



Public Works Department

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TREE COMMITTEE

Monday June 12, 2017 7:00 p.m.
El Cerrito City Hall
Hillside Conference Room
10890 San Pablo Avenue

1. Roll Call :

Present: Members, Cathy Bleier (who, upon request of the Committee, acted as Chair), Robert Hrubes, Yan Linhart, Mike Srago, Mary Torrusio. .

Also present: City Council Liaison, Paul Fadelli; Staff Liaison, Stephen Prée.

Absent: Chair Ralph Boniello, Vice Chair Steve Price

2. Committee Member Announcements:

- Mike Srago announced that City trees located in front of his neighbor's house are dead and that they are interested in replacement trees. Prée recommended that the neighbor contact the City and handed Srago his business card.

3. Comments from the Public on non-agenda items: There were none.

4. Report from the City Council Liaison.

Councilman Fadelli reported on: the June 11, Loving Day Celebration, commemorating the U.S. Supreme Court decision that overturned the ban on interracial marriage; he informed the Committee of labor negotiations and collective bargaining continues with the City employee unions; provided a City Budget update : El Cerrito Swim Center repairs, Canyon Trail Park clubhouse repairs, Hillside Natural Area signage, extended El Cerrito Library hours, additional City monies devoted collectively with other cities for maintenance to the Gilman Street Soccer Fields, a substantial increase is anticipated for the cost of Public Safety dispatch services. Mr. Fadelli also reported the recent news of the West Contra Costa Unified School District notification to the City that the El Cerrito Senior Center lease will terminate effective June 30, 2018 after more than 50 years and he discussed the significant challenges of finding a new facility.

Robert Hrubes asked Mr. Fadelli if the increased Public Safety dispatch costs would affect the funding for the City's urban forestry program. Councilman Fadelli replied that further negotiations with Richmond and Contra Costa County may yield savings to the projected cost increase.

5. Action Items- A motion was made to adopt the minutes from the April 10, 2017 meeting by Robert Hrubes, 2nd by Yan Linhart; adopted unanimously.

6. Report from the City Arborist: Stephen Prée reported that a meeting with City staff regarding the process for revising the City tree ordinance determined that a new ordinance would be drafted

by City staff for public comment and would include only limited citations (if any) regarding trees located on private property. Prée also reported that the process for approval of the City Tree List had been established and he would proceed with seeking approval after finalizing format changes and edits.

A general discussion followed, regarding the City's enforcement options and responsibilities in response to unauthorized removal or mutilation of trees in the Public Right of Way.

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

- A. Education & Outreach- Cathy Bleier reported on the June 6 meeting of the Education & Outreach ad-hoc subcommittee (Bleier, Linhart, Torrusio) where City website opportunities were reviewed with City staff and suggestions were made for revisions to specific pages linking tree and urban forestry related content with other pages including the Green El Cerrito page. It was suggested to develop tree and urban forestry related content for various City newsletters. Mary Torrusio commented that El Cerrito after school programs provide good opportunities for tree and urban forest related outreach and education access.
- B. Centennial Activities – Mike Srago reported on the May 23 meeting of the Centennial ad-hoc subcommittee (Hrubes, Price, Srago) with Prée; three Centennial tree planting sites were discussed: the Ashbury Avenue median near the Albany border (south City entrance), the Baxter Creek Gateway Park circle (north City entrance) and at the northeast corner of the City Hall landscape. Prée reported that a City Hall planting site could pose special obstacles due to the recent approval of the current landscape design that includes an engineered bioswale and inadequate space to accommodate the growth of a large stature tree. The Committee agreed that the Ashbury Avenue and Baxter Park sites were acceptable for planting centennial trees. Mr. Srago recommended that the species of the tree to be selected be the California Blue Oak (*Quercus douglasii*). The committee agreed that this was a good recommendation, that native Oak species are preferred and that further research is warranted. Councilman Fadelli inquired if the Committee was planning to name a City tree species; a discussion followed on what criteria would be used to make such a selection.

8. Old/New Business – none

9. Future agenda items:

- City Tree
- Centennial Activities
- Education & Outreach

Adjournment- 8:30