



Public Works Department

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TREE COMMITTEE

Monday June 13, 2016 7:00 p.m.
El Cerrito City Hall
Hillside Conference Room
10890 San Pablo Avenue

1. Roll Call :

Present: Chair Ralph Boniello, Vice Chair Steve Price, Members Cathy Bleier, Robert Hrubes, Yan Linhart, Mary Torrusio, Mike Srago. Council Liaison Janet Abelson, and Staff Liaison Stephen Prée were also present.

Absent: Members Michael Charlton, Karen Christian

2. **Comments from the Public on non-agenda items:** There were no public comments. Committee Member Yan Linhart reported that he attended the Richmond Trees picnic on June 12 at Kennedy Grove. He discussed possible future meetings and collaborations with this organization and he said that the group noted the most common problems they have experienced with street tree plantings is getting residents to agree to plant trees and then to follow-up with watering them.

- Steve Price asked if Richmond Trees is regulated as a City Committee: No, they are a registered non-profit community volunteer group (Prée).
- Chair Boniello suggested that the El Cerrito Tree Committee may want to collaborate with Richmond Trees to plant new street trees on the west side of San Pablo Avenue.

3. **Report from the City Council Liaison:** Janet Abelson reported on a.) her recent attendance at the New Partners for Smart Growth conference in Portland, Oregon sponsored by the Small Governments Association; she recalled her interaction with the local Friends of Trees organization who have a person dressed in costume as a tree, and she distributed tree care buttons and stickers to members of the tree committee. b.) the June 12, 2016 'Loving Day' celebration hosted by the City of El Cerrito Human Relations Commission in celebration of racial equality, marriage equality and human equality. c.) The recent City Council review of proposed City budget looks good with an increase in reserves from 5% to 9%. This is due in part to higher property values, which may be the result in part of the efforts by the City to make El Cerrito "more walkable and more of a place where people wanted to go".

4. Action Items:

Motion to adopt the minutes from the May 9, 2016 meeting: Hrubes; second: Srago; approved unanimously with Cathy Bleier abstaining because of absence.

5. **Report from the City Arborist:** Prée updated the Committee on a.) The number of dead or dying trees on Richmond Street from Blake Street to Stockton Avenue (21) that need to be removed and replaced in the 2016/17 budget year b.) Multiple dead or dying trees in the Hillside Natural Areas that also need to be removed for fire fuel reduction this budget year. c.) The recent suspected

poisoning of two trees in El Cerrito; one City street tree, the other a private tree; Police reports were filed in both cases. d.) He reminded the committee of the upcoming annual City Board, Committee and Commissioner Appreciation Dinner on July 8, 2016 at the Mira Vista Golf and Country Club. e.) Chair Boniello initiated a discussion regarding how the Tree Committee would advise the City regarding the complaints received about a few of the new Arbor Week Grant trees at Arlington Park (The Committee would be in an advisory role since the grant recipient is the Tree Committee). Robert Hrubes recommended that any action to relocate the trees be of no cost to the City and that the persons relocating the trees would be required to assume liability for the health of the trees and be responsible to replace them if any tree health failure were to occur. The Tree Committee expressed overall agreement with this recommendation, although no motion was made.

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

- A. 2016-2018 Tree Committee Work Plan Development: Chair Boniello led a discussion of the process for revision of the prior year's Work Plan. Although a target date for presentation to City Council was not set, the month of September or October were recommended by Prée.
- B. Committee participation in upcoming City events: July 4 World One Festival. Mary Torrusio, Steve Price and possibly Cathy Bleier agreed to volunteer at a Tree Committee information booth. Details regarding the booth and informational materials were to be worked-out through Prée.
- C. Tree ordinance Update: deferred due to the late hour.

7. Announcements and future agenda items: no announcements were made.

Future Agenda Items:

- 2016-18 Work Plan
- Revisions to the Tree Ordinance

8. Adjournment- 9:10