

**CITY OF CORVALLIS
MINUTES OF THE CIVIC BEAUTIFICATION AND URBAN FORESTRY
COMMISSION
AUGUST 11, 2011**

Attendance

Angelica Rehkugler- Chair
Helen Ellis
Ross Parkerson
Kent Daniels
Dan Bregar
Larry Passmore
Tim Brewer, Vice Chair

Staff

Dave Phillips, Park Operations Supervisor
Becky Merja, Urban Forester
Jackie Rochefort, Park Planner
Mark Lindgren, Recorder

Visitors

Glenna and Henry Pittock

Absent/Excused

Bill Johnson
Joe Majeski, OSU Liaison
Joel Hirsch, Council Liaison

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
II. Review of Minutes	X		
III. Visitors' Propositions	X		
IV. Staff Reports Proposed Tree Removal			Motion passed to recommend Option 1, to remove both trees and replant two trees.
V. City Council/ OSU Liaison Reports	X		
VI. Committee Reports	X		
VII. Commission Member Reports	X		
VIII. Adjournment	X		The next CBUF meeting will be at 8 a.m. September 8, 2011, at the Parks and Rec Conference Room.

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Rehkugler called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.
- II. REVIEW OF MINUTES.** Parkerson said on packet page 5, under Commission Member Reports, his comment should reflect that “..one tree on the east side of the street had been cut”. Ross Parkerson moved and Dan Bregar seconded to approve July 14, 2011 minutes as corrected; motion passed.
- III. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS.** None.
- IV. STAFF REPORTS.**
Forester Becky Merja highlighted the documents that Mr. Pittock submitted regarding his request for removal of two trees. She said she had done a site visit and displayed photos of the trees. She said the

trees in question were among the last four Sweet Gums remaining on the block. She noted that there are places in town where trees have been removed but not replaced (the requirement to replant tends not to be enforced). The four have significant stature; in terms of arboricultural standpoint, they provide good shade, are healthy and providing good canopy cover for the neighborhood. She highlighted damage by the tree roots to the driveway concrete. The trees are close to the house, which is fairly close to the right of way.

She asked for guidance from the commission about how to address the balance in situations like this, with tree damage to private property. She said previous direction is that if it is reasonable to correct damage to private property without creating a hazard tree, then the tree should be retained. In this case, it is difficult to find a way to both preserve the tree and infrastructure. The northern-most tree, in particular, has roots entering the sewer line that must periodically be removed; it is breaking up the garage foundation, and the tree is still growing. She asked if it seemed reasonable to ask the Pittocks to have to pay so much for repairs, especially when the repairs will be difficult, due to the proximity of the driveway, and there are major buttress roots that flare near the ground that would be difficult and expensive to prune or ground, which could affect the long-term health of the tree.

Mr. Pittock cited estimates from two contractors to repair the foundation alone, without additional costs of removal and replacement of garage slabs. He said there had been even further cracking and heaving over the last several weeks.

Parkerson said the site tour was helpful. The trees provide a considerable impact for the neighborhood and the home; however, there also must be consideration of the damage to the driveway, sidewalk, foundation and garage door. It's clear that the situation won't be much changed by surgery to the north tree, so he favored removing the north tree, but not the south one, which didn't appear to be causing as much trouble.

Glenna Pittock said the tree to the south had sustained damage a couple decades ago, when it lost its northern half and became misshapen. She expressed concern about leaving the south tree, since it would shade any newly planted northern tree. Merja said there wasn't room for a replant for the north tree; Glenna Pittock said an arborist said there was room to replant two if they were smaller and located differently. Henry Pittock added the south tree has large sucker growth.

Daniels said he had no problem removing the north tree; he asked for guidance on the structural condition on the southern one. He noted that the sidewalk damage wasn't an issue here, since the city now has responsibility for fixing the sidewalks. Merja suggested getting an aerial evaluation of the southern tree and getting a structural report so the group could base its decision on that. Daniels suggested working with property owners to replant several trees further north along the street in order to address the absence of trees on the block. Merja replied that she works with property owners on tree replanting, since if they don't care for them, they won't thrive.

Glenna Pittock said the northern neighbors wouldn't care for a new tree; across the street, neighbors planted a couple. Merja said it sounded as if there was potential to plant a few on the block. Daniels said as he saw it, in the future the City needed to look at planting trees on City right of way whether or not property owners were willing to maintain them.

Passmore suggested CBUF work long-term to address the roughly 900 Sweet Gums in the city. He said simply repairing the foundation, driveway and sidewalk without removing the north tree would be foolish. He said the tree causes a recurring problem, which is difficult to ask of a property owner, as opposed to a one-time cost. He advocated that long-term, CBUF work to plant appropriate trees that

won't cause infrastructure damage. Parkerson said mature trees greatly influence how we view neighborhoods; it takes a long time to replace lost mature trees, and the City must consider that.

Bregar asked who owned the location of the trees; Merja replied that the trees are located on public right of way. Bregar said that in the past, dealing with these has been a gray area. He said Sweet Gums all around town were problematic and must come out sooner or later. He advocated taking them both out; he said he was very familiar with them. He noted the current owners were interested in planting two trees. Henry Pittock said they had lived there since 1970 and planned to live there a long time.

Daniels moved to approve the Forester's option to remove the northern tree and to request that she do a careful structural analysis of the south tree and have the option to remove it based on that evaluation; Parkerson seconded. Merja estimated there were 890 Sweet Gums around the City of different ages and classes, mostly in the public right of way. Brewer suggested starting a program of deliberately removing and replanting a certain number each year, since there is a considerable cost to infrastructure due to the damage they cause.

Merja said she brought the issue to the group since CBUF had consistently favored retaining trees where there didn't appear to be tree structural problems. Bregar asked Merja's opinion on the southern tree; Merja replied she strove for consistency; without having surveyed the southern tree, she said she favored removing the northern tree and retaining the southern tree. She said no tree was perfect. Brewer said the southern tree would need pruning. Merja noted that every tree and situation is different.

Ellis said she was very familiar and fond of those trees; she said both trees should come out; the neighborhood will be better for the new trees having been planted. Sweet Gums can do a lot of damage. She said Merja didn't spend time surveying the southern tree. Ellis moved to amend the motion to allow removal of the second tree; Bregar seconded. Daniels said removal of the second tree represents a very different course from previous CBUF actions. Parkerson advocated careful consideration, due to the considerable impacts.

Rehkugler advocated removal of both trees; however, changing precedent was a significant issue. She noted that these property owners want to replant two trees. Henry Pittock said it would be difficult for a new tree to thrive in the shade of the south tree. Merja said it wouldn't be recommended to replant a north tree in the current location.

In the vote on the amended motion, four voted in favor; two opposed; the amendment carried. Daniels noted the amendment eliminated the second part of the original motion. In a vote of the original motion, as amended, motion passed. To clarify the matter, **Daniels moved and Bregar seconded to recommend Option 1, to remove both trees and replant two trees; motion passed.** Passmore said CBUF would certainly revisit the Sweet Gum issue in the future. He said the motion changed past CBUF policy.

Merja related that she got a call from Beaver Lodge at 13th and Van Buren; they plan to remove 13 cottonwood trees causing problems in the parking lot; it is private property and there are no restrictions on their removal.

She is drafting procedures for implementing the Urban Forestry Management fee; the purchasing process will be reviewed by the City Manager and Finance Director. She has responded to over 100 service requests since February; she is prioritizing the requests in terms of the degree of safety issues of each. She said she is also responding to many construction projects that could impact trees.

She highlighted a newsletter article drafted for this fall regarding the ecoservices report that Don Phillips has been working on. She distributed a brochure that the USFS did on urban and community trees and how trees pay you back in the northwest. The Phillips ecoservices report will have similar figures and be more consistent with what's happening in Corvallis. Don Phillips is sending his final report out for peer review by Chris Ramstead, David Cook, and possibly David Sandrock.

Dave Phillips related that the City and AFSCME were going into a contract labor mediation process after they were unable to come to agreement. He highlighted that PNARB recently heard testimony from Northwest Natural company representatives regarding its proposed natural gas Loop project; PNARB gave approval last night to continue negotiations on an easement for the project, which affects about eight acres of parks (Berg Park, Shawala Point and Pioneer Park). Ellis asked whether funds would go into the City's general fund or to Parks and Recreation; Phillips replied it would come into the Parks budget.

Phillips related that the Parks and Rec Department would rent the two-bedroom former caretaker's house in Avery Park to the public, raising the rent considerably, to \$650 per month. Daniels said the rent should be substantially increased; Ellis suggested \$900 instead. He advocated further discussion on Sweet Gums.

V. CITY COUNCIL/OSU LIAISON REPORTS. None.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

Rehkugler related the Education/Outreach/Volunteers Committee met; the group felt it was time to restructure the committees and divide their work differently. Parkerson agreed it was time to rethink the purpose of the committees. She said the E/O/V Committee has been working on the Pesticide/Herbicide-free project; Beautification, Majestic Trees; and has been initiating and getting projects going; it also does ongoing projects, such as the Footwise window and making PowerPoint presentations. However, in doing so much work on both development and ongoing implementation, it is sometimes dropping the ball. She suggested a committee for ongoing booths and presentations, with another to develop new projects.

Daniels suggested Rehkugler bring a proposal on paper for the commission's consideration. He said the Planning/Ordinances/Partnerships Committee had accomplished most of what it had set out to do. Passmore said he was hearing approval for Rehkugler to bring a more concrete proposal; Rehkugler said she was hearing consensus for change. Bregar suggested having a subcommittee work on the issue; he, Daniels, and Parkerson and others volunteered.

Rehkugler related that Planner Rochefort had suggested changes to the Beautification Awards project. Rehkugler suggested there needed to be a paradigm shift: there needs to be more focus on funding and public input. Nominations should come from the public, so creating publicity is important. The same issues apply to proposed Majestic Trees program. Parkerson agreed there needed to be more public participation in the Beautification Awards. Ellis highlighted Deb Curtis' work in setting up backyard tours as a fundraiser. The commission needs to keep promoting the beauty in Corvallis. Parkerson suggested making a presentation to the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI).

Passmore said if someone makes a donation for a tree as a memorial, it can be problematic; he suggested using the "Heifer" project as a helpful model to emulate. In this case, we have the need for trees and support of other tree-related projects. He advocated that people and organizations be able to buy certificates for that, with CBUF producing a brochure that describes the different levels of financial support that people and organizations can provide. Also, there should be social networking and a blog;

Rehkugler noted that CBUF currently can't use social networking, but we need to partner with people that can. Passmore said it would help with creating visibility for CBUF.

Merja highlighted the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) "Adopt-An-Acre" Program, which give donors a certificate of adoption. Phillips said he would take it to the next management staff meeting to get input; Ellis said a new City Manager would also want to weigh in. She said caution was needed, since CBUF was a public entity. Rehkugler said there is a different perception of government versus a non-profit group; transparency is critical.

Bregar added that while he had seen signs for CBUF, he had never thought about it; he said that was probably true for most of the Corvallis public. He noted that most of the public would get behind most of CBUF's work, which is feel-good in nature; more public relations and marketing is needed. He said CBUF needed to be a household word and make a bigger impact on the community. He said professional support was needed to make CBUF more effective; perhaps someone would do it for free.

Parkerson related that he and Ray Harris staffed a booth together at the Farmers Market for a few years, which was helpful in outreach. He said CBUF needed to be in the newspaper more often. Rehkugler suggested having separate committees for fundraising and publicity; Bregar said that that would help a great deal with getting volunteer labor for projects like tree planting. There need to be signs all around town that show what CBUF is doing. If there are enough volunteers, we could provide labor to do landscape labor for one house a year; that could involve people doing community service; Rehkugler highlighted partnerships.

Merja reported on development of the Majestic/Heritage Tree proposal. She suggested setting up a stakeholder committee that would be interviewed on development of the program and help provide answers to how to address issues. It would probably have three public forums, similar to the Urban Forestry Management Plan process, and bring it back to CBUF for final review and comment. She said stakeholders could include an arborist, an OSU liaison, at-large members, CBUF Members, and others. She will bring a draft list to CBUF for input; it could also include representation from the Chamber of Commerce and PreservationWorks, among others, as well as a Planning Department staff member. She related that Director Emery was willing to facilitate. Ellis suggested getting representation from downtown merchants; Daniels suggested the DCA. Merja said the process could address naming. She suggested starting it in January next year.

Rehkugler related that America McMillan would present at the next meeting on the Pesticide/Herbicide Free Program. She said there also needed to be discussion on the Fall Festival booth and other events.

VII. COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS.

Daniels asked whether tree irrigation bags were being filled and whether destroyed trees were being replaced. Merja replied those trees were now the City's responsibility; she asked that people finding damaged trees contact her. Parkerson asked about trees removed at 7th and Tyler; Merja said homeowners chose large stature replacement trees to replant there.

There was consensus to discuss Sweet Gum policy at the October meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M.