

Oregon Heritage Tree Committee

Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting, Friday, April 30, 2021

Committee Participants: Chair Kristin Ramstad; Vice-Chair Samantha Wolf; Nancy Appling-Salucci; Scott Brown; Charlotte Lehan; Molly McKnight; Arne Nyberg; Nate Pedersen; Al Tocchini; Craig Leech; Ed Washington

Excused: Jennifer Karps; David Hedberg

Staff Participants: Annie von Domitz; Jim Denno; Jessica Carbone

Call to Order/ Introductions: Ramstad called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. Self-introductions were made.

Approval of the Minutes: Appling and Ramstad suggested a few edits to the draft minutes. *Tocchini made a motion to approve the January 15, 2021, minutes as corrected. Nyberg seconded the motion. The motion carried.*

Heritage Tree Nominations:

- a. **Smith Farm Walnut update:** Von Domitz has had some communication with the county about the tree. They have not raised any major concerns about the tree being in the nearby roads right of way. Her recommendation is to continue forward with the nomination if this was the only concern.
- b. **Jordan Family American Elm:** Von Domitz shared that the nominators had sent additional sources that they felt connected the tree to the history of the city or county. They are small and scattered pieces that will need additional analysis. Leech asked for verification of the species of elm. Ramstad said that pictures of the front and back of flattened leaves, bark, or seeds could be used to identify the tree since there were no leaves in the pictures sent with the application.

Tocchini made a motion to table both nominations until the next meeting. Appling seconded. The motion carried.

Award Nominations

- a) **Maynard Drawson Award** Appling said that Frank Callahan spent many years identifying Champion Trees in Oregon's forest alongside Maynard. Callahan, a native Oregonian, is a scientist, botanist, and seedsman, and devotes much of his time to managing his western North American native tree and shrub seed business. He consults as a field botanist, with emphasis on trees, for the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Callahan prefers fieldwork, considering discoveries as his "life's adventure." These days Callahan focuses on growing, collecting, and distributing tree seeds worldwide. He collects and distributes seeds worldwide

trying to establish refugia of rare and endangered species. Offerings from Callahan's seed collections grow in major arboreta in the western US and around the world. Callahan is a leading nominator of National Champion Trees, having reported the largest individual trees for more than 80 species. He has discovered, documented, and written articles on plants native to California, Nevada, Idaho, and Washington. He appeared in botanical documentaries with Martha Stewart in "Martha Stewart Living", Ed Bagley, Jr. "Bigfoot country" and "American Forest National Champion Trees" for PBS. The committee discussed the nomination and how Callahan's achievements meet the award's requirements.

Nyberg made a motion to approve the nomination of Frank Callahan for the 2021 Maynard Dawson award. Tocchini seconded. The motion passed.

b) Hero Award

- **Dorothy (Didi) Dahlsrud:** Wolf presented the nomination of Didi Dahlsrud by The Oregon City Natural Resources Committee. Dede is on the Oregon City official tree board. She has always had a passion for heritage trees and was instrumental in rewriting the city code to make the program more accessible by changing the need for an expensive professional arbor report. Before we modified the code, there were only four heritage trees and one heritage stand in the city. Since the new code was adopted in 2018, six more trees and an additional heritage tree stand with approximately 20 trees have been added to the list, every one of them nominated by Didi. She is truly the heritage tree champion of Oregon City. She not only finds the trees but measures them and digs up any available historical information. Dahlsrud has always been a strong advocate for tree planting, tree care, and tree awareness.

McKnight made a motion to approve the nomination of Dorothy "Didi" Dahlsrud for a 2021 Heritage Tree Hero Award. Lehan seconded. The motion carried.

- **Jim Gersbach:** Ramstad presented the nomination of Jim Gersbach. She has worked with Gersbach as a board member for both Oregon Community Trees and the US Forest Service's Oregon state advisory council. Currently, Ramstad and Gersbach worked as colleagues at the Oregon Department of Forestry. She described Gersbach's instrumental work with Oregon's Green Legacy Hiroshima Peace Tree project. Gersbach has been involved with many projects educating the public about trees and history. He is also an acclaimed tree expert and tree tour guide in Portland, a long-time volunteer for Friends of Trees, and has been the force behind the establishment and maintenance of Portland's linear arboretum and the Cully-Concordia International Tree Grove. He has been an advocate for trees his entire adult life, weaving together their significance historically as well as ecologically and socially. Trees and history weave together best in his famous tree walks around Portland neighborhoods. Through his work with Friends of Trees and the City of Portland, he has been involved with numerous other projects.

McKnight made a motion to approve the nomination of Jim Gersbach for a 2021 Heritage Tree Hero Award. Tocchini seconded. The motion carried.

Program Review & Strategic Direction:

- a) **Heritage Tree Program Criteria:** Pedersen gave an overview and discussed the major points that the subcommittee outline in their recommendations they submitted. The subcommittee discussed the issues such as: ensuring consistency of decision making, developing clearer criteria for tree nomination, casting a broader net for a wider representation of stories, reviewing how the group's requirements for academic and written documentation can exclude certain groups, pro-actively reaching out to more diverse community groups, exploring the possible introduction of indicator trees, and revisiting past excluded trees. The subcommittee made the following recommendations:
- Discuss and define what a "direct connection to history means". For example, would this include oral histories?
 - Reword the nomination to clarify what type of tree nominations the committee is looking for. Pedersen suggesting the addition of "Heritage trees or groups of trees are those that tell a compelling story related to national, state or local history." Focusing on the tree's "story".
 - Develop a value statement for the program.

Ramstad recommended adding a section to the nomination form that asks the nominator to summarize the importance of the tree in 70 words. Von Domitz shared the tree data analysis done by Jim Gersbach. The data shows that the current trees skew heavily towards white settler history. The committee approved Ramstad's suggestion of adding cultural to "Heritage trees are those individual trees or groups of trees, that tell a compelling story related to national, state, regional or cultural history." As the committee continues to build relationships with local tribes, the Heritage Tree website can be used as a tool to expand the story of each tree beyond the 70-word limit of the plaques. An indigenous land recognition for each tree can be posted on the website. The website is being used by students and researchers as a resource and could be better utilized by the committee.

McKnight made a motion to include indigenous inclusivity as a discussion topic in the next meeting agenda. Nyberg seconded. The motion passed.

Pedersen made a motion to revisit past rejected nominations using the new criteria. Appling seconded. The motion carried.

- b) **Plaque text review:** Von Domitz thanked everyone that reviewed and left comments on the plaque texts. The biggest takeaway is a lot of the comments that were brought up had to deal with additional information that can or should be added. She suggested that the most fiscally responsible action would be to add to and expand the information available on the website and direct people to that resource. Pedersen suggested that there may be an opportunity to apply for grant funding to replace the physical plaque with more inclusive text. Von Domitz will follow

up with Tim Nitz to see if they would like to rename the Indian Village Grove Trees. She has also reached out to Bob Garcia and Robert Kentta for their feedback on the Cape Perpetua tree text.

Updates & Reports/New Business

- a. **TIC/Council Report:** Washington said the Council's relationship with staff is good. Funding is stable. Leadership and staff are working very hard.
- b. **OCT Awards Report:** Wolf said that she had a good year expediting the Oregon Community Trees (OCT) awards. Milwaukee was Tree City USA this year. Lehan was also an award winner.
- c. **Reports from Members:**
 - **Pedersen:** Pederson is doing further research about cherry trees at the Kennedy School for possible nomination.
 - **Tocchini:** Tocchini has spent time volunteering in the Santiam Canyon after the fires. The local chapter of the American Foresters is discussing planting trees.
 - **Leech:** Leech thanked McKnight for all the work she did checking on heritage trees that may have suffered damage from the winter ice storm. He checked on the oak trees at the State Fairgrounds. They did sustain damage, but there were no trees completely lost. Von Domitz said that Benedictine Sequoia suffered damage, especially on one side, but the tree seems to be ok. Leech said that it is the 50th anniversary of the Moon Trees. There have been cuttings taken from them and they are being grafted. Oregon State Parks is going through a major reorganization, and it is planned to be completed by the next biennium. The new reorganization includes four foresters on staff and up to seven natural resource specialists.
 - **Wolf:** Wolf said the Urban Forestry Conference will be happening virtually on September 14 and 15.
 - **Lehan:** Lehan said that the RV Short Fir sustained limb damage from the ice storm. The walnut grove suffered minor damage. The cable trees suffered no damage.
 - **McKnight:** McKnight said the Shipley Cook Grove sustained damage, but no trees were lost. She is still reaching out to contacts in Pendleton for possible information about the trees in Roy Raley Park.

2021 Meeting Schedule

July 9, 2021- Zoom

October 15, 2021

January 2022

Adjourn at 3:12 p.m.