



TREE AD HOC COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2016
3:00 – 5:00 PM
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM
280 MADISON AVE N
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA 98110

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Quitslund, Mack Pearl, Sarah Blossom, Ron Peltier, Kol Medina

COBI STAFF: Jennifer Sutton, Josh Machen

PUBLIC: Olaf Ribeiro, Cam Fletcher, Jonathan Davis, Robert Dashiell, Charles Schmid

Notes from the April 27 meeting were approved as distributed.

Jennifer distributed copies of pp. 10-11 of the Administrative Manual (detailing what is required in the Landscape Plan submitted in connection with conditional use and subdivision applications), with highlighted changes displayed in strikeout/underline form. Discussion dealt primarily with the rationale for the required tree survey and the extent, in different circumstances, of the ISA valuation for trees to be protected during construction and retained in the landscape.

We agreed that valuation of trees is needed to justify a penalty in the event of damage, removal, or morbidity due to negligence during site preparation, trenching for utilities, and construction. Valuation is not required for trees that are not at risk, or not essential to a tree unit calculation. Olaf spoke of the various factors that are taken into account in the ISA valuation methodology, and he said that in some circumstances a “generic” valuation is possible.

Where the Admin Manual mentions, in D.2.a (p. 10), “A tree survey or aerial photograph that represents current site conditions,” we said that an aerial photograph would probably not provide sufficient information: what’s needed is an accurate inventory showing the locations of trees being retained, removed, and added to the landscape. We did not discuss the scope of the inventory in circumstances where a large portion of the total site will remain undisturbed, set apart from the developed area (e. g., in conservancy).

The committee understands that the tree survey and valuation should not be made unduly burdensome: the aim of these requirements is to ensure that development will not be reckless, but will respect the long-term value and ecological services of canopy cover and a variety of trees.

Jennifer will return to the committee with some further revisions.

At 4:10 p.m. we began a wide-ranging discussion of the Vegetation Management chapter (BIMC 16.22). Where is it applicable? It lays out the steps to be followed in large-scale clearing of

For special accommodations, please contact Jane Rasely, Planning & Community Development 206-780-3758 or at jrasely@bainbridgewa.gov

undeveloped property, and of partially developed property that can be subdivided. It regulates the harvesting of mature timber on forest land, and (with a Conversion Option Harvest Plan) the clearing that may precede subdivision and residential development.

However, as Josh observed, if a property owner starts with the subdivision process (either short or long plat), the complicated rules of the Veg Management chapter do not apply. Jon said that his objective was to create regulations for conversion of forested acreage, especially in the R-0.4 and R-1 zones, that would apply to residential subdivision development and would, at the same time, promote conservation and stewardship of the acreage that remains forested.

Josh observed that if we want to get away from the current rule, in subdivision design standards, saying that COBI can't require any more than 25% of the acreage in a subdivision to be preserved as open space, we will need some other basis for limiting the amount that can be cleared.

Some attention was given to the page and a half of Comments on BIMC 16.22 that Jon had composed back in November, 2014. Jon offered more questions than answers, and the committee's discussion did not reach any conclusions, but some questions came into focus.

BIMC 16.22 gives mind-boggling attention to four different classes of forest practices, involving different DNR permits: is all of this necessary? With reference to an explanation of forest practices by King County, Jon thought that since all of Bainbridge Island is classified as an Urban Growth Area, forest practices would require a Class IV-General permit, and COBI, rather than the DNR, might have authority to exercise jurisdiction over such practices.

Another source of confusion in the chapter comes from provisions for a six-year moratorium on development after the harvest of timber, and description in another part of the chapter of a Conversion Option Harvest Plan. The moratorium may be useful as a penalty for large-scale clearing without a permit, but the two tracks seem unnecessary.

Notes Approved: May 25, 2016