

**Ad Hoc Tree Committee
Meeting Notes
February 10, 2016**

Committee Members in Attendance: Jon Quitslund, Mack Pearl, Sarah Blossom, Ron Peltier, Kol Medina

COBI Staff: Jennifer Sutton, Joe Tovar, Josh Machen

Public: Olaf Ribeiro, Charles Schmid, Tami Meader

The meeting came to order at 9:05 a.m. and adjourned at 11:15.

At Kol's request, Jennifer gave a brief summary of the committee's work. Beginning in January, 2014, we focused first on those parts of BIMC 18.15.010 pertaining to trees in the MUTC, with the goal of preserving the tree canopy within Winslow, expanding protections of significant trees and promoting the planting of street trees. Working with the Code Enforcement officer, we made some changes in the Land Clearing chapter to address Island-wide problems. We saw to the creation of a Tree Fund, and the Heritage Tree program is now administered by the Historic Preservation Commission. We then moved on to review and revise provisions in BIMC 18.15.010 that apply to residential and non-residential development across the Island. This work has produced a draft Ordinance, No. 2016-01, which needs only finishing touches before going to the Council.

In the past, the committee discussed some features of the Land Clearing and Vegetation Management chapters and regulations pertaining to subdivisions (especially the Cluster option), with a desire to regulate more effectively how soils, native vegetation, healthy trees and forested areas are protected, not recklessly destroyed in the course of property development and improvement.

As we began to speak of the committee's unfinished business, Mack raised a question about trees in the right of way: a 'grey area' in which various rights and interests are poorly defined and imperfectly understood by citizens.

Ron observed that one of the committee's goals should be to make policies easier for the public to understand. Jennifer suggested preparation of a Frequently Asked Questions summary for the COBI website. Joe observed that some guidance could be represented graphically – we have an example in the 'flow chart' associated with the Land Clearing regulations. We also talked of establishing a 'parking lot' for issues that may be beyond the committee's scope, or could be taken up as we move through a list of priorities.

Item 1 on the Agenda: Sarah Blossom was chosen as the Committee Chairperson.

Item 2: Notes from the previous meeting (January 5) were approved as distributed.

Item 3: Scope of work for the Committee. At a Council meeting where subdivision development and the possibility of a moratorium were discussed, the Ad Hoc Committee was given the task of reviewing and (where appropriate) proposing revisions to the BIMC, to be consistent with principles and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, currently being updated. Kol observed that our main concern should be preservation of the tree canopy. Mack pointed out that we ought to be thinking about existing lots as well as new development. We discussed the order in which to tackle the several parts of this task.

Sarah proposed that we look at the 'Cluster Option' as described in the Subdivision Design Standards (BIMC 17.12): eliminate it, or modify the regulations? It was agreed that that will be the main topic of our next meeting.

Joe remarked on the broad context for the committee's work: COBI has an obligation, under guidance from the Department of Ecology, to develop regulations for Low Impact Development, in order to provide for effective stormwater management. That fits in with an Island-wide conservation strategy, and entails preservation of tree canopy. Jennifer mentioned that current stormwater regulations are in BIMC 15.20. Public Works has taken the lead on developing LID regulations; Janelle Hicks has been the point person.

The Land Clearing and Vegetation Management chapters in Title 18 are also on our work program, along with trees and understory vegetation in the right of way.

At several points, discussion went beyond trees and the community forest to touch on other important environmental resources: soils, air, views, aquifers, surface water, and wildlife. Sarah may propose to the Council a broadened definition of the Ad Hoc Committee's responsibilities.

Item 4 on the Agenda: Ordinance 2016-10. Mack called attention to a passage on p. 11 of the draft, saying that protection of soils is important, along with trees. {The Ordinance will come back to the committee one more time for finishing touches, following discussion in the Planning Commission meeting on Feb. 12.}

We agreed to plan for two meetings a month. The next meeting will be Feb. 17, 3:30 to 5:30 p. m.

Notes Approved: February 17, 2016