



City of Lake Oswego Natural Resources Advisory Board Minutes

February 18, 2009

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Morgan Holen called the Natural Resources Advisory Board meeting of Wednesday, February 18, 2009 to order at approximately 6:36 p.m. at the West End Building, 4010 Kruse Way, Lake Oswego, Oregon.

Members present were Chair Morgan Holen, Vice Chair William Gaar and members Nancy Gronowski, Shawn Howard, Stephanie Wagner and Rishi Rajani (student member). Denise Dailey and Douglas Rich were excused.

Staff present were Jonna Papaefthimiou, Staff Liaison/Natural Resources Planner; Nathalie Strom, Parks Natural Resources Coordinator; and Lori Summers, AmeriCorps.

Also in attendance were guests Mike Buck, Todd Praeger and *Council Liaison Mary Olson.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Buck suggested that after the City was done with the current process of updating the Sensitive Lands code an effort should be made to get as many stakeholders involved as possible, open up the code and deal with it in a positive way. He indicated owners of land with a lower value resource could learn how to upgrade it. Chair Holen observed that fit the Natural Resources Advisory Board's (NRAB) education and outreach goal. She asked him to alert the NRAB when it was a good time to schedule the discussion on the agenda.

*Councilor Mary Olson joined the meeting.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

The board **voted** to postpone the discussion of Water Conservation & Clean Streams and the Urban and Community Forestry Presentation until the next meeting so the absent members could participate.

IV. REGULAR BUSINESS

Native Plant Propagation Update

Natalie Strom presented the update. She reported that AmeriCorps worker, Aulani Johnson, was propagating native plant cuttings and seeds at an area in Luscher Farm that the Parks and Recreation Department had offered him. He had held two volunteer potting events and planned another one the following Saturday. The plants would eventually be used in City restoration projects and offered to neighborhood associations and “friends” groups to use in their projects. He hoped to arrange a sponsorship program to raise \$800 from local businesses and use the funds to rebuild the hoop house. The growing site and events could be educational and help kids learn about native plants. The City was hiring a new caretaker at Luscher Farm who would water the plants. During the discussion period, she said the first two events had attracted 5 and 12 participants. Mr. Rajani said he had been encouraging student groups to become involved with the project. Ms. Strom hoped that when the AmeriCorps program ended in two years the City would hire a full time person to continue the program.

Parks Comprehensive Plan Update

Ms. Strom reported that funding of the comprehensive parks plan was on the list of projects to be considered by the City Budget Committee. Councilor Olson reported that the Councilors had discussed making the Luscher Farm master-planning project a separate budget item, but they finally voted to include it in the comprehensive parks planning project, which would have to compete for funding with a multitude of other kinds of master planning projects. Only a few would be selected for funding this year.

The board anticipated that there would be a lot of public pressure by different types of potential users of Luscher Farm so it was important to start master planning there. They said the old Luscher Farm master plan that called for ball fields was outdated. They talked about fashioning a strategy to lobby the Budget Committee for either the comprehensive plan or a separate Luscher Farm plan project. Ms. Gronowski advocated taking the comprehensive approach first. She explained that once the City had decided where in the City the ball fields could go, that would take the pressure off Luscher Farm for that use. Ms. Gronowski agreed to lead the discussion at the March meeting.

Update on recent meetings with Councilors

No one present reported having a recent meeting with a City Councilor.

Water Conservation & Clean Streams

This discussion had been postponed until the next meeting. Ms. Papaefthimiou anticipated that the City Council would invite the NRAB and Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB) to comment on the Clean Streams Plan. She suggested NRAB members review the plan and work with SAB to develop joint recommendation to the City Council. She explained the SAB was currently busy gearing up for Sustainability Action Month in May. Chair Holen announced that Craig Diamond planned to attend the next meeting to suggest ways the NRAB and the SAB could collaborate.

State of the Forest Report

Lori Summers, AmeriCorps, presented the first draft of the City's first State of the Forest Report. She and her predecessor had inventoried street trees in the right-of-way along a random sample of Lake Oswego City street segments equal to 5% of all City streets. A GIS department computer program had selected the streets. The report addressed the cost and benefits of street trees; estimated their replacement value; and offered recommendations for managing them. Besides collecting data on the species, health, location and size of individual trees, she had estimated the size of the City's canopy.

Ms. Summers reported finding twice as many deciduous trees as conifers, and said that might mean the City should plant more conifers. She advised an urban forest should be composed of diverse species that were appropriate in an urban setting. She noted that maple trees tended to lift sidewalks. She had compared inventoried tree sizes to what was recommended in the Journal of Horticulture article, "A Practical Approach to Assessing Structure, Function and Value of Street Tree Population in Small Communities." She said Lake Oswego features a greater percentage of small trees and few really large trees than a typical urban forest had. She listed certain species of trees considered to be more beneficial because they contributed more to the canopy. Such trees included big leafed maple, Douglas fir, and Oregon white oak. She discussed the health of street trees and said 80% were in good condition, 14% fair condition, 5% poor condition and 1% were dead or dying.

Ms. Summers reported finding that 35% of the trees had ivy growing up to or on them. She said 9% of them were trying to grow in space that contained power lines. She estimated the City had 40,000 street trees, and more than 6,000 spaces that could adequately accommodate more trees. The board suggested she calculate the number of street trees per mile of street, rather than the number per square mile of City. Ms. Summers reported that a significant percentage of street trees were actually growing in the City right-of-way easement over private property and most owners probably assumed they were in their yard. She reported that City's canopy cover was 47% of total City area, which compared well with Portland, which had much less canopy cover, and was trying to increase canopy cover to 33%. She said in 1972 the Columbia/Willamette region had about 46% canopy cover and now it was down to 21%. She said the street tree inventory increased the value of homes.

Ms. Summer estimated the net return on a street tree after deducting the cost of maintaining it was more than \$10. She estimated the replacement value of the street tree inventory was about \$129 million. She then discussed street tree management. Since 72% of street trees were on private property, and many were being impacted by ivy, she suggested the City set the example of how to maintain them. People needed to learn how to prune trees and to remove ivy. They needed to learn what kind of tree would work best in their space. The City should ensure the urban forest grew more diverse when it planted new trees. When asked, Ms. Papaefthimiou confirmed that City had no policy regarding allowing ivy on street trees, and no permit was required to plant

street trees. Ms. Gronowski advised that Portland offered guidelines regarding what species to plant in what size space.

The Board commended Ms. Summers for her work. They suggested she describe the benefits of green infrastructure and explain how trees helped reduce runoff and captured carbon dioxide. Ms. Papaefthimiou observed that Lake Oswego depended more on the tree canopy than piping to deal with storm water. Ms. Summers invited the members to email her additional comments. Ms. Papaefthimiou said the document would be finalized, presented to the City Council, and then offered to the public in booklet form.

Members anticipated that a regularly updated State of the Forest report would offer useful information. They hoped that after the City no longer had the benefit of AmeriCorps workers, they would hire a full time City forester. It was suggested the information should be offered to property management companies along Kruse Way. Ms. Gronowski said the American Society of Architects was about to publish an article on “sustainable sites.” Ms. Wagner suggested an awards and recognition program for businesses. *Councilor Olson left the meeting.

Urban and Community Forestry Presentation

The discussion was postponed to the next meeting.

2009 Farmer’s Market Update – Planning

Members discussed their plan to man a booth at the Farmer’s Market. They could discuss the state of the forest, explain to people why ivy was bad, and talk about how to care for trees in the right-of-way and why that was important. Ms. Wagner was organizing volunteers to pick up native plants from a local nursery. Ms. Strom reported the Farmers Market manager recommended participating in the market once a month. She said Parks and Recreation would provide the table and canopy. Members agreed to that and to Ms. Papaefthimiou’s suggestion to join the SAB in the lower plaza along State Street on May 24th. The SAB would talk about green power and energy use and the NRAB would talk about how native plants helped save water.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was scheduled for March 18, 2009. There being no further business Chair Holen adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonna Papaefthimiou
Natural Resources Planner