

El Cerrito Tree Committee Meeting Minutes December 10, 2012

Attendance: Committee Members- Ralph Boniello, Sheaucheng, Janet Hittle, Steve Price, Michael Srago. Interested Public- Cathy Bleier, Ken Hirano, Mike Charlton

1. Self Introductions
2. Comments from the public-
 - A. Ken Hirano wanted the committee to know about the Eucalyptus sideroxylon (Red Gum) limb, trunk failures and sap oozing. Inquired about City tree removal process. Wants to know long term plan on the tree in front of his house. He considers it a safety issue. *Prée will follow -up*
 - S. Cheng inquired if the City has a hazardous tree list
 - S. Prée said there is no inventory of hazardous trees, hazard trees are pruned or removed as discovered. This species is prone to branch drop.
 - Cathy Bleier inquired about the City's liability with City tree failure
 - B. Mike Charlton intruded himself as being interested in serving on the Tree Committee.
3. Adopt minutes from November 19 minutes – C. Bleier requested more meeting notes on action items and expectations to help committee members prepare for future meetings. Motion to adopt minutes S.Price, M. Srago second. Adopted unanimously.
4. Officer election- M. Srago nominated J. Hittle to Chair; J. Hittle nominated M. Srago to chair, S. Cheng seconded. R. Boniello reminded the committee of the Chair's role of keeping the meeting on topic and time limits. M. Srago elected chair unanimously. R. Boniello nominated J. Hittle to Vice Chair, seconded by S. Cheng; J. Hittle elected vice chair unanimously.
5. Report from Staff Liaison- RFP for Tree Inventory to be open to the public by end of week. Tree failure report from December 2 storm. **S. Price** inquired about the City policy for private tree falling on public property. **S. Prée** commented that the City took responsibility to open the road for emergency egress in this case because of the relatively high population and traffic volume on the street. Prée announced the California Tree Failure Report annual meeting Jan. 10.
6. Approved Street Tree List- **J. Hittle** recommends a subcommittee be formed to the modify and update the list. **M. Srago** inquired as to the criteria of tree species selection. **C. Bleier** recommend additional criteria be added to a new list such as scale, irrigation needs, role of tree in the landscape. **S. Price** called attention to the suitability of the list to a software application. **M. Srago** reminded the committee that the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) recommended street tree species be selected on a signature basis to identify particular neighborhoods. *He recommended the whole committee review the original criteria then move it to subcommittee for species selection. Use one meeting to set the criteria.*

7. Tree Agreement Form- **Prée** recounted that the form was generated after the EEMP Grant and is out of date now, the form needs revision. Trees planted in the City ROW require a permit and agreement. A discussion of tree planting standards followed. **R. Boniello** asked about forming a tree planting team to assure quality and adherence to standards. **M. Srago** inquired about existing volunteer groups. **Prée** said the City does not have a “Volunteer Coordinator” and most of the volunteer work is through the Friends of Five Creeks and the Green Teams. **C. Bleier** recommended that the purpose of the form be identified before revision. **J. Hittle** asked if there is a tree planting standard detail. **M. Srago** recommended the revision of the Form be deferred.

8. Workshops- Discussion of types and timing of workshops. **S. Price** suggested 2 types one for general knowledge and one to train volunteers. **R. Boniello** reiterated from the UFMP that one of the roles of the committee is to outreach on urban forest issues and asked if there might be regular serial workshops such as walking field trip to ID trees, Hazard Trees, would we form a workshop subcommittee? **C. Bleier** suggests Urban Forestry 101 to improve Tree Committee and residential knowledge, she recommend tapping into existing online and other resources. **R. Boniello** called attention to the Environmental Quality Committee’s outreach effort. **S. Price** commented on trees roles in storm water management and how many more people would be interested in trees if we can engage them in the common functions of trees. **M. Srago** recommended listing the ideas presented, identifying potential subcommittees and prioritization of contents. Tree committee may supply just the Chair of a subcommittee for a particular idea and the recruit people for sub- committee work. **Prée** discussed an Arbor Day (March) activity be a priority for the immediate future. General discussion followed of developing a City Urban Forest web page with links to other resources, links, videos. **C. Bleier** recommends that the priority be the Approved Street Tree List. Think about our committees- Street Trees , Open Park Areas, Guidance to Mitigation and how people want to weigh in on certain areas. **Prée** Does the Tree Committee want to form a subcommittee for an Arbor Day event and a pruning workshop? **M. Srago** Who is the audience for a pruning workshop? **Prée** The Tree Committee. The topic is Training young Trees for Structure and Form **S. Price** The Committee needs to understand the basic principals of training trees. How do they function in the urban environment. General circular discussion followed. **M. Srago** we need to make some decisions now go to future agenda items.

9. Future Agenda Items- 1. Subcommittees - Outreach, Tree Selection, Resources, Website, Workshop, and Volunteer Coordinator- how will the subcommittees function? 2. Tree List – Determining Criteria and review of past criteria.
- M. Srago** recommends no more than 2 agenda items outside of reports so that we get something accomplished. Discussion- Committee agreed to aim for ending at 9:00 p.m. in the future **C. Bleier** We need to establish a method for reviewing the criteria. *Look at UFMP and species list again, review what would be on list.*
- M. Srago** Review criteria that exist and what is missing.
- S. Price** Criteria for residents, City planting and functional objectives.
- R. Boniello**- What is meant by criteria? Some trees would not be considered.
- M. Srago** What are the criteria being used to make the list, where they go is the second step. Create the criteria for what will be on and off this list.
- C. Bleier** Does City Planning have any criteria for species? *Prée will check*
- R. Boniello** The criteria will need to be consistent if the list is to be revised semiannually.

Group agreed to limit time for each agenda item.

Action Items- Consider

- *In what instances, for what purpose would the Committee form subcommittees*
- *criteria for species selection, review existing lists for criteria*

Meeting adjourned at 9: 30 p.m.

Next meeting is January 14, 2013 7:00