

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Environmental Board**

6:30 PM
November 8, 2023

MINUTES

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave.
NW, Issaquah

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Board members:

Jamie Finch, Chair
Don McQuilliams, Vice Chair
Nancy Davidson
Anne Newcomb
Prajakta Ghatpande
Tom Anderson
Alix Lee-Tigner
Ashwin Kannan*

Administration/Staff:

Stacy Vynne McKinstry, Sustainability
Manager
Dan Hintz, Urban Forest Supervisor
Mina Jun, City Intern
Leilani Mathieu-Deciga, City Intern

Chris Peiffer, PlanITGeo consultant
Andrea Starbird, PlanITGeo consultant

Janet Wall, Alternate
Joy Lewis, Alternate

*Youth/young adult members.

Ashwin Manoharan* (unexcused absence)
Dixie Bair (excused absence)

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair FINCH called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair introduced the minutes, which were included in the agenda materials. The minutes were approved as presented by unanimous consent.

- a) Minutes of October 11, 2023

PUBLIC COMMENTS

JONATHON SMITH announced a reminder for the monthly litter clean up on the first Saturday of each month. The next event is December 2, 2023, beginning at 9am at the Post Office.

VYNNE MCKINSTRY acknowledged written comments submitted by CONNIE MARSH on November 8.

CONNIE MARSH provided public comment on the urban forest program updates. MARSH expressed appreciation for the City undertaking the recommendations made back in 2008. MARSH expressed concerns for barriers to the urban forestry program, including a lack of staff authority for forest protection. MARSH asked that staff recognize the difference between a forestry plan and a tree plan and that a forestry plan needs to consider the entire forest ecosystem. MARSH provided feedback on the heritage tree program and encouraged the need for greater protection of these trees.

AGENDA ITEMS**a) Urban Forestry Management Plan and Program Update (I, D)***Presented by:**Dan Hintz, Urban Forest Supervisor*Urban forest managing plan

CHRIS PEIFFER of PlanITGeo provided an overview of the Urban Forest Management Plan scope and project plan. The Board asked clarification questions around the scope of the plan and what is covered by “urban forest.” PEIFFER and HINTZ clarified that a tree inventory is not covered by the plan but may be a recommendation for a next step. Board Member DAVIDSON provided feedback on street tree concerns and requested more information about how they are considered in the plan. Board Member LEWIS requested more information on technology that is used for assessing tree canopy. Board Member ANDERSON asked for information on how the city is engaging in tree and forest research projects and HINTZ and ANDREA STARBIRD of PlanITGeo highlighted some of the research programs the city is involved in. Board Member GHATPANDE asked for clarification for how natives and nonnatives are considered as part of the plan and requested that the City provide more information on native species for residents. HINTZ identified ways the city may be able to improve information and programs around native trees. Board Member LEWIS encouraged staff and consultants to consider how the plan will inform revisions to existing policy and new policy. STARBIRD shared that through the planning process, they are reviewing policies and will make recommendations on what policies are effective and where improvements may be considered. Board Member FINCH is encouraged by the plan and that it will identify implementation strategies to advance the city towards tree canopy goals. Board Member FINCH asked that staff stay focused on the tree canopy goals and use data to drive decision making and any future policies or policy revisions. He recommended that staff review Title 18 for gaps around trees.

Heritage Trees

HINTZ provided an overview of the history, process and proposed modifications for Issaquah’s heritage tree program. The discussion focused on the main questions proposed by HINTZ, including whether to allow groves, how to address culturally modified trees, and overall purpose and outreach about the program. The Board asked clarifying questions around the goals of the tree program which HINTZ clarified is currently very focused on education and celebration. The Board provided feedback on needing to better understand what the program means for protection of trees, both on private and public lands. Overall, the Board was supportive of the program and would like to see it promoted. The Board requested that HINTZ return in early 2024 for further discussion on the program and incorporation of recommendations from the Board.

Urban Forestry Program Updates

HINTZ provided updates on the program, including environmental education, volunteer activities, tree plantings, and Green Issaquah. The Board asked clarifying questions and Board Member DAVIDSON encouraged the City to engage in conversations with partners, such as utilities, that prune trees within the city limits.

b) ICAP 2024 Check In (D)*Presented by:**Stacy Vynne McKinstry, Sustainability Manager*

The Board did not have time for discussion on this topic and will revisit at the December meeting.

c) 2023 Board Report and Self Assessment (D)*Presented by:**Stacy Vynne McKinstry, Sustainability Manager*

The Board did not have time for detailed discussion on this topic.

Board member LEWIS suggested adding a question to the self assessment that looks at whether the Board missed any important topics in 2023, where were they able to move the needle, and what initiatives

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do they want to consider for 2024. Staff will incorporate feedback and distribute they survey. Staff will bring the final draft board report to the Environmental Board at the December meeting.

REPORTS

- a) 2022 Greenhouse Gas Inventory Preliminary Results
- b) Environmental Board 2024 Workplan

VYNNE MCKINSTRY provided brief updates on Council topics and city initiatives.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM.