



Public Works Department

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE

Monday April 15, 2019 7:00 p.m.

El Cerrito City Hall

Hillside Conference Room

10890 San Pablo Avenue

1. Roll Call :

Present: Chair Steve Price, Vice Chair Mary Torrusio, Members, Cathy Bleier Robert Hrubes, Yan Linhart.

Also present: El Cerrito Fire Department Battalion Chief David Gibson; Staff Liaison, Stephen Prée; members of the public: Ralph Boniello, Sandra Sprague, Mark Mandell.

Absent : Mike Srago. Also absent: City Council Liaison Gabriel Quinto.

2. **Committee Member Announcements and changes to the agenda:** Chair Price reported that he had attended a Sierra Club function and met Arthur Boone, who has led volunteer street tree planting efforts in Berkeley and Oakland; Mr. Price also described the successful March 24 Arbor Day tree planting event in Poinsett Park. Yan Linhart agreed and said that the new tree looks good. Robert Hrubes reported that the Centennial tree is healthy and growing. A change to the agenda was made by liaison Prée, who said that Ann Thrupp was unexpectedly unable to give her presentation on the history of the Friends of El Cerrito Trees tonight but will reschedule this agenda item.
3. **Comments from the Public on non-agenda items:** None.
4. **Council / Staff Liaisons announcements and reports:** Prée announced the dates for the 2019 Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Blitz and invited the UFC to participate in this citizen science event; he requested that interested parties let him know soon so that the sampling could be organized and not duplicative.
5. **Action Items:** A motion to adopt the minutes from the March 11, 2019 meeting was made by Robert Hrubes; 2nd Yan Linhart; motion passed unanimously.
6. **Presentation on Wildfire Prevention and Preparedness:** Battalion Chief David Gibson gave the presentation "Mega- Fire, The New Norm" and answered questions. He also described recent progress on the City's fire prevention work in the Hillside Natural Area. He announced additional dates scheduled for the presentation to the public including 10:00 a.m. May 11, 2019 at the Arlington Park Clubhouse.
7. **Update on Revisions to the City Tree Ordinance:** City staff member Will Provost summarized the revisions made to the City Tree and Shrub Ordinance based on the comments

received from the public and the UFC by email and during the January and February UFC meetings (see those meeting minutes for details of comment). The changes to the January draft consist of the addition of the word “Public” in the Tree and Shrub Ordinance title; the elimination of a new prohibited species list; and the addition of an introductory paragraph recognizing the complexity of the City’s urban forest. Robert Hrubes commented that the elimination of the prohibited species list was perhaps the most significant change; Cathy Bleier noted that the City would retain the seven (7) species already prohibited (MC 10.90.109). A discussion followed regarding the limits of this ordinance draft addressing only the protection of public trees and how that may be considered inconsistent with the term “Urban Forest”, since the urban forest is comprised of both public and private trees. Robert Hrubes asked if the public comments received during the January meeting had been addressed in this draft. Provost said that during the January meeting the public agreed that their issues with private trees and fire were not within the scope of this Public Tree and Shrub Ordinance. The UFC then turned their attention to the new introductory paragraph; the committee made comments and suggested changes to its structure and content.

The question of when and how private trees and/or fire issues could be included in a City Ordinance was answered by staff with the recommendation that the UFC could include these items in their 2019-2021 work plan.

A motion was made to endorse this ordinance draft, with the UFC’s recommended changes, for public comment before and during the May 13, 2019 UFC meeting. Motion: Bleier; 2nd Linhart; unanimous.

8. Future agenda items-

- Friends of El Cerrito Trees- Ann Thrupp
- 2019/2021 Work Plan
- UFC Member Recruitment

9. Old/New Business – Robert Hrubes encouraged Mark Mendell to join the UFC because he is participating anyway and his input is valuable. Prée invited all non-members present to consider joining the UFC.

Adjournment- 9:15