



## City of Edmonds

Citizen Tree Board

Approved Meeting Summary Minutes

December 6, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Anna-Marie Heckman, Chair.

**Members present:** John Botton, Steve Hatzenbeler, Anna-Marie Heckman, Susan Paine, Sandy Seligmiller, Rebecca Wolfe

**Members absent:** none

**Staff present:** Kernan Lien, Dave Timbrook

**City Council Liaison present:** Joan Bloom

Public attendees: none

Approval of the November 2012 minutes was postponed for next meeting.

### Old Business

Progress and discussion concerning Tree Code revisions was summarized. Priorities for the process are: definitions, penalties/fees, and enforcement. It was suggested that the City may not be charging enough for fees to cover overhead. The current fee schedule is adopted by resolution and is not in the code. It was last updated in 2009. Susan mentioned Seattle's economic model.

Anna discussed the yearly Tree Board summary presentation to be made to Council in February. It will include slides and cover these topics:

- our recommendations and what we need from Council
- our progress in our Tree City USA membership and yearly reapplication
  - Outreach: Edmonds Alive, Watershed Fun Fair, Farmers Market, Fourth of July parade, Edmonds in Bloom. More than 180 trees were given away, visibility created, and valuable contacts made.
  - Education:
    - Lake Forest Park's 'Community Forest Management Plan' presentation in March
    - Linden Lampman-Mead;'s presentation on 'the role and importance of tree boards' in April
    - 'Community Tree Management Institute' course taken by Board members Anna and Sandy from March through October
- Projects:
  - Tree Canopy Cover Analysis
  - Heritage Tree Program Proposal

- Planning and discussion for updating Tree Code
- Becoming a Tree City USA and meeting Growth Awards

We need to continue to develop new opportunities for educational outreach and education, both for the Board and for the public, to continue to receive Tree City USA Growth Awards.

Possibilities include:

- Tree University (online program) for the entire Board, maybe a session per month?
- coordinate a speaker series to improve outreach
- tree labeling in the Parks. There are some existing ones, but they are in poor shape.  
Dave can help with this. It could be a short term educational opportunity, or maybe an Arbor Day campaign.

We also need to be thinking about possible partnership opportunities.

Rebecca suggested developing a program that motivates builders not to cut trees. Anna said we're not yet in a position to consider canopy incentives. In 2012 we were able to verify the Tree City USA requirement that the City spend at least \$2 per capita on tree-related work, which was \$80K. This year the City's budget is only \$30K for Parks and \$30K for Public Works, which isn't enough, and we may have trouble meeting the goal. Rich Lindsey is working on a better way of tracking expenditures and funding. Dave mentioned that Parks staff timesheets don't show leaf control, which is a lot of additional hours. The Planning department also has untracked time spent on tree-related issues such as permits and complaint resolution.

At the January meeting, we need to get our GOALS set and clear. This means creating a focused, agreed upon list. It would be great to have this before the Council presentation, but not necessary. The Heritage Tree Program will need the approval of Council. We will send a packet of information about the proposal before the Council meeting and Anna's presentation. It is unclear whether such a program would need to be written into Ordinance or Resolution, and who decides this. Kernen will check into it.

Anna's Canopy Cover Analysis shows that Edmonds existing canopy is 27.3% (plus or minus 2%). There is 15.1% non-pervious surface, 27.1 % pavement, and 25.6% other pervious.

American Forests

recommended canopy goals

50%  
25%  
15%

Edmonds canopy

39%  
2%  
1%

single family – 77% of Edmonds  
multi family – 8% of Edmonds  
business/commercial – 8% of Edmonds  
public open space – 5% of Edmonds

There was some discussion about how trees add to property value. Joan mentioned a presentation that suggested that planting trees 30 feet apart in a retail area can increase profit by 50%. The slowing of traffic by planting street trees was also mentioned.

We need to see where our Single Family canopy cover is. If it's already good, maybe we need to focus on other areas such as Street Trees (Perrinville?). They are mainly along commercial strips in the existing Street Tree Plan. It was asked how we assess meeting our goals, since a tree's canopy is smaller at planting. This is a reason to have a Tree Inventory for the public, to create estimates of the canopy at different timeframes. What is an appropriate recommended canopy? How many trees need to be planted now to reach it? Let's make this canopy percentage a goal for farther away, such as 2030. Formulating a timeframe is part of the process.

Joan reiterated that the Council has allocated *no staff time* to any of this. We need a Canopy Assessment to do the other steps toward our goals. What are we asking for from Council? How do we get this done? How does the Board get the help it needs? Susan asked how, if we get grants, will we accept and administer them? Who manages this? When a project is ready to go, perhaps, then, we can partner with

City personnel. Rebecca asked whether we can partner with another organization to manage grants, one with a common goal. Anna said that if we get this GIS work done (8 hours of staff time needed) and have a canopy cover goal (maybe 40% or less), we can discuss a timeline. We need to discuss this as a Board and we need more information. Once you have a canopy analysis, you can move to funding a tree inventory and locate planting space availability, then create an Urban Forest Management Plan.

Where does arboriculture fit into our city? In a typical list of city resources and allocation of funding, trees are at the bottom. Kernen mentioned that most Boards have wording that says something about “professional and general staff at the discretion of City Council and the Mayor...” Could this line maybe be added to the Tree Board’s charter?

#### New Business

There was discussion about Engineering’s policy concerning removal of trees in the Right-of-Way. Adjacent property owners can apply for a permit to remove trees in front of their house. It is approved if there is a safety issue or the roots damage *public* property. Should this be changed to include *private* property damage? There was an instance where Public Works root-pruned a tree a homeowner was concerned about, but the property owner wanted it removed. The City doesn’t remove Right-of-Way trees.

The Board would like to amend it’s website to clarify that we are an advisory entity only and don’t have anything to do with permitting or setting policy. There is evidence of public confusion on this issue. Sandy will look into making this clarification.

There is an outreach opportunity at Edmonds Alive again this year, on January 10. Anna has a flyer she can email to those interested. Also, **Board members are requested to tally their volunteer hours** for the year, including meetings. Be generous.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Sandy Seligmiller