



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Karen Pinkos, City Manager
DATE: February 21, 2019
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

Reflecting on the February 19th City Council meeting: while we expected a crowd, Tuesday's audience numbered over 150 people, which in staff's memory is the most highly attended City Council meeting since this City Hall building opened ten years ago. I'd like to thank the City Council and those in attendance for their patience, especially in cooperating with the Fire Marshal, dealing with some audio issues, and seating arrangements. I'd like to especially thank Jeff Ballantine of Planning, Eric Ng of IT, Police Captain Robert De La Campa, and Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Janes for their assistance with moving chairs and directing people in and out of the Council Chambers before the meeting began. But most of all, I'd like to thank the members of the public who attended the meeting and participated in a considerate, engaged, and thoughtful manner throughout the proceedings. It makes me so proud to be a part of a community that may have different views on a topic, but at the end of the day is able to be respectful of one another. I look forward to continuing the study session on Tenant Protection options at 5:30 pm on March 5...and yes, we'll be sure to be prepared for another large audience!

Next week, I will be traveling to the South. I begin in Pelham, Alabama, where I am very proud to be the keynote speaker at the first ever Women Leading Government Conference for the Alabama City/County Management Association. From there I head to Greenville, South Carolina where I'll be at the [ICMA Southeast Regional Conference](#). I'll be working on the next City Council agenda remotely, and I'm available by phone, text, or email. Alex Orologas, our Assistant City Manager, will be in town and, if needed, available to assist along with the executive team. Have a great week.

Best,

Karen Pinkos

CITY MANAGEMENT

Expanded Passport Processing Hours

City Hall has expanded its passport hours to better serve our customers. Effective Monday, February 11, 2019, we began accepting applications on a first-come, first-served basis, Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. For more information please visit the City's website or contact the City Clerk department at CityClerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or 215-4371.

Reminder about Dog Leashes in the Hillside Natural Area

The City Manager's Office wants to remind users that dogs are only allowed on leashes when walking in the Hillside Natural Area. No off-leash dogs please.

Commission, Committee, and Board Vacancies

The City of El Cerrito is seeking applicants interested in serving on its commissions, committees, and boards. Members of these bodies provide an invaluable service to the City Council and to the community. A list of current vacancies, and the application to serve can be downloaded from the City's website at el-cerrito.org/commissions. Applications can be submitted via e-mail to CityClerk@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mayfair Project

Development of the long vacant "Mayfair lot", located at 11600 – 11690 San Pablo Avenue and adjacent to the Del Norte BART Station, was approved last year. The development includes two buildings which feature a) 156 market rate units; b) 67 affordable housing units; and c) almost 9,000 square feet of new commercial space, public open space and public art. The project is a joint-venture between the market rate developer, Holliday Development, and a non-profit affordable housing developer, BRIDGE Housing.

The market rate developer submitted a building permit application February 5, 2019 to the City to break ground on the first of two buildings and anticipates pulling the building permits in about three months.

This modular project will be built off-site then assembled in the Mayfair lot. Modular construction reduces the impact on the surrounding neighborhoods and community and the project is projected to be completed within 18 months of groundbreaking. The affordable housing project is currently seeking financing and will follow the construction of the market rate parcel.

For more information, visit el-cerrito.org/majorprojects.

FIRE

King Court Fuel Reduction

The Fire Department has been working with the Cal Fire Delta hand crews this week and are focusing on the area between King Court and Moeser Lane. This fuel break and reduction is aimed at providing a buffer zone between the residences and the drainage as well as the grove of eucalyptus trees above the Corporation Yard. The Fire Department is requesting the crews one week for every month up to the fire season.

The Fire Department is looking for additional funds for 1) the work that was completed last fall at the City's request during the devastating fires in Paradise, as well as 2) future work this spring in order to get a head start on the new growth that will be a result of the wet winter.

East Bay Parks Fuel Break

The Fire Department met with representatives from the East Bay Parks Fire Division and were shown the extensive work planned for this spring and summer. Additionally, the East Bay Parks Fire Division is planning fuel break and fuel reduction from Richmond Heights to Kensington. This work will provide a better defense to any potential vegetation fires originating in the park. Updates will be provided when the work starts and as it progresses.

Fire Safety Community Meeting

During the first week of February, Police Chief Paul Keith, Fire Chief Michael Pighoni and Assistant City Manager Alexandra Orogas met with representatives from a resident group, "Make El Cerrito Fire Safe." The meeting focused on the group's ideas for fire safety improvements in and around the community of El Cerrito.

Fire Safety Community Meeting

See "Police" section below

POLICE

Fire Safety Community Meeting

During the first week of February, Police Chief Paul Keith, Fire Chief Michael Pighoni and Assistant City Manager Alexandra Orogas met with representatives from a resident group, "Make El Cerrito Fire Safe." The meeting focused on the group's ideas for fire safety improvements in and around the community of El Cerrito.

City staff have taken steps to improve the City's response to the threat of wildfires. Staff developed a vegetation management program and addressed some overgrown areas in the Hillside Nature Area. Staff also attended evacuation drills in Moraga and Orinda to aid in planning evacuations in El Cerrito.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

On February 7, members of the El Cerrito and Kensington Police and Fire Departments met to plan evacuation routes and develop a combined evacuation map for both communities. The meeting also included discussion and identification of evacuation zones to aid in directing evacuation orders and preliminary discussions about evacuation drill planning.

Staff from the Police and Fire Departments continues to evaluate the ideas and feedback from the public, provided in both City Council meetings and small group meetings. ECPD and ECFD plan to host a follow up meeting with the "Make El Cerrito Fire Safe" group in March.

PUBLIC WORKS

Rainy Season Update

Public Works staff have been proactive in preparing for the rainy season. Recent storms have caused minimal flooding and minimal damage to public infrastructure across the City. Preparation has included regularly cleaning the City's storm drain system and drain inlets (before, during, and after rains), preventative work as part of the City's Tree Program, and providing free sand bags to residents to prevent flooding. The City will continue to keep sand and sandbags stocked so residents can get them before heavy rains are expected. For more information, please visit el-cerrito.org/sandbags or contact Bill Driscoll, Maintenance Superintendent, at 215-4369 or maintenance@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Parks and Fields Update

During the Winter, the City's Maintenance crew and contractors have been working hard to prepare the City's fields and parks for the Spring sports seasons. Staff has laid new sod at two Cerrito Vista Park baseball diamonds and prepped all the baseball fields for the 2019 season. The City will continue to monitor the conditions of the fields after rain events and close the fields to all users when they are too wet or unplayable. Sign-up to receive alerts about the Play Fields Closure Status at el-cerrito.org/list.aspx. For more information, please contact Bill Driscoll, Maintenance Superintendent, at 215-4369 or maintenance@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

LimeBike Program Discontinuing in El Cerrito

Public Works staff have been alerted by LimeBike, the City's bike-share provider, that the company is discontinuing its bike-share services in all communities. The company will instead focus its efforts on expanding its electric scooter rental services, currently offered in the City of Oakland and other municipalities. The one year bike-share pilot program with LimeBike provided nearly 19,000 rides in El Cerrito, to more than 5,000 unique riders. Public Works staff is continuing to explore implementation of other bike share programs in coordination with neighboring cities. For more information, please contact Will Provost, Management Analyst, at 525-7622 or wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

El Cerrito teams with PG&E for Eucalyptus removal in the Hillside Natural Area

PG&E plans to remove several large Eucalyptus trees on the south edge of the Hillside Natural Area along the Moeser Lane utility corridor in late February, weather permitting. This project will provide additional protection for the electrical transmission lines while providing fuel reduction in the hillside. Fire Department and Public Works staff initiated and coordinated the work with PG&E. Fifty-six trees in a line running uphill have been identified for removal; a biologist will conduct bird nesting surveys immediately prior to work. For more information, please contact Stephen Prée, Environmental Programs Manager at spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Canyon Trail Park Volunteer Day

On January 27, approximately 45 parents and students from the Prospect Sierra School Tapscott Campus worked with Public Works staff to remove Algerian ivy from native oak trees and to remove invasive plants from the park. This was the third consecutive January for this cooperative work day event and was well-received by the school community.

RECREATION

Subscribe & Follow

For up to date information on all the happenings brought to you by the El Cerrito Recreation Department, please subscribe to our email newsletter **rECnews** at www.el-cerrito.org/recreation. Follow us: Instagram - @ecrecreation | Facebook - @ecrecreation | Twitter - @ElCerritoREC

UPCOMING EVENTS:

March 9 (Saturday) – Arbor Week Volunteer Work Day with the Urban Forest Committee, 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Location: Hillside Natural Area Quarry Hill Eucalyptus Grove (King Court)

Contact: Stephen Prée, spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 559-7685

The Urban Forest Committee will host a public volunteer work event in the Quarry Hill Eucalyptus Grove west of King Court. The work will focus on the removal of eucalyptus litter and French broom plants. Participants should wear long sleeves, long pants and close-toed-shoes.

March 10 (Sunday) – Green Teams Cleanup-Baxter Creek Work Party, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Location: Meet at Baxter Creek Park, Key Blvd. at Conlon Ave.

Contact: Public Works Operations & Environmental Services, green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 215-4350

Volunteer at a Green Teams Cleanup at Baxter Creek. All ages welcome (under 18 with guardian).

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE (CONT'D)

March 10 (Sunday) – Arbor Week Volunteer Work Day with the Urban Forest Committee, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Location: Poinsett Park

Contact: Stephen Prée, spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us, 559-7685

See above description. Members of the El Cerrito Garden Club and public are invited.

March 17 (Sunday) - Messy Art Day, 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Location: 7200 Moeser Lane

Contact: Daniel Barth, marketing@ecpckids.com

Come celebrate play and creativity, where kids young and old can explore colors, textures and a variety of media in a safe and fun environment. Free event for the public is hosted by El Cerrito Preschool Cooperative and sponsored by the City of El Cerrito Arts & Culture Commission.

March 31 (Sunday) - El Cerrito Urban Forest: Past, Present, and Future at 2:00 p.m.

Location: Arlington Clubhouse at 1120 Arlington Blvd.

Contact: David Weinstein, 524-1737, davidsweinstein@yahoo.com, elcerritohistoricalsociety.org/upcomingevents

Journey through time with us as we survey El Cerrito's urban forest and how the ever-changing values of El Cerrito's residents influence its structure and composition. This El Cerrito Historical Society presents public event is free and light refreshments will be served.