



**City of Spokane  
Citizen Advisory Committee to the  
Urban Forestry Tree Committee**

3 p.m. Tuesday, May 2, 2023  
Hybrid in-person and WebEx virtual meeting  
Katie Kosanke - Urban Forester

**Committee Members:**

- X Kris Neely – Chair
- X Tim Kohlhauff
- X Beth LaBar
- X Guy Gifford
- X Toni Sharkey
- X Catherine Olsen (left at 3:50 p.m.)  
Cindy Deffe - Absent
- X Joe Zubaly (left at 3:45 p.m.)
- X Matt Stewart

**Parks Staff:**

Katie Kosanke  
Kris Behr  
Sarah Dietrich

**Guests:**

Ben Kappen – Avista Utilities (Ben lost connection right after joining the meeting and due to technical difficulties could not get reconnected to the WebEx meeting)  
Nancy MacKerrow – The Susie Forest  
Justyce Brant – The Lands Council

## MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 3:11 p.m. by committee chair Kris Neely.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from January 2023, February 2023 and March 2023 will be reviewed at the next meeting.

### Discussion Items:

1. Ceremonies, Appointments, Announcements

- Current openings on the committee include representatives for member at large, downtown, and utility representative positions. Ben Kappen with Avista Utilities is interested in the utility position and Justyce Brant with The Lands Council is interested in the member at large position. Katie said she does have someone interested in the downtown representative position and once that position is filled the UFCAC will have a full committee.
- **Ben Kappen Letter of Interest** – Ben Kappen with Avista submitted a letter of interest for the utility representative position. Ben was not present at the meeting due to technical difficulties and not being able to connect to the WebEx meeting. The committee members previously reviewed his letter of interest and had no other questions of Ben.

Guy Gifford made a motion to appoint Ben to the utility representative position. Tim Kohlhauff seconded the motion. A vote was taken to appoint Ben Kappen to the utility representative position and passed unanimously 8-0.

- **Justyce Brant Letter of Interest** – Justyce Brant with The Lands Council submitted a letter of interest to be considered for the member at large position. Justyce was at the meeting and thanked the committee for considering her for the member at large position. She said she would like to contribute to the work already being done by the committee for the City of Spokane and help increase the Urban Canopy coverage, which she says is what her and Katie do for the SpoCanopy program. She said her work at The Lands Council will help her contribute and help the committee to be successful.

Kris advised that Toni and himself are on the board of The Lands Council and asked if anyone on the committee had any concerns if Justyce was appointed. The committee members said they had no concerns.

Guy Gifford made a motion to appoint Justyce to the member at large representative position. Cadie Olsen seconded the motion. A vote was taken to appoint Justyce Brant to the member at large representative position and passed unanimously 8-0.

**Public Comments:** Nancy MacKerrow advised she is still planting trees. So far this year two have been planted for Susie, one has been planted in Twisp, WA, she is working on one in Winthrop, WA and one was planted at Arbor Day on Saturday. Ten trees that were vandalized at Friendship Park will also be replaced.

### **Standing Report Items:**

1. Community Assembly – No report.
2. Staff Report: Katie Kosanke provided the staff report and reported on items wrapping up for Spring.

The Arbor Day Celebration was held at Finch Arboretum on Saturday April 29<sup>th</sup>. It was a great success. Kudos to Karin and Michael for helping to organize the event, due to their outreach we were able to have more table vendors and solicit sponsorships. With the sponsorships we were able to provide free kettle corn and drinks.

There was a great article in the Spokesman Review about the Arbor Day Celebration, canopy coverage, SpoCanopy and more.

Nancy MacKerrow was at the Arbor Day Celebration, and they did a Susie tree planting following the Tree City USA ceremony where we celebrated 20 years as a Tree City USA.

Katie thanked Bartlett for sponsoring the Arbor Day Celebration event. They also did a climbing demonstration and gave out seedlings.

On-Track Academy had their Tree Hero Symposium on April 22. They will get their Tree Campus USA accreditation again for this year. They are one of the first in the nation to get this accreditation, making them a founding campus. There was a drive through seedling give away, art activities, a tree planting demo adding a Sequoia tree to their campus, and the students had their tree related

projects on display. Seedlings left over from the event were given to the Shadle library for their plant swap event and were distributed quickly.

Kudos to Lars Erpenbach, city arborist who has been helping with Saturday events and with SpoCanopy projects.

Kudos to Jeff Perry, city arborist for putting together a fantastic planting video. The video has just been put out on our website and Cable5 is also running it. It's a simple video and less than five minutes. The video was primarily made to be a resource for industry professionals for planting.

Spokane Ponderosa planted trees at Camp Sekani and Campion Park this spring. A minimum of 1,000 trees were planted at each location. They had lots of students and volunteers who helped plant the trees. Other areas have been lined up for Ponderosas to be planted at a later date.

SpoCanopy plantings were done over three days with volunteers with The Lands Council for another successful season of street tree planting

Staff have been working with a consultant on the Design Standards Updates, which is the review of the planting distance to underground utilities, etc. to give recommendations for changes to the Design Standards. Feedback is being solicited from utilities, etc. Because it is technically an engineering item and must go through their channels for approval and then to City Council, the timeline will depend on engineering staff's availability. Currently staff are looking at temporary deviations. Some neighborhoods currently being planned have narrow lots and there is no room for the required street trees due to locations of utilities. The deviations would allow for planting closer to utilities.

Katie relayed information regarding historic grant opportunities through the federal level through the Inflation Reduction Act, which includes \$1.5 billion dollars for Urban Forestry. UF thought it would be distributed through the states and we would have 10 years of proposals of funding and grants. They are now asking for large proposals from \$100,000 up to \$50 million to be applied for by June 1st. Urban Forestry is working hard to determine how much funding to apply for. UF wants to propose increased planting, but also request maintenance to be provided in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Several Urban Forestry Employees will be attending the Washington Parks and Recreation Association Conference in May. One of the UF staff members will be giving a talk on the UF tree nursery and some of our successful growing practices to share with other cities in Washington.

SCC received their Tree Campus USA designation.

Adams Sweeney, who has worked with the urban forestry crew for four years as a seasonal employee, has taken a full-time position at Whitworth College. UF will be looking for an arborist to fill the position.

Many engineering projects are starting, and many include tree work. There are also a lot of projects taking place in the fall. UF is going through each city project and evaluating the impacts they may have on trees and will be communicating with abutting property owners. UF is working on notifications and invoicing and being better organized to make sure all steps are being completed in the very detailed process.

The Pacific Education Institute is hosting a teacher extended learning class this weekend at The Woodland Center at Finch Arboretum. UF is going to help and will take the teachers on a tour

through the street tree exhibit. PEI has provided an entire curriculum based on urban forestry to teachers who will then integrate that information into the classroom. They are also working on revising and enhancing the urban forestry curriculum, so it can be a resource for anyone in the state to use in the classroom.

A lot of fuels reduction work is going on, thanks to Nick Jeffries with the fire department. They are working on a parcel across from Finch Arboretum on Sunset Highway. The work includes overdue forest health fuels reduction and is being done with use of DNR crews and other labor crews. A 1.5 million grant was received to complete significant fuels reduction work within the city.

The UF crew is working on many projects including a few removals at Audubon, Comstock, Underhill, and Liberty parks. A full prune is planned for Friendship Park this season and replacement trees will be planted through the Susie Forest. In May, the crew will be focusing on planting, including new and replacement trees throughout the parks system.

## **Old Business:**

### 1. Downtown Educational Program Update – Katie Kosanke

Katie reported she has been in contact with the Downtown Spokane Partnership, and they likely have capacity to help look out for issues with trees in the downtown area. We would provide an educational program to train their staff on what to look for with tree issues, mainly water issues. We would also provide a FAQ sheet for downtown business owners. The downtown trees have tough growing conditions. If issues are caught early, typically irrigation issues, water can be turned back on or repaired, or temporary water/gator bags can be provided.

Internally and with volunteers an update to the tree inventory downtown can be completed to further catch issues. Friendly reminders regarding tree issues can be mailed to property owners. DSP recently send UF 72 locations downtown where they found issues with trees, tree grates or a combination of both. Since some of the locations include tree grate and sidewalk issues, UF is working with streets and code enforcement to determine the best way to communicate the issues to the abutting property owners and to send out notices regarding the issues.

The DSP said they likely could distribute water/gator bags downtown and it was suggested to brand them with a program sponsor's logo

Staff is ready to move forward with a downtown program and meeting with DSP. We will also provide watering brochures designed by the CAC and have educational resources... Removal and replacements are very costly for abutting property owners. Preventing decline of trees in the downtown area is critical. Katie will be in touch with CAC members who are interested in being involved with this educational program.

## **New Business:**

### 1. Spring SpoCanopy 2023 Update – Justyce Brant

The spring SpoCanopy planting was a three-day tree planting event. With the help of less than one

hundred volunteers, including 18 volunteers from Mica High school, 52 trees were planted over the three days. Trees were planted in northeast Spokane, in the Hillyard, Bemis and Nevada Heights neighborhoods and the West Central and Emerson Garfield neighborhoods. On Monday they finished mulching the trees and left tree tags with information on caring for the trees.

Jeff Humphries took great video footage of the SpoCanopy tree plantings, and it was shared on the City Cable5 channel. Jeff also met with a resident who received a SpoCanopy tree previously and talked with her about how much she loved the trees and how she is encouraging her neighbors to participate in the program.

Justyce has had 80 new signups for the SpoCanopy program. Outreach is helping to increase the program and with coverage by the media and the Spokesman Review people are hearing more about the program, which allows the program to continue and increase the program to keep providing street trees to residence and keep sharing the benefits of street trees to all the neighborhoods in Spokane. The SpoCanopy program has been a great partnership between The Lands Council and the Urban Forestry Department.

We would like to have a long list of locations so when doing volunteer plantings, we can better group them together and prioritize the plantings together for the most sufficient planting.

A tree service contractor will be planting 55 SpoCanopy trees throughout the month of May.

The Lands Council was also just awarded another DNR grant for SpoCanopy, which will allow TLC and the city to continue doing this important planting work. This is the fourth year in a row WA DNR urban forestry funding has been received.

## 2. Field Trip – Katie Kosanke

A field trip may be scheduled for next month or the following month. Some ideas for the field trip were to see Friendship Park before a full prune is done, to fuels reduction areas that have just had fuels reduction work done, or any other park projects the CAC might be interested in. The CAC agreed on Friendship Park for the field trip.

### **Other Program Ideas:** None.

It was asked if the tri-fold watering brochure has been distributed yet. The brochure has been finalized and will be reviewed by the communications group before distribution. Katie will coordinate with the reprographics department to get the brochures printed so they are ready for distribution.

Kris Neely requested a copy of both the printed version and digital version of the brochure go to The Lands Council, so they have the ability to print the brochure also for distribution. Kris also mentioned putting the brochures in the libraries would be a good idea.

It was asked if the Urban Forestry Department at the City has a program where they go out to Universities and Colleges to talk to people about opportunities to help with trees, etc. Katie advised they give lots of presentations when requested, about urban forestry as a whole being they are

involved with many different things. The CAC will talk more about a future program goal to distribute information out to the colleges and solicit volunteers at local colleges to help with plantings.

It was also asked if the city uses interns for Urban Forestry. The Urban Forestry Department hasn't used interns in the past but may look in to using interns in the future.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

The next meeting will be a special meeting with a joint field trip with the Urban Forestry Tree Committee to Friendship Park at 3 p.m. on May 30, 2023.



Dear Mr. Jones,

This letter is to establish my interest in joining the UFCAC, representing Utility Vegetation Management. I was a member of the committee for a term around 2010 representing commercial arborists. I have been an arborist working in the greater Spokane area for 25 years and presently work for Avista Utilities representing the Vegetation Management Program.

Sincerely,

*Ben Kappen*

**Ben Kappen**, Vegetation Management Program Administrator  
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March 2, 2023

Garret Jones

Director of Parks and Recreation

City of Spokane

808 West Spokane Falls Blvd.

Spokane, WA 99201

Hello,

My name is Justyce Brant, and I am interested in serving on the Urban Forestry Citizens Advisory Committee (UFCAC). I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to fulfill the responsibilities of any vacant seat on the UFCAC and especially value your time and consideration.

I am the restoration coordinator for The Lands Council, a local environmental nonprofit that seeks to preserve and revitalize the Inland Northwest's forests, waters, and wildlife. I manage and coordinate riparian restoration projects while regularly engaging with students, volunteers, landowners, and environmental professionals. I love my role at The Lands Council as it has allowed me not only to apply my passion for the environment, but also for its broader call to civil servitude.

I am also a lead coordinator for the SpoCanopy program which concentrates on equitably addressing disparities in canopy coverage across the various neighborhoods of Spokane. SpoCanopy is a collaborative effort involving The Lands Council and Spokane's Department of Urban Forestry. Additionally, I educate Spokane residents about the benefits of urban forests through presentations at local and regional organizations as well as neighborhood council meetings. I am a strong advocate for the indispensable environmental needs of my community.

During my time as an environmental science and sociology student at Whitworth University, I understudied for the campus arborist completing annual tree maintenance and caring for over one hundred tree species on our campus.

Our forests and trees have always served as a refuge for me and they are a substantial reason why I call this city my home. By joining the UFCAC, I plan to continue the work of current committee members focusing on maintaining and increasing Spokane's urban canopy and share with Spokane residents the joy of our beautiful urban forests.

Thank you for your consideration.

All the best,  
Justyce Brant