



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, December 10, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
El Cerrito City Hall – Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue

This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible

Miner called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Roll Call:

Chair Miner, Vice Chair Goudey, Members Doan, Krueger, Weinstein, Wildenberg

Absent: Benjamin, Dandridge, Pavel, Solari, Spitalnik,

Also Present: Maria Sanders, Environmental Analyst and Staff Liaison; Janet Abelson, Council Liaison;

- 1. Council Liaison Report** – Mayor Abelson reported on the annual Council reorganization at the last City Council meeting. She also reported that in late January, as Mayor she will be reassigning Council Liaison duties, to be effective February.
- 2. Comments from the public on non-agenda items** – Glenn Lubke introduced himself and discussed his interest in applying to become a member of the EQC.
- 3. Approval of the Minutes** – Wildenberg made the motion to adopt the minutes of the Regular meeting from November 12, 2013. Seconded by Weinstein. Unanimous.
- 4. EQC Educational Events: Energy in Ukraine & Chernobyl 27 Years Later** – Sanders provided a presentation (slide show contained in EQC binder) on her volunteer cultural exchange trip to Ukraine and her tour of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. The exchange was organized by the nonprofit organization Center for Safe Energy (CSE). During her presentation she was joined by CSE consultant Professor John Perkins and CSE staff Melissa Praeger. Krueger announced that the EQC will be periodically hosting additional talks on environmental themes.
- 5. Interview of Prospective EQC Candidates** – Sanders reported that there were two applications for EQC membership and that an interview has been scheduled with Robert Schaadt for January 14. Miner made a request for Committee members volunteers to participate on the interview panel. Goudey volunteered.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION

To request a meeting agenda in large print, Braille, or on cassette, or to request a sign language interpreter for the meeting, call Garth Schultz, Staff Liaison at 559-7684 (voice) at least FIVE (5) WORKING DAYS NOTICE PRIOR TO THE MEETING to ensure availability.

- 6. Eco Film Series: Updates and Action Items** - Weinstein provided an update on the success of the *Rebels with a Cause* event that was held as a fundraiser for the Madera Property at the Cerrito Theater on Dec. 7.
- 7. Hillside Natural Area Open Space Fundraising** – Weinstein reported that the Trust for Public Land (TPL) is applying for a grant to the National Wildlife Foundation to support the City’s purchase of the Madera Circle open space. Weinstein provided a Letter of Support (attached) for the grant application from the Chair of the EQC on behalf of the EQC. Weinstein made a motion to approve the Letter of Support, with revisions as discussed by the EQC. Seconded by Doan. Unanimous. Weinstein also presented for discussion the Open Space Committee’s “Ten by Ten” fundraising plan for the Madera Circle open space, asking if EQC members would be willing to help raise funds under this plan. Ideas during the discussion included: sponsoring a 2 hour phone bank to help provide moral support to those who volunteered to make calls; organizing walks and tours of the space; Doan volunteered to make a YouTube video that could be used as a fundraising tool; Goudey discussed an idea to organize a “Fun Run” through the City as a way to build awareness about El Cerrito, which could be used as a fundraiser. Weinstein made a motion to create a subcommittee that would meet to develop educational events in the Hillside Natural Area that would promote the Madera Circle open space. Krueger seconded. Unanimous. Subcommittee volunteers: Weinstein, Miner, Wildenberg, and Goudey.
- 8. Green Teams: Updates and Action Items** – Weinstein made a motion to hold 3 Green Team events at multiple spots in the City: Clean-Ups at both Gateways on January 19; Creek Spruce-Ups at multiple creeks on March 19; and Clean-Ups in multiple parks on May 18. Seconded by Krueger. Unanimous.
- 9. Announcements and future agenda items**
Future agenda items requested included:
- City participation in Earth Hour
 - Election of Committee Officers in March
 - City Bike/Ped Events
 - Next EQC Educational Event in February
 - Status report on the City’s Active Transportation Plan
- These upcoming Meetings + Events were also mentioned
- Nov 2 Baxter Creek Work Party
 - Nov 9 Green Teams Northern Gateway Clean-Up
 - Dec 7 Rebels with a Cause Film Showing at Cerrito Theater
 - Jan 14 Interview Subcommittee to interview EQC applicant Robert Schaadt
- 10. Adjournment** – Miner adjourned the meeting at 9:10 PM.

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Environmental Quality Committee regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center Administrative Office at 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 pm

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 Fifteenth Street, NW Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Re: Uniting the Hillside Natural Areas grant request

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to share my strong support for the City of El Cerrito's application to the Environmental Solutions for Communities grant program for the *Uniting the Hillside Natural Areas* project.

[Insert 1 short paragraph about the EQC] The Environmental Quality Committee is a group of citizens appointed by the City Council to advise on environmental matters and to spearhead such programs as habitat restoration, creek cleanups, green business programs, education, and more.

The Hillside Natural Areas are home to some of El Cerrito's most important natural resources. They are covered with native grasses, oak woodland and creeks that provide habitat for local wildlife, capture and filter stormwater, help to keep our air clean and healthy, and provide opportunities for El Cerritans to connect to the natural world. Stewardship of the Hillside Natural Areas is a top priority for the EQC.

Protection of the Madera Property is important in its own right, as it shares the same environmental features as the Hillside Natural Areas, including two of its own creeks. But this is also a strategic acquisition, as it creates the only possible natural connection between the two distinct units of the Hillside Natural Areas. This connectivity is critical to preserving the integrity and ecological value of the existing Hillside Natural Areas, and this is why the EQC stands in support of the City's acquisition of the property.

Private funding is critical to the project. The City of El Cerrito has very limited resources with which to purchase the Madera Property. Without outside funds, the City would have no ability to address other pressing environmental issues in town. That is why the EQC has joined the many other organizations and individuals who are lending a hand to the fundraising campaign for the Madera Property. This December we are hosting a screening of *Rebels with a Cause* – a documentary about the history of land conservation in the San Francisco Bay Area – following by a panel discussion to raise awareness of the project and to solicit donations.

EQC is also enthusiastic about the plans to restore the property's meadow and creek. Not only will this improve the ecological health of the property and safeguard water quality downstream, but it will raise awareness in our community about the natural resources in our backyard and engage volunteers in stewardship of our local environment. This will pay dividends beyond the Madera Property.

Thank you for considering the City's ESC grant proposal. I hope you will consider joining the EQC in supporting this project.

Sincerely,

Mark Miner, Chair
El Cerrito Environmental Quality Committee