



Public Works Department

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TREE COMMITTEE

Monday April 11, 2016 7:00 p.m.
El Cerrito City Hall
Hillside Conference Room
10890 San Pablo Avenue

1. Roll Call :

Present: Chair Cathy Bleier, Vice Chair Ralph Boniello, Members Michael Charlton, Karen Christian, Yan Linhart Steve Price, Mary Torrusio, Staff Liaison Stephen Prée.

Absent: Member Robert Hrubes and City Council Liaison Janet Abelson.

2. Comments from the Public on non-agenda items:

- El Cerrito residents Helda and John Walker commented with their concerns about the pine trees in the Hagen Blvd. median: the trees interfere with views of the Bay; the trees pose a potential for problems with the electrical utility service due to the proximity of the trees to utility wires on Hagen Blvd.; pine needles could clog the storm sewer. Chair Bleier reiterated the City Council resolution which absolves the Tree Committee of view concerns.
- Jesse Brown, a Project Manager with Earthteam, a non-profit youth services organization, introduced himself and described the organization's tree planting service: Earthteam, will plant trees with paid youth labor at no cost to a contracting agency.
<http://www.earthteam.net/about>
- El Cerrito resident Charles Burress (Behrens Street) , reported his dissatisfaction with the City tree that is in the PROW in front of his home and of his desire to have it removed; the City planted the tree as part of an Adopt – A--Tree program but the tree has become too large and messy, branches break and the seeds sprout in his and his neighbors yards; he is willing to pay to have the tree removed. Prée thanked Mr. Burress for taking the time to make a presentation to the Committee. A discussion followed regarding the value of the particular tree species (Flame Tree or Koelreuteria bipinnata) as a street tree and the ambiguities of the El Cerrito Municipal Code to address City tree removal such as Mr. Burress's request.

3. Report from the City Council Liaison: Janet Abelson was not present so no report was given.

4. Action Items:-

- A. Motion to adopt the minutes from February 8, 2016: Vice Chair Boniello; second: Linhart; approved unanimously.
- B. Nomination of Ralph Boniello to the office of Chair: Mike Srago; no additional nominations; unanimously elected. Nomination of Steve Price to the office of Vice Chair: Ralph Boniello; no additional nominations; unanimously elected.

5. Report from the City Arborist: Prée said that he was feeling ill and did not report.

6. Tree Committee Activities, Calendar and Work Plan Update:

- A. Earth Day/CA ReLeaf Arbor Week Grant: April 16, Arlington Park Tree Planting: There was a discussion of event activities, logistics, refreshments and job assignments.
- B. Revisions to the City Tree ordinance: The Committee discussed reasons for a revision to the existing ordinance. Vice Chair Boniello circulated and reviewed an objective outline that Prée had prepared. In regard to the public process, Srago commented on the importance of listening to and objectively recording the view point of City Cerrito residents and the need for a professional facilitator to accomplish this. Next steps for the ad-hoc committee: review and show ordinances from other cities with matrix of values. (Ad-hoc committee: Vice Chair Ralph Boniello, Michael Charlton, Robert Hrubes, Mike Srago)
- C. 2016 Work Plan: Chair Bleier recommended that the next meeting agenda start with Work Plan and contain 30 minutes or more for discussion.

7. Announcements and future agenda items:

- Vice Chair Boniello announced the Diablo Fire Safe Council work on the El Cerrito , Kensington Community Wildfire Protection Plan and encouraged Committee members to complete the citizen survey: <http://www.diablofiresafe.org/El-Cerrito-Kensington-CWPP-AP.html>

Future Agenda Items:

- 2016 Work Plan
- Revising the City Tree Ordinance
- Tree Planting Priorities

8. Adjournment