort advocated for including public landscaping, to not have the whole focus on just trees. Parkerson said the proposed version was more direct.

Merja said the subcommittee suggested recommended projects to focus on during 2011-2013. It includes helping staff implement the Sustainability Initiative Fee (SIF); the target for 2011 is for education and outreach to inform citizens of the new fees. She noted that the Tree City USA 10th Anniversary target date is actually 2012 (2011 is when the points for the award will be accrued). Regarding the Majestic Trees Program, the “Develop, launch and promote” target date is 2013 to coincide with the Majestic Theater’s 100th anniversary.

Rehkugler noted that some tasks were ongoing, such as CBUF displays and booths. The main thing for today is to get consensus on three goals for 2011. Parkerson asked why some text was italicized; Merja related that they are currently part of CBUF Goals and Objectives created when the group was formed, but which may need revision and updating. Rehkugler said the wording in the three goals still needed more work.

Daniels asked about ongoing tasks; Rehkugler said tasks needed to be assigned to committees, along with timeframes. Daniels noted that the booth displays was a big and important part of the group’s work; he suggested bringing it forward and making sure it stays on the list year after year.

Parkerson asked about Tree City USA Awards; Merja explained that the Awards require four things: There must be a commission or department that takes responsibility for trees in a city; \$2 per capita must be spent on trees; there must be an Arbor Day Celebration each year; and there must be ordinances that support tree growth and preservation in the community. The Tree City Growth Award requires that the program must be grown; she said it has done so in six years of the last seven or eight. Activities that have counted in the past for Growth Awards for Corvallis are the Know Your Trees Brochure; tree planting projects; and in the future, the Majestic Tree Program will count. The award evaluators want to see sustainable growth. The City must prove they’ve completed the tasks to the State Forester, who forwards the information to the Arbor Day Foundation in Nebraska.

Parkerson suggested more graphically illustrating the activities that generate the awards; Merja said that could be displayed at the website. Parkerson suggested listing those activities at the booth. Liaison Hirsch asked what would cause the Tree City USA Award to be lost; Merja replied that when times are tough, funding for tree programs is usually among the first things to be cut. If funding for trees is cut below the \$2 per capita level, that would disqualify receiving the Award. Also, losing a partner such as Pacific Power (which has a program of pruning and replacing with appropriate trees) would also have the impact of not qualifying.

Hirsch asked if independent activities, such as the CVHS arboretum, could count towards an award; Merja replied that it was done by the school district; Hirsch countered that the award was for the municipality as a whole. Merja said activities have to be something that CBUF initiates. Ellis asked if the SIF could be counted as part of the \$2 per capita funding; Merja said that that stable, ongoing funding source for tree maintenance will be the basis of this year’s Growth Award, and will help

recover some funding losses. She will bring in the Growth Award criteria for the commissioners. Daniels noted that Public Works' TMDL program will include tree planting, which should count.

Vicki Wills encouraged having independent groups be "spokesgroups" for CBUF. She suggested CBUF have a Facebook page, for example; Emery related that development of a City social media policy was several months away. Hirsch added that CBUF needed to be able to succinctly explain why having a Tree City Award was a good thing for the city; he suggested CBUF could cite increased real estate values and improved air quality. Rehkugler agreed that with low-level grumbling about the SIF fees, CBUF will need to be able to explain the benefits. Parkerson suggested pinpointed the work that is done to make the Tree City USA award possible. He highlighted the OSUNow group. Passmore suggested creating cards thanking people for their work on behalf of trees and beautification in the community.

Ellis related that the CBUF brochure and Breen's tree walks were directly responsible for bringing that OSUNow effort into being. She suggested inviting the OSU students that spearheaded the OSUNow initiative; Parkerson added that several students are working to promote history of individual trees on campus; Hirsch said the system uses GPS. Merja stated that she will contact the students.

Parkerson asked if there was anything new planned for the CBUF booth at Insights to Gardening; Merja related that the SIF material was too new to present. The booth will focus on landscape awards, nomination awards, and a tree raffle.

- V. STAFF REPORTS.** Director Karen Emery related that Mayor Manning was looking for a replacement for Mike Riddle, who occupied a Certified Arborist position on the commission. She noted that CBUF members are considered under the same rules that employees are: as soon as the levy becomes a measure on March 7, commission members may not promote or discuss the levy as a CBUF member, though they may do so as private individuals. She will bring information on what members can or can't do in regards to speaking on the levy.

Forester Merja distributed a signup sheet for the Insights to Gardening booth. The program, at LaSells Stewart Center, is put on by OSU Extension and Master Gardeners; there are classes on topics, and attendees visit booths between sessions. She included an unusual rhododendron for the raffle. Ellis suggested members wear their T-shirts.

Merja distributed a draft version of SIF FAQ's for review and comment. Hirsch asked if the liability issue was addressed; Merja replied it was and invited questions and comments. Merja distributed a draft "Notification to Property Owners" piece; it needs to be determined how to do outreach, such as in the form of letters or door hangers, letting property owners know that tree work will be done in their neighborhood.

She related that she, Rochefort and John Hinkle met with Tom Cook, retired OSU Horticulture professor, yesterday to discuss a series of urban forestry articles that he's interested in helping CBUF draft. The idea is to have pre-prepared information with talking points regarding urban forestry in advance of storm tree damage events, etc. She said the articles can include planting techniques, pruning and training information, with simple line drawings, which can be submitted at the right time during the season or when opportunities arise. She related that Cook said that CBUF needed to send information to the G-T regarding the urban forestry SIF fees and ordinances that relate to public right of way trees. Merja said that Cook had the energy and time to prepare the articles. Rehkugler added there should also be information explaining the sidewalk fee. Emery said the information could go on the website, as well.

Parkerson suggested printing the FAQ on the Urban Forestry Management SIF on bright green paper and including the CBUF logo, and having it available at the Insights to Gardening event. Emery suggested explaining that it was a new service, which was formally paid for by individual property owners; Rehkugler concurred. Several members suggested removing reference to specific dollar amounts in outreach materials. Hirsch noted that since the liability still remains with the property owner, he suggested materials emphasize that it is important for them to notify the City as soon as possible about defective trees; that way, it shifts responsibility. Rehkugler said we need to explain what is changing. Merja clarified that the service is not new, it is simply being funded differently.

City Council Liaison Hirsch said that the SIF should've really been titled "Efficiency in Government" fees rather than "Sustainability Fees"; they are effective tools for efficiently addressing issues in the public right of way and people have tried to implement them for many years. He noted that once the City was on better financial footing, he would lead the campaign to remove them as soon as there was a more efficient way of funding those services. He said there would never be a good time to introduce what is really a tax, which residents didn't get to vote on; the fees don't necessarily have to be permanent.

Merja noted that the Urban Forestry SIF fee will make her job a lot easier and she and Public Works have already started planning on how to deal with long-standing issues that community members have complained about. It is an opportunity to do something new and creative regarding sidewalks and right-of-way tree issues. She predicted that once the program is in place and producing results, residents will be pleased. Rehkugler suggested outreach identifying "How the SIF fees are good for me?" and how they solve problems.

Parkerson emphasized that the handout on the Urban Forestry Management SIF fee was an important chance to explain the fees to people. Wills suggested an approach, "Public safety is a priority for the City of Corvallis". Emery noted that previously, a property owner would have paid \$2,000 to fix a tree and still be liable. Rehkugler suggested emphasizing the fairness aspect of distributing the costs of maintaining trees that we all walk under. Emery said we can simply state the facts. Merja summarized staff will make changes to the draft handout. There was consensus to take the reference to funding out. Parkerson said that this simply explains how it impacts citizens; he said the draft was mostly done really well. Merja said she would add the piece on public safety under liability; the importance of property owners notifying the City of defective trees; and how it was formerly funded by individual property owners; now, this is a different way of paying for it. She encouraged members to contact her with any additional comments.

She related that staff have been working with Pat Breen on adding a third Breen tree walk during the August in Motion event (there are currently walks in April during the Earth Faire and the May Spring Garden Festival). The CBUF PowerPoint created by David Sandrock is now posted at the website. She is working on creating an interactive online SIF form, along with an interactive tree list (for people trying to determine what kind of tree to plant). She highlighted events in the CBUF calendar in the packet; the Arbor Day City Council awards will be April 18, and the Birkenstock window display will be from October 18 to November 1, 2011. Passmore suggested adding the Tree Walks to the calendar.

Parkerson noted that May was Historic Preservation Month, which highlights the history of buildings in Corvallis. He said that in most of the walking tours, trees were a big part of what is seen in the neighborhood and trees contribute to the ambience. He asked whether that should be included in the calendar. Merja suggested adding it as part of the Majestic Tree program for 2013.

- VI. COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS.** Rehkugler related she attended a meeting at the library regarding a sustainability peer learning group for nurseries, landscapers, and designers. Jeff Cope of Homegrown Gardens made a presentation about a program in Santa Barbara that fostered networking and certification of green horticulturists in the landscape industry and promotes sustainable gardening. There was also discussion of the best ways of dealing with the organic waste that the industry generates. Hirsch noted that Allied Waste needs that waste to counterbalance food waste. The group will meet again on April 16 and invite more people. She related that there was discussion and unhappiness regarding a new requirement for a bond for landscaping for new commercial construction. Johnson explained that a commercial landscaping business must post a bond for one year for new landscaping to ensure the landscaping is cared for and replaced if it dies; the bonds are not cheap. Hirsch highlighted another group meeting- "Prosperity without Growth".
- VII. CITY COUNCIL/OSU LIAISON REPORTS.** Liaison Hirsch noted the previous mayor had felt it inappropriate for a Council Liaison and a partner to serve on the same commission; he asked whether that was mayoral or CBUF policy. Rehkugler said Wills would be a welcome addition; several members concurred. Rehkugler said there were two openings on the commission; one for a certified arborist and another a general position. Daniels suggested asking Jeff Cope to serve as the certified arborist position; Ellis noted that a candidate's business must be located within the City, and Cope's business, Home Grown Gardens, isn't. Rehkugler suggested inviting him to a CBUF meeting; perhaps he could serve on a committee.
- XIII. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 9:54 A.M.