

# URBAN FORESTRY SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

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| Date:      | 01-20-2026   |
| Time:      | 4:30 – 6:07 pm   |
| Place:     | Virtual Zoom Meeting   |
| Attending: | <b>UFS:</b> Chair Christine Johnson, Jim Buck, Keith Warren, Steve Stevens, Thea Hayes<br><b>Staff:</b> Torrey Lindbo (Staff Liaison), Hayley Hamann<br><b>PC Liaison:</b> Greg Schroeder<br><b>Council Liaison:</b> N/A<br><b>Guests:</b> Janet Unruh, Shannon Martin |
| Absent     | <b>UFS:</b> N/A  |

| Agenda Item #2 – Public Comments |  |
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| Discussion:                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul> |
| Decisions:                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>  |
| Action:                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>  |

| Agenda Item #3 – Approval of Meeting Minutes |   |
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| Discussion:                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair Johnson noted a small edit needed on the November 17, 2025, minutes. Edit was in section about recruitment flyer, and question was asked about whether the changes had been made.</li> </ul>   |
| Decisions:                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>November 17, 2025, minutes approved unanimously with suggested edit.</li> </ul>  |
| Action:                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Torrey to make edit to minutes and send final version of minutes to Hayley</li> <li>Torrey checking in about edits to recruitment flyer, and will hopefully share final version for Saturday event (Nadaka Park with Friends of Trees on 1/24/26)</li> </ul> |

| Agenda Item #4 – Staff Update |  |
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| Discussion:                   | <p><u>Tree Code Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since the November 4, 2025, Council work session and follow-up briefings, the project team has been reviewing policy options for consideration at a future Council work session (date TBD). This work is in response to Council feedback emphasizing the importance of balance between tree goals and development feasibility, consideration of cumulative impacts with other regulations, and input from developers.</li> <li>Currently, Planning staff are continuing to develop policy updates that focus on discrete changes to strengthen existing provisions and policies, while also considering the proposed canopy standards.</li> <li>In the meantime, Mary Phillips has left the City. Terra Wilcoxson and Gabby Sinagra are managing the project and have structured their work to ensure continuity and steady progress. As the policy options are further developed and a future Council work session is scheduled, they will be able to provide more information on project timing and anticipated updates.</li> <li>UFS members expressed concern about staff potentially changing canopy goals or other aspects of the tree code that were based on community input simply because developers have new concerns they could have raised during the public process. UFS members support the previously developed goals, including both canopy targets and the climate justice aspects.</li> </ul> <p><u>Gradin Tour with Parks Department</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks staff have invited UFS members to join them on a tour of the new Gradin Park facility. UFS were interested in this, so will work to find a time that works for all.</li> </ul> |

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|            | <p><u>Street Trees at New Library</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The library had to use smaller street trees (the vine maples) to accommodate Fire Department access to the building (they needed aerial access along the building frontage). The fire access has been a frequent requirement for buildings over 30 feet. Many newer developments have had to provide access from the street when they cannot provide it internally, resulting in areas along street frontages that are not allowed to have street trees.</li> <li>• UFS members expressed concern about why Fire seemed to be reviewing plans later in process, rather than requiring changes to be made during design that would allow full-sized street trees to be planted.</li> <li>• Appreciation for some of the native plantings, as well as some concern about long term impacts of having large Doug Firs so close to building, as well as planting some native plants that generally are in understory out in direct southern exposure.</li> </ul> <p><u>Rockwood Tree Wells</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torrey shared some photos of the 32 tree wells currently being installed along Stark, Burnside, and Oak Street in Rockwood as part of FEMA urban heat island mitigation grant.</li> </ul> <p><u>Tree Removal at Butler Creek Estates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jim had asked about the large area of trees that was removed for the re-alignment of Butler Rd and the new Butler Creek Estates development. Most of this parcel had been covered with trees (mostly invasive locust), which were all removed for development.</li> <li>• The current code is very permissive of tree removal outside of the Natural Resource Overlay and Hillside and Geologic Risk Overlay, so replacement/mitigation requirements are very limited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There was a “settlement agreement” related to unpermitted removal of 11 trees during early site work</li> <li>○ 7 trees removed in the HGRO called for 14 mitigation trees in the HGRO area north of Butler</li> <li>○ For most of the mass removal, no replacement/mitigation was required</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Jim asked whether the mitigation trees will need to be native trees and what size</li> <li>• Thea asked whether the “settlement agreement” is something that can be shared</li> <li>• Christine noted that her company had done some assessment of trees in that area a few years prior and found many were considered exempt due to size, invasive species status, or deterioration/hazard status.</li> </ul> |
| Decisions: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UFS agreed that a tour of Gradin with Parks staff would be valuable</li> </ul>  |
| Action:    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair Johnson and Torrey will work on developing a Doodle poll to find date for Gradin tour with Parks staff. Late mornings/early afternoons mid-week in February seemed like best options for UFS.</li> <li>• Torrey will check on the Butler Creek “settlement agreement” and other details about mitigation trees</li> <li>• Torrey will ask Planning staff for an update on tree code</li> </ul>  |

| <b>Agenda Item #5 – Committee Member Update</b> |   |
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| Discussion:                                     | <p><u>Unpermitted Tree Removal near Johnson Creek</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jim shared an update on vandalism done by “Gresham Lumberjack”.</li> <li>• Gresham Neighborhood coalition asked City Manager Eric Schmidt if any legal action could be taken to prevent this from happening yet again. He responded that he will have legal department look into the issue.</li> <li>• Thea suggested drafting a letter to the City Manager on behalf of the Urban Forestry Subcommittee. Other members interested in this idea.</li> </ul> <p><u>Tree Topping and inadequate replacement at SW 41<sup>st</sup></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code compliance case for 2 large street trees that were delimbed in 2024 required replacement. The trees used to replace them were smaller canopy trees that are not on approved tree list, and Jim noted that either property owner or landscapers have been pruning branches, including dominant central stem.</li> <li>• There was discussion about “topping.” Christine noted that she felt the pruning on the new trees would likely constitute topping, but the group noted there are multiple definitions of “topping” on Gresham website</li> <li>• Questions and discussion related to who approves replacement trees, as well as when the city and code enforcement responds to trees that are either damaged or don’t meet the requirements</li> </ul> <p><u>February Meeting Date</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next meeting conflicts with President’s Day, recommended rescheduling of February 23, 2026</li> </ul> <p><u>Upcoming Events</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January 24<sup>th</sup>: Tree Planting at Nadaka Nature Park with Friends of Trees</li> <li>• TBD: Park-to-Park Tree Rock with Equipo De Arboles</li> </ul> |

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|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• February 24<sup>th</sup>: Black Heritage Month Tree Stories at the Gresham Library</li> <li>• April 18<sup>th</sup>: (Tentative) UFS Arbor Day Event</li> </ul>   |
| Decisions: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UFS will draft a letter to share with city about tree cutting along Johnson Creek.</li> <li>• Next meeting was moved to Monday, February 23, 2026.</li> </ul>   |
| Action:    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jim will draft a letter about Johnson Creek tree cutting and share with Chair Johnson and Torrey.</li> <li>• Torrey will check to see whether code enforcement member could join upcoming meeting to talk about tree topping</li> </ul> |

Future meeting topics:

- Tree list
- Tree code update
- EAB
- Code enforcement – tree topping
- Update on Parks comprehensive plan

Meeting adjourned at 6:07pm

Next Meeting is February 23, 2026.

*These meeting minutes were unanimously approved by the Urban Forestry Subcommittee on February 23, 2026. A link to the meeting recording is below:*

<https://greshamoregon.zoom.us/rec/share/iDVKzIsHeFSHEEF4dWAcZWCh4DNjSfsR8LLcG6kENDCY2JJbfSTumSrixvejBklj.0nm3Okh6JFicC7Yn>