



URBAN FORESTRY COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 26, 2026, 8:05 AM
City Hall- City Hall Conference Room 6

Members Present:

John Schwandt (Chair)
John Burke
Bob Hallock
JD Reeves
Bruce Martinek
Gabriel Hynes (Student Representative)

Members Absent:

Gina Davis
Steve Bloedel

Staff Present:

Monte McCully Urban Forester
Kris Beyer Admin Assistant
Dan Gookin Mayor (9:30-9:35am)

Guests Present:

Angela Birdsall
Daniel Roop

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 9:16 AM by John Schwandt.

MINUTES (Action Item)

Motion to approve February 2026 minutes with added detail on tree species to be added on tree removal requests by Bruce Martinek, seconded by JD Reeves; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Angela Birdsall addressed the committee and submitted a nomination for a Douglas Fir tree located at 6th St. & Spokane Ave. to be considered for the Historic Tree Program.

Discussion included:

- Compiling a comprehensive list of nominated trees from both public submissions and committee observations.
- Encouraging committee members to identify notable trees throughout the city and record locations for future evaluation.
- Potential partnership with local schools and forestry programs to assist with:
 - Measuring trees
 - Collecting data
 - Updating records

The committee also discussed updating the Historic Tree Program to improve accessibility and reduce costs by:

- Transitioning from printed booklets to digital formats
- Using QR codes for public access
- Creating an online map and database for continuous updates



It was noted that expanding digital access would allow for more trees to be included and easier long-term maintenance of records.

FORESTERS REPORT

**See attached report by Monte McCully.

- Removals, Pruning, Planting:
 - Approximately 102 forestry cases have been tracked year-to-date, including permits, inquiries, and inspection requests.
 - The majority of removal requests involve dead or declining trees, especially ornamental species such as plums and cherries.
 - Monte McCully continues to evaluate removal requests administratively when appropriate, bringing only contested or viable tree removals to the committee.
 - Significant work has been completed in:
 - Clearance pruning for pedestrian and traffic safety
 - Removal of hazard and storm-damaged trees
 - Addressing tree conflicts with sidewalks and infrastructure
 - The cost-share program continues to support pruning, removal, and related work, with most applications processed and reimbursed.
- Memorial Trees- Replanting
 - Monte reported ongoing work related to memorial tree replanting efforts across city parks and rights-of-way.
 - Several memorial trees from prior years were replanted recently, including installations completed within the past one to two months.
 - A White Pine memorial tree was planted in City Park in proximity to the American Chestnut trees. While staff noted that new memorial trees are typically not placed in City Park, this planting was completed in accordance with a prior approval.
 - Additional memorial trees were planted along trail corridors, including conifer species (Pine/Fir), with placement intended to improve accessibility for viewing associated plaques and creating a more cohesive grouping of memorial plantings.
 - Monte also reported:
 - Replacement of trees in areas where previous memorial trees were removed due to infrastructure changes (e.g., swale or construction areas such as Tubbs Hill/Veterans Memorial Field area).
 - In some cases, species substitutions were necessary, such as replacing Ash trees with alternative species due to pest concerns (Emerald Ash Borer considerations).
 - New plaques have been installed for most replanting's; however, at least one plaque still needs to be reordered due to the species change.
 - Discussion points included:
 - Maintaining consistency in memorial tree placement and species selection moving forward.
 - Improving long-term tracking of memorial tree locations and ensuring accurate records when trees are removed or replaced.
 - Considering accessibility and visibility of plaques when selecting planting locations.



- Continued coordination with other departments (e.g., Parks and Water) to ensure irrigation support and long-term survivability of memorial trees.
 - Monte indicated that memorial replanting efforts are ongoing and will continue to be addressed as part of routine planting and replacement cycles.
- Water Department- Replanting
 - Monte McCully reported coordination with the Water Department regarding tree planting and replanting activities in areas impacted by utility work.
 - A number of trees previously held in the Parks Department nursery were transferred to the Water Department for planting, primarily consisting of Crabapple varieties. These species were selected for relocation due to maintenance considerations within park spaces (fruiting and debris concerns), making them more suitable for utility corridors or right-of-way planting.
 - Monte noted that the Water Department has been actively involved in planting these trees along project areas, and initial establishment appears to be progressing well following installation.
 - Discussion also highlighted ongoing challenges related to utility conflicts with existing trees, including:
 - Water line repairs that require excavation in close proximity to established trees
 - Occasional removal of trees during utility work without prior coordination
 - Limited planting opportunities in areas where underground utilities (water, gas lines, etc.) are present
 - Monte emphasized a renewed effort to adhere more strictly to spacing requirements, including maintaining appropriate setbacks (e.g., approximately 10 feet) between trees and underground utilities. This is intended to:
 - Reduce future conflicts
 - Prevent repeated removals due to infrastructure access needs
 - Improve long-term survivability of plantings
 - Additional discussion addressed shallow or improperly installed utility lines observed in some areas, which further complicates tree placement and increases risk of conflict.
 - Coordination strategies moving forward include:
 - Increased communication between the Urban Forestry program and Water Department before planting decisions are finalized
 - Identifying suitable planting zones that minimize risk of future removal
 - Utilizing surplus or less desirable tree stock in areas managed by the Water Department where appropriate
 - Monte indicated that continued collaboration with the Water Department is essential to balance infrastructure needs with urban canopy goals, and to ensure newly planted trees are appropriately sited to avoid repeat disturbances.
- Re-Leaf
 - Monte reported that the Re-Leaf tree planting program was successfully completed for the current season and represented a highly efficient and cost-effective operation.



- Approximately 100 trees were planted as part of the program.
 - Planting work was completed within a relatively short timeframe (approximately two weeks), even while accommodating other ongoing maintenance tasks.
 - A contractor (Knot Head Tree Service) was utilized and demonstrated significant efficiency through the use of specialized equipment:
 - A modified Dingo-style compact machine equipped with a custom shovel attachment allowed for:
 - Direct vertical soil penetration
 - Minimal disturbance to surrounding soil and turf
 - Reduced risk of damaging irrigation systems or underground utilities
 - The equipment enabled crews to loosen soil and extract planting areas quickly, allowing for installation rates of up to 20 trees per day.
 - Cost and efficiency notes:
 - The selected contractor's bid was:
 - Approximately half the cost of the next lowest bidder
 - Roughly one-third of the average bid cost
 - The contractor was able to maintain profitability while delivering improved efficiency, making the project notably cost-effective for the City.
 - Operational observations:
 - The equipment and method significantly reduced:
 - Labor time
 - Surface disruption
 - Conflicts with irrigation and existing infrastructure
 - The planting process was described as smooth and effective, with no major complications reported during installation.
 - Future considerations:
 - Monte McCully indicated interest in continuing to use similar methods in future Re-Leaf cycles.
 - However, it was noted that future program size may be adjusted:
 - Planting large numbers of trees in a single cycle places pressure on the maintenance budget.
 - Funds must remain available for hazard tree removals, storm damage, and pest response (e.g., Bark Beetle issues).
 - Discussion included the possibility of scaling the program slightly lower than 100 trees annually, balancing expansion of canopy with long-term maintenance capacity.
 - Overall, the Re-Leaf program was considered highly successful, demonstrating improved efficiency, reduced costs, and effective planting outcomes, while highlighting the need to align annual planting volumes with available maintenance resources.
- Inventory Grant:
 - Discussion included updates on the tree inventory grant program:
 - Matt Perkins reported initial funding awards did not include Coeur d'Alene; however, reallocated funds from other communities (due to underutilization) may now become available.
 - Monte anticipates receiving sufficient funding to complete a significant portion



- of the inventory, though not necessarily the entire project.
 - Additional inventory considerations:
 - Estimated total tree stock: approximately 30,000 trees
 - Existing inventory data is partially outdated or incomplete
 - Proposed approach:
 - Prioritize older entries first
 - Combine contractor work with in-house updates
 - Include tree health assessments
 - Long-term goal is to establish a consistent multi-year cycle for maintaining accurate inventory records.
- Trees Idaho:
 - Monte McCully and Daniel Roop, Trees Idaho board member, provided an overview of the Trees Idaho partnership and tree distribution event, noting that the program was highly successful and well-received by the public.
 - Trees Idaho organized a community tree giveaway, distributing approximately 100 trees to local residents.
 - Unlike the City's Re-Leaf program, which focuses on public right-of-way planting, this program allowed trees to be planted on both private and public property.
 - Residents were responsible for planting their own trees, with guidance provided to support proper installation.
 - Program logistics and operations:
 - Trees were staged and distributed from a City facility (similar to compost giveaway operations).
 - The distribution followed a drive-through model, allowing residents to pick up trees efficiently.
 - Staff assisted with staging and loading trees at the nursery prior to the event.
 - The event was completed successfully, with all trees distributed and minimal operational issues.
 - Tree stock and selection:
 - Trees provided were generally smaller caliper (approximately 1-inch diameter) compared to the City's typical 2-inch Re-Leaf trees.
 - The smaller size improved:
 - Ease of transport
 - Handling and loading
 - Planting success for homeowners
 - A broader variety of species was offered compared to City programs, providing more flexibility for different site conditions.

Additional Discussion

- Matt Perkins, Urban and Community Forest Program Manager reported his continued efforts on regional coordination & outreach
 - Increasing coordination with regional communities, including:
 - Post Falls
 - Hayden



- Dover
- Kellogg
- Boundary County
- Plans include:
 - Increasing frequency of visits (targeting quarterly outreach)
 - Supporting communities new to urban forestry programs
 - Rebuilding relationships where prior engagement has declined
 - Monte reported there is new interest in reviving regional collaboration meetings, similar to past efforts, where Forestry professionals, Agencies (IDL, Forest Service) and contractors could share knowledge, training, and best practices.
- Additional Program Discussion
 - Continued success of tree giveaway programs (Trees Idaho) was noted.
 - Interest in expanding volunteer programs such as Tree Captains to support planting, pruning, and education efforts.
 - Future arborist training workshops were discussed, with emphasis on scheduling during off-season periods to encourage participation.

BOB HALLOCK RETIREMENT

Mayor Dan Gookin joined the meeting to recognize Bob Hallock for 24 years of service to the City and the Urban Forestry Committee.

- A formal acknowledgment was presented.
- Committee members expressed appreciation for Bob's long-standing contributions, particularly:
 - Advocacy for native species
 - Emphasis on proper planting practices ("Right Tree, Right Place")

Bob was invited to continue attending meetings in an informal capacity.

DANIEL ROOP APPLICATION (Action Item)

The committee considered the appointment of Daniel "Danny" Roop. Discussion acknowledged his willingness to serve and participate in committee activities.

Motion to approve the appointment of Daniel Roop by Bob Hallock, seconded by Bruce Martinek; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

PLANT STRIP ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee reviewed a request from a property owner to remove grass from a planting strip and replace it with gravel. No address was provided by Monte McCully.

Discussion included:

- Concerns about gravel migration onto sidewalks and streets
- Potential decline in tree health due to lack of irrigation and soil coverage
- Risk of setting precedent for similar requests throughout the city



It was confirmed that:

- Irrigation is required for street trees
- Landscaping alternatives may be considered but must comply with city standards

Consensus: The committee did not support full gravel replacement without proper landscaping and irrigation provisions.

UF COMMITTEE REMOVAL REVIEW

1702 E. Satre Ave (Spruce Tree)

The committee reviewed a removal request for a mature Spruce tree.

Findings:

- Tree is healthy and structurally sound
- No evidence of pests or disease
- Removal request based solely on maintenance concerns (needle and cone drop)

Discussion included:

- Importance of preserving healthy canopy trees
- Concern regarding increased requests based on maintenance rather than necessity

Motion to deny the Spruce Tree removal at 1702 E. Satre Ave by Bob Hallock, seconded by Bruce Martinek; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

INSPECTION REQUESTS

- 1702 E Satre Ave- see above

ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting July 17, 2026 at 8:05 AM

Motion to adjourn by Bruce Martinek, seconded by Bob Hallock, all in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting ended at 10:05 AM