Washington Community Forestry Council Meeting
May 14, 2019
Finch Arboretum, 3404 W Woodland Blvd, Spokane, WA

Members Attending: Angel Spell, Cindy Deffe, Dave Bayard, David Miller, Juli Hartwig, Kirsten Lints, Linden Lampman, Lisa Ciecko, Paula Dinius, Semra Riddle, Kathleen Wolf

Members Absent: John Bornsworth, Kathy Sheehan

Guests: Ben Thompson, Garth Davis, Katie Kosanke, Sandy Letzing

Meeting Convened: 9:05 a.m.

Welcome: Chair welcomed members. Roll was taken.

Agenda Approved: Motion to approve agenda, with adjustments for guests as needed, Kirsten Lints. Second David Miller.

Minutes Approved: Motion to approve minutes from February 27, 2019, Lisa Ciecko. Second David Miller. Motion passed. One abstention.

Sandy Letzing, Cascadia Conservation District
UCF Program is preparing to initiate a contract with Cascadia Conservation District for technical assistance in Okanogan, Chelan, and Douglas Counties. Sandy, a newly certified arborist, will deliver technical assistance to communities in these counties. Sandy runs the urban agriculture and cost-share programs at the district and provides technical assistance and conservation planning to landowners.

Budget Update:
Linden provided a brief update on the budget citing the Legislature’s authorization of a large amount of funding for forest health. UCF program requested funding for an additional FTE although it is yet unclear if this position is included in the new forest health funding.

Discussion:
Kathy Wolf commented on current agency support for Urban Forestry through Division Manager, Julie Sackett, State Forester George Geisler, and Commissioner Hilary Franz. Kathy is engaged in an agency-wide climate resiliency strategic planning effort as a member of the technical advisory team. She is ensuring that the Commissioner and the team gains a perspective of the importance of urban forestry connections to other agency programs.

Environmental Justice in UCF – Program next steps:
Ben Thompson facilitated a discussion to direct activities that will continue incorporating environmental justice into the UCF grants programs. Approximately $90,000 is available for grants in 2020.
Discussion points:

- Need for more direct community engagement to increase understanding about tree care and maintenance.
- Need for seed money for early planning to identify existing community relationships that might be interested in engaging in urban forestry planning and project implementation.
- It would be good to provide examples of fundable projects, in order to guide potential proposals.
- Consider providing a “tool kit” to guide grantees through the proposal process.
- Compensation for community engagement specialists can be a stumbling block, especially if a non-profit has limited resource capacity.

Recommendations:

- Develop an Outreach, Education, and Partnership Grant. Successfully implemented grants would position grantees for follow-up funding to implement projects.
- Consider hiring a community engagement consultant that, by invitation, could work directly with communities at the neighborhood level.
- Grants should retain a strong focus on trees and urban forestry since that is our primary mission/objective.
- Consider focusing on specific land uses, schools for example.
- Grant deliverables could include a list of potential future projects and master agreements/MOUs between organizations, among others.
- Add equity and diversity into the UCF Mission and Vision to reflect the diversity we are trying to achieve.

Tour of Finch Arboretum: City of Spokane staff led the council on a tour of the arboretum.

Network and Working Lunch – UCF program updates and member updates attached.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training session with Dr. Roberta Wilburn and Associates: Dr. Wilburn led Council members through several activities and discussions to highlight how perceptions can influence programs as they work to be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Growing our individual and collective awareness of other cultures is a journey; we are each at a unique level of understanding principles of equity based on our experiences and willingness to learn. Takeaways included:

- Find commonalities to begin to develop relationships.
- Be authentic and don’t hold back for fear of doing or saying the ‘wrong’ thing.
- Recognize that we all have implicit biases. The challenge is to recognize and understand biases in order to surpass them.
- Knowledge is key but must factor in diversity (individual), equity (a fair chance for success based on needs), and inclusion.
- Meeting others “where they are” and understanding their goals and objectives is key to understanding.
- Measuring progress and growth is important.
- SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) are important to success.

Meeting Adjourned: Motion to adjourn meeting Semra Riddle, Second Cindy Deffe.

Next meeting: September 11, 2019, Seattle, location TBD