



CITY OF  
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

TREE & LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT  
AD HOC COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2018  
3:00-4:30 PM  
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM  
280 MADISON AVE N  
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA 98110

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## AGENDA

- 3:00 PM**      **Review and Approve Notes from February 7, 2018 Meeting**
- 3:05 PM**      **Review and Approve Meeting Agenda**
- 3:10 PM**      **Public comment on agenda-related items.**
- 3:20 PM**      **Ongoing Business:**
- Hedge Regulations from other Jurisdictions
  - Consider New Retention Requirements for Winslow Residential Zones
  - Discuss Revisions to BIMC 16.18 *Land Clearing*
- 4:15 PM**      **Public comment on agenda-related items.**
- 4:25 PM**      **For the Good of the Order**
- 4:30 PM**      **Adjourn**

**\*\*TIMES ARE ESTIMATES\***

Public comment time at meeting may be limited to allow time for Commissioners to deliberate. To provide additional comment to the City outside of this meeting, e-mail us at [pcd@bainbridgewa.gov](mailto:pcd@bainbridgewa.gov) or write us at Planning and Community Development, 280 Madison Avenue, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

**For special accommodations, please contact Jane Rasely, Planning & Community  
Development 206-780-3758 or at [jrasely@bainbridgewa.gov](mailto:jrasely@bainbridgewa.gov)**



TREE & LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT  
AD HOC COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING NOTES  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2018  
3:00 – 4:30 PM  
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM

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**Committee Members in Attendance:** Jon Quitslund, Rasham Nassar, Mack Pearl, Ron Peltier, Sarah Blossom

**COBI Staff and BIFD:** Jennifer Sutton, Luke Carpenter

**Public:** Mike Juneau, Charles Schmid

**Agenda Items 1 & 2:** Notes from the previous meeting were reviewed approved as distributed. The Agenda was not modified.

**Agenda Item 3:** Charles Schmid brought several past issues of the ABC's publication, *Scotch Broom*, in which instances of clearcutting and the woeful lack of adequate regulations had been documented. He distributed copies of an especially shocking instance from 1997. Enough said?

**Agenda Item 4, Revisions to BIMC 16.18:** Chairing the meeting, Ron first brought up the dilemma presented by Paul Bonham's interest in a remedy for overgrown and view-blocking hedges. The Committee had been advised against attempting to craft regulatory language in this area. Jennifer said that there are regulations for fences and hedges in the zoning setback, but not beyond it. Several comments were offered. The issue arises between neighbors, and there is a conflict between one person's right to privacy and another's interest in an unobstructed view. A hedge is meant to be trimmed, but sometimes a hedge is formed by trees that should not be topped. Mike pointed out that the SMP includes regulation of hedge height, but they apply to side yards. Jon said that hedges are out of place on Bainbridge; Sarah countered that they are common in Eagledale. Any regulation of existing hedges would have to be complaint-based, and perhaps the City Attorney finds no solid basis for adjudicating such a complaint.

At 3:35 we turned to other business in the Code chapter. Ron proposed that we leave the perfecting of language in the chapter to Jennifer, and he turned attention to her latest list of outstanding policy questions.

**1<sup>st</sup> bullet point:** "Should there be an upper limit to tree removal or canopy change on a developed SFR in Winslow (R-14 through R-2.9)?" Jon asked whether BIMC 18.15.010 was adequate, as that might be the proper place for such a regulation. Mack suggested following the example of Lacey and/or Olympia. We didn't settle the question conclusively. Jennifer's digest of regulations from other jurisdictions deserves study.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Outside of NVPA's, should the City limit significant tree removal without regard for species? For instance, alders of any size might not count as significant unless they are in a critical area or buffer. Are there other 'undeserving' species? Mike observed that species diversity is important. We didn't settle this matter conclusively.

**3<sup>rd</sup>:** Should the current definition of significant tree within the MUTC & HS districts (8" dbh) be applied Island-wide? On this, we decided "NO," sticking with the established criteria of 10" dbh for deciduous and 12 dbh for evergreen species.

4<sup>th</sup>: New “exceptional tree” category. We agreed that the simple definition (48” dbh or greater) is not adequate, but did not craft a better one. The committee discussed the Heritage Tree Program, which is managed by the Historic Preservation Commission, and the merits of creating the new exceptional tree category compared to the voluntary heritage tree program. The Committee agreed that the Heritage Tree Program should be better promoted.

We struggled with the question of how to define the criteria for granting a permit – which may come down to how to deny a permit, or to grant it with conditions attached. Jon said it would help to know what information is required in the application for a permit, and what form the approval takes. At this point we were running out of time.

Jon expressed some frustration, as he had come in with a marked-up copy of the latest draft, including points where there’s a policy decision to be made and other places where the language could be improved. Jennifer assured him that they could work together on the next iteration.

The next meeting will be on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

## NEW BIMC Chapter 16.18

### Forest Stewardship, Vegetation Maintenance and Tree Removal

#### 16.18.010 Overview.

- A. The policies presented in this chapter rest on an assumption that in the care of trees and vegetation on their property, citizens will be guided by common sense and best practices, responsive to the Purposes stated in section **16.18.025** below. Sanctions may be applied to activities that are found by the planning director to be reckless and destructive, and to any action or negligence that adversely affects a neighboring property, pursuant to the provisions of section **16.18.110** and other applicable provisions of the Code.
- B. To a large extent, work carried out in landscaped yards and forested areas does not require a permit (see **16.18.040** below). However, property owners who are considering major changes to the landscape and trees on their property should seek advice and professional services from a licensed arborist who is certified by the American Society of Consulting Arborists or the International Society of Arboriculture, or a landscape professional who is certified by the City.
- C. This chapter is one of several in the Municipal Code that pertain to the care of trees, vegetation, and forested areas on Bainbridge Island. Its policies and non-regulatory provisions pertain especially to the plans and ongoing activities of Island residents, outside of their homes or places of business but on their own property, when the use and enjoyment of the property involves stewardship and maintenance of trees and vegetation.

#### 16.18.020 Findings.

- A. Forested areas and trees on individual lots are integral parts of Bainbridge Island's character; they enhance the City's appearance and livability, as well as providing significant environmental benefits and natural resource values.
- B. Conserving and managing the Island's forested areas and native vegetation is a central goal of the Bainbridge Island *Comprehensive Plan*: see Guiding Principles 1 & 5 and related Policies; Goals LU-6, 12 & 13; EN-3, 4, 5, 18 & 19; WR-3 & 4; and Policies LU 4.10 & EN 15.3.
- C. Trees are valued by homeowners and, when well cared for, enhance property values.
- D. Reckless and unnecessary removal of trees and understory vegetation, combined with extensive disturbance of soils, cause loss of habitat and wildlife, runoff and soil erosion, degradation of surface water and aquifer recharge, and adverse impacts on air quality, as well as loss of aesthetic appeal.
- E. The community forest resources of the Island are best understood as a mosaic, with some large and many small pieces, on publicly owned and private properties. When clearing for

development further fragments the mosaic, both individual and community interests are affected.

- F. On Bainbridge Island and elsewhere, examples exist to demonstrate that development for residential and other uses can be compatible with careful conservation of forest conditions and other natural features; and that such development can be cost-effective, attractive, energy-efficient, and well adapted to our climate.

### **16.18.025 Purposes.**

This Chapter is adopted for the following purposes:

- A. To promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of Bainbridge Island citizens without preventing the reasonable use of private property.
- B. To preserve and enhance the City's physical and aesthetic character, to promote the healthy functioning of our Island's natural systems, and to provide economic benefits to the community, for the sake of present and future generations.
- C. To implement the purposes of the State Growth Management Act relating to conservation of natural resources, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.
- D. To implement goals and policies in the current [Comprehensive Plan](#), the [Community Forest Management Plan \(2006\)](#), the [Bainbridge Island Open Space Study \(October 2008\)](#), and the [Bainbridge Island Community Wildfire Protection Plan \(2010\)](#), or subsequent updated versions.
- E. To promote forest stewardship practices and carefully planned development that results in minimal disturbance to the prior conditions of a property and neighboring properties.
- F. To implement a long-range policy of maintaining the Island's forest canopy cover while taking measures to prevent wildfires and protect structures in accordance with recommendations of the Bainbridge Island Fire Department.
- G. To allow limited tree and vegetation removal to provide for solar access, agriculture and gardens.
- H. To promote infiltration of stormwater and aquifer recharge; to minimize erosion and prevent pollution; to prevent landslides; to protect the waters of Puget Sound and the quality and quantity of water in wells.
- I. To maintain in a healthy state significant trees, clusters of trees, and forested areas, allowing for thinning, limbing, removal of invasive and undesirable vegetation, selective harvest and replanting, developing and maintaining trails, and removal of diseased, dead, or dangerous trees.

### **16.18.030 Applicability.**

Provisions of this chapter apply citywide to all properties where trees and naturally occurring vegetation are found, except where other chapters of the Municipal Code apply as described below:

- A. This chapter does not apply to any portion of a property that is identified as a critical area or a prescribed critical area buffer zone, pursuant to BIMC Chapter 16.20 (*Critical Areas*). In these areas, including a Native Vegetation Protection Area if one has been defined, the regulations of BIMC Chapter 16.20 apply. **Additionally, the regulations of this chapter do not apply to any property with a designated and approved NVPA.**
- B. This chapter does not apply to the portion(s) of a shoreline property within 200 feet landward of an Ordinary High Water Mark, where the regulations of BIMC 16.12 (the *Shoreline Master Program*) apply.
- C. The provisions of BIMC 18.15.010 (*Landscaping, Screening, and Tree Retention, Protection and Replacement*) and BIMC 17.12 (*Subdivision Design Standards*) may apply to projects involving significant land disturbing activities and substantial development or redevelopment.

### **16.18.040 Activities Allowed without a Permit.**

The following activities are allowed without a Tree Removal and Vegetation Maintenance Permit:

- A. Routine landscaping and maintenance of vegetation, such as pruning and planting, removal of invasive/exotic species, management of brush and seedling trees. This includes maintenance of trees and vegetation required to be retained or planted through a land use permit such as a subdivision, site plan review, or conditional use permit.
- B. Removal of diseased, dead, or fallen trees (when letting the wood decay in place is not an option).
- C. Removal of trees and ground cover in emergency situations involving danger to life or habitable buildings, or to eliminate substantial fire hazards.
- D. Routine maintenance activities in rights-of-way and required roadside buffers, including removal of inferior trees and invasive/exotic species, trimming of overgrown hedges, and planting to replace removed vegetation.
- E. Clearing and digging required for the installation and maintenance of water meters, fire hydrants, and other utility lines and infrastructure, provided that the property owner is consulted and is satisfied that vitally important tree roots will not be compromised.
- F. Development of existing farmed areas in accordance with an approved farm management plan, unless tree removal would be in excess of the amount permitted in this Chapter.

- G. Limbing of significant trees to remove dead or hazardous branches, and to improve the tree's form and long-term vitality, provided that such work is done by a qualified professional arborist.
- H. Removal of trees that are smaller than significant trees, provided that they are removed with minimal soil disturbance.
- I. Removal of some healthy significant trees (see **16.18.120 Definitions**) is allowed, **provided that the extent of canopy cover is not reduced below 50% of the lot area.** On a lot that is one acre or larger, a property owner may, without a permit, remove no more than **six** significant trees in any 36-month period. On a lot less than one acre in size, removal of **three** significant trees in any 36-month period is allowed without a permit. **On any property, if canopy cover would be reduced below 50% of the lot area, a tree removal / vegetation maintenance permit is required. NOTE: CONSIDERING NEW RETENTION STANDARDSdd Cross reference to new retention standard**

**16.18.050 Activities Requiring a Permit.**

The following activities require an applicant to obtain a Tree Removal / Vegetation Maintenance Permit prior to commencing:

- A. A permit is required for any tree removal or vegetation maintenance in an area required to be retained or planted, pursuant to BIMC 18.15.010, through a land use permit such as a subdivision, a site plan review, or a conditional use permit. Routine maintenance as described in section **16.18.040.D** above is exempt from this requirement.
- B. For properties located outside of the Mixed Use Town Center and High School Road zoning districts, a tree removal permit is required for removing more than the number of significant trees allowed without a permit, pursuant to section **16.18.040.I** above. On any property, a tree removal / vegetation maintenance permit is required to authorize reduction of the canopy cover below 50% of the lot area. The planting of a replacement tree or trees may be required.
- C. If it is necessary to remove trees or tree limbs to provide for efficient functioning of solar panels, such plans shall be submitted and reviewed with the application for a building permit. If a tree removal / vegetation maintenance permit is issued, the planting of a replacement tree or trees may be required.
- D. For developed properties located within the Mixed Use Town Center and High School Road zoning districts, a tree removal / vegetation maintenance permit is required for removing any tree eight inches in diameter or greater, measured 4.5 feet above grade. The applicant must demonstrate that the requested removal meets one of the following criteria:
  - 1. The tree is diseased, dead, or determined to be hazardous, as certified by an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Risk Assessment Qualified (TRAQ) arborist; or

2. The removal is necessary to allow reasonable use or enable permitted construction, and no alternative is feasible; or
  3. The removal is necessary to maintain utilities, provide access, or fulfill the terms of an easement or covenant recorded prior to the adoption of the ordinance codified in this chapter.
- E. For undeveloped properties within the Mixed Use Town Center and High School Road zoning districts, a tree removal / vegetation maintenance permit is required to remove **any** tree except trees that are diseased, dead, fallen, or contributing to an emergency. The tree removal permit will be reviewed for consistency with any applicable provisions of **BIMC 18.15.010** that would apply to future development permits.
- ~~F. A tree removal permit is required to authorize removal of an *exceptional tree* (see **16.18.120 Definitions**) in any part of the City. The criteria outlined above in section **16.18.050.C** apply. The planting of a replacement tree or trees may be required.~~

#### **16.18.060 General Regulations and Standards.**

- A. While non-native and invasive species should be kept under control and eradicated if possible, native understory vegetation shall be maintained and land disturbing activity shall be kept to a minimum. Stump pulling and use of heavy equipment are not allowed without a tree removal / vegetation maintenance permit.
- B. On the undeveloped portion(s) of forested acreage in the R-0.4, R-1, and R-2 zones that may be developed in the future through subdivision or Site Plan and Design Review permits, at least 65% of the area shall be left in its natural condition, anticipating a Site Assessment Review and the designation of a Native Vegetation Protection Area pursuant to BIMC 15.19 and 16.20.100, respectively.
- C. With an approved *Forest Stewardship Plan* (described in BIMC 16.20.180.H), property owners are authorized to implement long range plans without obtaining tree removal / vegetation maintenance permits for piece-meal work.
- D. If the amount of tree removal, vegetation maintenance and/or land disturbing activity will impact more than 7,000 sq. ft. of area or more than 35% of the property, whichever is less, a Site Assessment Review will be required pursuant to BIMC 15.19, prior to application for a tree removal permit. This applies to one-time removal and to cumulative tree removal / land disturbing activities.

**16.18.070 Tree Removal / Vegetation Maintenance Permit Administration and Review Process.**

- A. For activities requiring a permit, the process begins with submission of a complete application, usually after discussion of the proposed activity with a member of the Planning staff. The reasons for requesting a permit must be consistent with the **Purposes** (section **.025**) of this chapter.
- B. Tree removal activities shall comply with this chapter's provisions for permits and related regulations. Permits for tree removal / vegetation maintenance may require the planting of replacement trees.
- C. The planning director shall grant a tree removal permit if the application meets the requirements of this chapter and is consistent with other relevant city codes relating to, including but not limited to Chapters 15.19, 15.20, 16.12, 16.20, 17.12, 18.15.010 BIMC. If the tree removal permit application is denied, the decision may be appealed pursuant to BIMC 16.18.100.

**NOTE: CRITERION FOR GRANTING TREE REMOVAL PERMIT OUTLINED IN SECTION C. IS THAT THE REMOVAL DOESN'T VIOLATE OR IS NOT PROHIBITED BY OTHER SECTIONS OF THE CODE. WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED FOR CRITERIA?**

- D. No work authorized by a tree removal permit shall commence until a permit notice has been posted by the applicant at a conspicuous location on the subject property. The notice shall remain posted in said location until the authorized tree removal has been completed.
- E. Any tree removal permit granted under this chapter shall expire one year from the date of issuance. Upon a showing of good cause, the permit may be extended for six months by the planning director. Approved tree removal permits shall not be amended without authorization of the planning director.
- F. A tree removal / vegetation maintenance permit may be suspended or revoked by the planning director because of incorrect information supplied or any violation of the provisions of this chapter.
- G. A forest practice permit from the State Department of Natural Resources may be required pursuant to RCW 76.09, and it is the responsibility of Planning staff to advise applicants if a DNR permit is required. Failure to obtain a forest practice permit when applicable shall be grounds for denial of all applications for permits or approvals, including building permits and subdivision approvals, relating to non-forestry uses of the land for a period of six years, in accordance with RCW 76.09.060.

**16.18.080 After-the-fact Tree Removal/Vegetation Maintenance Permit.**

- A. In response to a report that one or more trees have been removed improperly or vegetation maintenance activity did not comply with any section of the BIMC, the City's Code

Enforcement Officer shall investigate. If in fact the reported activity was legitimate without a permit, no action will be taken. If the reported activity would have been allowed if a permit had been applied for, an after-the-fact Tree Removal/Vegetation Maintenance Permit shall be issued. The person or persons responsible for unauthorized tree removal shall be made aware of all the conditions for approval and any applicable regulations and remedies. The fee for an after-the-fact permit shall be established by a resolution of the City Council.

- B. If in fact the reported activity would not have been permitted, entirely or in some particulars, the Code Enforcement Officer, in consultation with the Director or the City Attorney, shall follow the procedures for **Enforcement and penalty** in this chapter or another applicable chapter of the BIMC.

#### **16.18.090 Performance assurance.**

- A. The planning director may require, as a condition for the granting of a permit, that the applicant furnish a performance assurance in a form approved by the planning director, in order to obligate the applicant, after the approved tree removal has been accomplished, to complete all required replanting, erosion control, and cleanup on the property. The surety device shall be in an amount equal to the estimated cost of such services, with surety and conditions satisfactory to the planning director.
- B. In order to stay enforcement, the director may choose to enter into a voluntary correction agreement (VCA). This is a civil contract entered between the City and the applicant. The VCA will outline several performance items that will be required within an agreed-upon time frame.

#### **16.18.100 Appeals.**

Appeals of the planning director's decision on a tree removal permit application shall be in accordance with the administrative decision procedures established in Chapter [2.16](#) BIMC.

#### **16.18.110 Violation – Enforcement and penalty.**

- A. In addition to any other sanction or remedy that may be available, a violation of or failure to comply with any provision of this chapter shall be a civil infraction and shall be subject to enforcement and civil penalties as provided in Chapter [1.26](#) BIMC.
- B. A violation of or failure to comply with any provision of this chapter shall be a misdemeanor punishable, upon conviction, as provided in BIMC [1.24.010.A](#).
- C. Any fines collected through enforcement of this chapter shall be directed to the city's tree fund, Chapter [3.39](#) BIMC.

### 16.18.120 Definitions.

“Applicant” means a person, corporation, or organization that files an application for a land use or development permit with the city: either the owner of the land in question, or the authorized agent of such a person.

“Arborist” means an individual engaged in the profession of arboriculture who, through experience, education, and related training, possesses the competence to provide for or supervise the management of trees and other woody plants. Must be concurrently an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist to perform any role required of a Certified Arborist.

“Arborist, Tree Risk Assessment Qualified (TRAQ)” means an arborist who has successfully completed the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) TRAQ training course and assessment and holds a valid ISA TRAQ credential.

~~“Exceptional Tree” means a tree that is especially worthy of notice, and of preservation if possible, on account of rarity, size, age, or historical associations. Such a tree may be recognized in the Heritage Tree listing (see Resolution 2014-19, 2006-11).~~ **NOTE: CONSIDER NOT ADDING NEW EXCEPTIONAL TREE CATEGORY**

~~“Hedge” means a line of closely-spaced trees and/or shrubs intentionally planted and/or maintained along a property boundary or landscape border for privacy, screening, safety, or similar function, which typically requires ongoing pruning or shearing to maintain its intended function and/or reasonable use of nearby developed areas.~~

“Invasive / exotic species” means opportunistic plant species (either native or non-native) that colonize disturbed ecosystems and may come to dominate the plant community in ways that are seen by us as reducing the values provided by the previous plant community.

“Land disturbing activity” means any activity that results in a lasting change in the existing soil cover (both vegetative and non-vegetative) and/or the existing soil topography. Land disturbing activities include, but are not limited to, clearing, grading, filling and excavation. Compaction that is associated with stabilization of structures and road construction shall also be considered a land disturbing activity. Vegetation maintenance practices are not considered land disturbing activity if they do not include stump pulling. Stormwater facility maintenance is not considered land disturbing activity if conducted according to established standards and procedures.

“Low impact development (LID)” means a stormwater and land use management strategy that strives to mimic pre-disturbance hydrologic processes of infiltration, filtration, storage, evaporation and transpiration by emphasizing conservation, use of on-site natural features, site planning, and distributed stormwater management practices that are integrated into a project design.

“Low impact development best management practices (LID BMPs)” means distributed stormwater management practices, integrated into a project design, that emphasize pre-disturbance hydrologic processes of infiltration, filtration, storage, evaporation and

transpiration. LID BMPs include, but are not limited to: bioretention, rain gardens, permeable pavements, roof downspout controls, dispersion, improvements to soil quality and depth, minimal excavation foundations, vegetated roofs, and water re-use.

“Native vegetation protection area (NVPA)” means a portion of a development site comprised of forested or native conditions in which existing vegetation, topography and supporting soils are free of development, uses or activities detrimental to the infiltration capacity and critical area functions and values of the total site area.

“Significant tree” means: (1) an evergreen tree 10 inches in diameter or greater, measured four and one-half feet above existing grade; or (2) a deciduous tree 12 inches in diameter or greater, measured 4.5 feet above existing grade; or (3) in the Mixed Use Town Center and High School Road zoning districts, any tree eight inches in diameter or greater, measured 4.5 feet above existing grade; or (4) any trees located within a required critical area or critical area buffer as defined in Chapter 16.20 BIMC.

“Vegetation” means plant matter, including trees, shrubs and ground cover.