



Public Works Department

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TREE COMMITTEE

Monday April 10, 2017 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,
Robert Hrubes, Mike Srago, Mary Torrusio.

Also present: Staff Liaison Stephen Prée.

Absent: Cathy Bleier, Yan Linhart. Also absent: City Council Liaison Paul Fadelli

2. Committee Member Announcements:

- Vice Chair Price reminded the Committee about an upcoming webinar on April 12: “More Nature, Better health: Urban Forestry’s reduction of Health Care Expenditures” that he had asked Prée to forward to the Committee.
- Chair Boniello reported on his research into the State Greenhouse Gas grants and the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation grants (EEMP) which provide money for tree planting and he suggested that the tree committee develop a list of tree planting sites in order to be ready to apply for such grants. A discussion regarding qualifying for these grants by collaboration with the City of Richmond and other agencies followed.
- Mike Srago reported that during his attendance at a recent silviculture organization reunion, the discussions emphasized a significant forest regeneration deficit because of the recent “natural regeneration” policies which do not repopulate forests as rapidly as previous more aggressive replanting practices.

3. **Comments from the Public on non-agenda items:** There were none.

4. **Report from the City Council Liaison:** Mr. Fadelli was not present.

5. **Report from the City Arborist:** Stephen Prée reported on the multiple tree damages from the April 6th, 2017 wind storm; the 2016/17 routine tree work budget was \$171,000 and included 70 tree removals, 15 stump removals, 319 trees pruned, 4 emergency hours to date (prior to April 6). Chair Boniello asked about tree service pricing. Prée responded that the tree pruning prices are based on the type of tree pruning that was performed, i.e. canopy reduction pruning versus restoration pruning; that the tree services contract was awarded based on competitive bids for the various pruning types and is available as public record. Vice Chair Price inquired how many trees were pruned during sector pruning, Prée said that sector or “grid” pruning is not currently being employed due to the need to “catch-up” with high maintenance trees due to deferred maintenance resultant of previous year’s budget constraints but that he groups tree pruning whenever possible

in order to minimize costs. A discussion followed on future City tree program activities and goals: Boniello recommended that an equal or greater number of trees should be planted than trees removed. Price suggested that allées of trees with similar maintenance needs be planted to maximize sector pruning prices. Prée also inquired with the Committee regarding participation in the Sudden Oak Death survey which coincides with the City Earth Day celebration on April 22. He asked if the committee would want to participate at another date.

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

- A. Update on the March 9, 2017 Arbor Week planting event- There was a brief discussion regarding future projects and planting sites; new school sites will require new outreach efforts; Boniello recommended that future Arbor Week activities and locations become a future agenda item.
- B. El Cerrito Earth Day activities- Mary Torrusio and Yan Linhart volunteered to staff an information table at the April 22 event.
- C. Hillside Festival activities- Chair Boniello will lead a tree hike from 2:30-3:30 at the May 21 event. Mike Srago volunteered to staff an information table.

7. Action Items:

- A. Consider a motion to change the name of the Tree Committee- After some discussion a motion to recommend to City Council the change of the name of the El Cerrito Tree Committee to the El Cerrito Urban Forest Committee was made by Mike Srago , 2nd by Robert Hrubes and passed unanimously.
- B. Election of Committee Officers for 2017/18- A motion was made to reelect Chair Boniello (Hrubes, 2nd Srago) after Vice Chair Price deferred election to Chair due to business obligations. Passed unanimously.

8. Old/New Business – none

9. Future agenda items:

- Scoping Tree Planting Opportunities
- City Tree Inventory Review
- Centennial Activities
- Educational Outreach
- Tree Pruning Principals Review

Adjournment- 9:10