



Tree Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Tuesday, October 27, 2015, 8:30 – 10:30 AM**
280 Madison Ave N
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
Council Conference Room
****note time change**

AGENDA

1. Review and Approve Notes from September 29 Meeting
2. Debrief from Dept. of Natural Resources Seminar on Tree Inventories
3. Review Tree Requirements for Single-family subdivision and existing single-family lots
 - Perimeter Buffers ([BIMC 18.15.010.D](#))
 - Roadside Buffers ([BIMC 18.15.010.E](#))
 - Tree Unit Requirements ([BIMC 18.15.010.G](#))

**Ad Hoc Tree Committee
Meeting Notes
September 29, 2015**

Committee members in attendance: Roger Townsend, Mack Pearl, Jon Quitslund, Sarah Blossom

COBI Staff: Jennifer Sutton

Public: Charles Schmid

We began with a review of notes from the previous meeting. Jon will make some changes before sending a .docx file to Jennifer for the record. Jennifer found the summary of Josh Machen's explanation at the previous meeting to be accurate.

Jon said that at some point – not before we deal with the old business on the agenda – he would like to have a discussion of the current regulations for open space in subdivisions. An effective Island-wide conservation strategy, as envisioned in the Comp Plan update, makes it imperative that we find ways to combine development with conservation of natural resources (the 'green infrastructure' of trees, brush, undisturbed soil; fields, streams and wetlands; greenways, wildlife habitat).

Responding to comments about the way outbuildings and additions expand the footprint of a house, Jennifer mentioned that the code establishes lot coverage standards that limit expansion.

We talked briefly about the "view blocking" issue that had been on the previous meeting's agenda, and agreed that the issue should be put to the side.

The "cluster" option in subdivision design standards, touched upon in previous meetings, came up again. Do we want to recommend eliminating this alternative? We decided "Yes." The next step will be to draft some language to follow through.

Jennifer observed that the cluster design is chosen only about 5% of the time. {One motive for allowing this alternative was to "create open areas large enough to accommodate crop agriculture." How has that worked out?}

We looked at the perimeter landscape requirements in Table 18.15.010-4. What perimeter buffers are appropriate? In many situations a buffer would be appropriate, and the contiguous open space may extend to the edge of the subdivision lot line, but where should it be required?

We looked at Figure 4-2, a map from the Island Wide Transportation Plan showing primary and secondary Arterial roads and "Collector" roads (distinguished from local access roads). On Mack's recommendation, we eliminated Collector roads from the table showing where buffers are required.

In subsequent discussion, Charles observed that the updated Comp Plan refers to “scenic” roads, and that effect can be achieved in many ways. Jennifer pointed to a reference in the table to the aim of ‘reflecting neighboring development patterns.’ We agreed that this was important – perhaps a determining factor in the design of new development.

It was noted that in addition to trees, people may want sunny space for a garden, and/or hours of sun for a solar cell array.

Discussion moved quickly toward replacing buffer requirements with a tree unit requirement. It should be not too demanding. Retention of existing healthy trees and native vegetation is most important. In some cases the trees will be on a perimeter, but not necessarily.

Jennifer described a hypothetical case: a 5 acre subdivision in R-1. A note from this description says, “open space doesn’t add to tree units.” Does this mean that the individual lots have a tree unit requirement in addition to trees in the open space? Jennifer went on to say that if the lots are retaining established trees, they won’t all be alike. I think the point is that the 5-unit subdivision as a whole will meet a tree unit requirement. So the open space may contribute to that total?

In existing residential development, the tree unit requirement will determine whether or not trees can be removed (diseased and hazard trees, presumably, would be exceptions).

We settled on a requirement for new development of 30 tree units per acre, but not more than are present prior to the development.

It was decided that the next meeting would be on Oct. 27th.

Notes from the Urban Forestry Seminar in Poulsbo, 8/25/15

The meeting, led by Ben Thompson, took place in the Poulsbo City Hall. Mr. Thompson is one member of a two-person Urban and Community Forestry Program within the state Dept. of Natural Resources, funded in large part by the U. S. Forest Service. I was present for the duration (9:30 a m to 2 p m with a break for lunch); with a daughter who had broken both wrists on the weekend, Jennifer arrived a little late and had to leave at lunchtime.

In a nutshell, the message was that trees are public assets to be managed. Trees on private property can be regarded as public assets, with due respect for the property owner's rights, along with his/her interest in protecting the asset's value. He observed that Parks Department and Public Works professionals are familiar with asset management assumptions. Is this also true of city planners?

A quotation from the brochure, *Urban & Community Forestry in Washington; Investing in More Livable Cities & Communities*: "Properly managed urban forests create livable cities and communities by contributing economic, environmental, and social benefits. The urban forest is part of the 'green infrastructure' in our cities."

Thompson described the typical urban forest as "a mosaic of fragmented ecosystems." On Bainbridge, as we know, the entire island is technically an urban growth area, but our community forest is not so fragmented as is typical. (Rather than a mosaic, it might better be described as a quilt.)

As green infrastructure, an urban or community forest provides ecosystem services. Trees require a 20-year investment in watering, pruning, and protection before they can provide prime services. Those services include stormwater management; best management practices call for tree planting and care.

There is a useful publication, *Tree Asset Management for the City of Portland*. Another publication was mentioned later: *Seattle's Forest Ecosystem Values: Analysis of the Structure, Function, and Ecosystem Benefits* (2012).

A good part of the seminar was devoted to explaining how and why to develop and maintain an appropriate **inventory**, describing and evaluating the community forest's trees as assets. The inventory should be designed with specific purposes in mind. Inventory data can be used to calculate asset values, develop tree maintenance and planting budgets, prioritize staff work and maintenance activities, identify tree-related risks, guide development decisions, and tell a compelling story about the community's trees and forested areas.

I noted three types of inventory: tree canopy data and analysis, using GPS and GIS technology; forest stand inventory, using sampling techniques, using either professionals on contract or trained volunteers; and inventory of street trees and trees in parks.