



Public Works Department

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TREE COMMITTEE

Monday April 13, 2015 7:00 p.m.

El Cerrito City Hall
Hillside Conference Room
10890 San Pablo Avenue

1. Roll Call :

Present: Vice Chair Cathy Bleier, Members Ralph Boniello, Michael Charlton, Sheauch Cheng, Karen Christian, Steve Price, Mike Srago
Staff Liaison Stephen Prée was also present

Absent: none

2. Comments from the Public on non agenda items:

Ralph Boniello announced the final Friends of Five Creeks Bay Currents lecture series for the season will be Tuesday April 14 "How the East Bay got its Forest" by Jerry Kent, retired Assistant General Manager of the East Bay Regional Parks District. The Event will be held at St. Alban's parish Hall in Albany.

3. Report from the City Council Liaison:

Councilmember Bridges was not in attendance

4. Action Items -Adopt the minutes from the March 9, 2015 Tree Committee.

Motion Christian, 2nd Cheng; approved unanimously

5. Report from the City Arborist- Prée reported that the San Pablo Avenue Green Spine project manager is including tree mitigation planting in his grant budget. He also relayed that the new City street tree planting program is behind schedule.

6. El Cerrito Arbor Week- Tree Committee members Bleier, Charlton, Christian and Srago reported on the Arbor Day tree planting activities at Cerrito Vista Park with the El Cerrito Garden Club and the Prospect Sierra Middle School students and teacher Aaron Moorhead. All are parties interested in continuing tree stewardship activities through the year and want to plan ahead for Arbor Week 2016.

7. Revised Draft City Tree List – A partial list of the updated Approved City Tree list was erroneously printed and distributed; this omission added some confusion to the approved species discussion. Boniello described the criteria used for species selection and rating: no invasive species, all species are required to be suitable to the El Cerrito environment, clay soil tolerant, low maintenance, deeply rooted, low infrastructure damage potential, high branch strength, low VOC emissions, drought tolerant etc.

Trees were assigned a rating of 1-4, and T for trial use; 3 & 4 rated trees to be on approved list. Bleier remarked on omitted species including *Acer rubrum* – this species received a low rating due to its high water requirement (WUCOLS).

- Public comment/question raised by Howdy Goudy: Why are so few native tree species listed? Ad-hoc Committee answered/discussion: many native species are not suited to the constraints of the built environment/street tree wells and may not be as structurally sound or rooted deeply enough for use outside parks or large planting areas. The purpose of the list is to recommend tree species for City street trees. The committee discussed making this kind of qualifying statement, including a statement regarding native tree species in an introduction/preface to the list and to include a master list of all species that were considered.

The committee discussed the formation of the final list for public distribution with desirable formatting attributes to be included: Sort by quality, searchable data base, click on column heads and sort. Charlton volunteered his assistance to develop the technical scope of work for the database and will meet with the ad-hoc committee date tbd.

- Additional classification columns to be included- list minimum planting distance to infrastructure, list WUCOLS rating.

Prée thanked the ad-hoc committee members Boniello and Price for their devotion of time and thoughtful input during the ad-hoc committee meetings over the last 5 months.

Boniello said the ad-hoc committee would require just a few more meetings to complete the list, Bleier volunteered to assist and draft an introduction to the list

Boniello requested comments on the list from the greater tree committee as soon as possible.

The ad-hoc subcommittee will report again to the greater tree committee at the June meeting.

8. Tree Committee Recruitment- Discussion: Of 15 total seats on the Tree Committee 8 are currently filled. The question of age restriction was raised.

Bleier recommended sending announcements to volunteer organizations, posting at U.C. Berkeley, the EC Library, Community Center etc. and volunteered to draft a flyer.

9. Calendar of Events and Work Plan Update – Earth Day: Tree Committee is not participating in City Earth Day activities this year. Prée will be working at Poinsett Park for those members who would like to join in. Hillside Festival: no action. July 4th: place on next meeting agenda.

10. Annual election of Tree Committee Chair and Vice Chair- Vice Chair Cathy Bleier was nominated to the position of Chair by Karen Christian, 2nd Srago; Unanimous. Ralph Boniello was nominated to Vice Chair by Mike Srago, 2nd Price; unanimous.

11. Announcements and Future Agenda Items:

- July 4th World One festival
- Approved City Tree List work scope

12. Adjournment