



**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE**  
**Urban Forest Committee**

**June 10, 2019**

**Staff Liaison**  
Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685  
spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Hillside Room  
El Cerrito City Hall  
10890 San Pablo Avenue  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

**This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible**

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**CONVENE REGULAR MEETING:** Chair Torrusio called the meeting to order at 7:02

1. **ROLL CALL – Present:** Chair Mary Torrusio; Vice-Chair Robert Hrubes; Members Cathy Bleier, Steve Price, Michael Srago. Also present: members of the public Robin Mitchell, Mark Mendell; Staff Liaison Stephen Prée. **Absent:** Yan Linhart. Also absent Council Liaison Quinto.
2. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS –** Robin Mitchell reported that some residents are concerned that the recent fire fuel reduction work on the Madera property has disturbed habitat and left a mess.
3. **COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS-** Chair Torrusio inquired about the new agenda format. Prée responded that the City has adopted the new format to facilitate consistency with all Boards, Committees and Commissions by direction of the City Clerk. Vice Chair Hrubes requested that an update on the status of the Public Tree and Shrub Ordinance be included in tonight's meeting agenda.
4. **COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS -** Council Liaison Quinto was not present. Staff Liaison Prée summarized the new minutes and agendas format requirement for Committees. He also reported that the first reading of the Public Tree and Shrub Ordinance Administrative Draft will be presented to City Council on June 18 with a slight modification to the Draft to remove the "Restricted Root Zone" graphic as it had resulted in significant confusion with a housing development project. He reported the name of the community development projects that he has reviewed in the last 6 months; that the City Manager had issued a moratorium on the use of Glyphosate on City property, and that a resident of Albany had contacted him regarding potential collaborative community tree planting projects.
5. **ACTION ITEMS –**
  - A. Approval of the Minutes- After hearing comment from Cathy Bleier regarding her dissatisfaction with the new minutes format, the committee approved the May 13, 2019 minutes **Moved / Second:** Vice Chair Hrubes / Price; Ayes: Members, Hrubes, Linhart, Price, Srago, Torrusio. Noes: none. Abstention: Bleier.
  - B. Approve the 2019 Regular Meeting Schedule for the Urban Forest Committee: After a calendar review discussion in which the November

meeting was moved from Veterans Day to November 18, the Committee voted to adopt the meeting schedule. **Moved / Second:** Price / Bleier: unanimous.

**6. PRESENTATION: A HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS OF EL CERRITO TREES -**

El Cerrito resident Ann Thrupp gave the committee background information, and shared photographs and memorabilia related to the formation and activities of the Friends of El Cerrito Trees. Dr. Thrupp explained that the group was formed in response to community efforts to remove multiple trees that were obstructing views; the Friends was formed to protect and preserve trees. They received California Urban Forest Council grants to plant 100 community trees, they made and distributed a tree calendar, advocated for an Urban Forest Plan, petitioned to appeal a View Obstruction Ordinance and eventually saved several trees from being removed in Canyon Trail Park.

Discussion- Hrubes: Could the group reactivate? Thrupp: Kids love to be involved. Bleier: At what point do volunteer activities then become assumed by the City? Is volunteer involvement diminished by the improved tree related activities facilitated by City staff? Price said that the Ohlone Greenway tree plantings in the 1990's relied heavily on volunteers *and* City staff or equipment. He asked Dr. Thrupp if the Friends activities relied on City assistance. Thrupp: The City watered trees. The UFC thanked Dr. Thrupp for her presentation and offered to archive materials in conjunction with the El Cerrito Historical Society.

**7. URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR AND WORK PLAN UPDATE-**

**A. Community Outreach –**

- I. UFC Outreach during the July 4, World One Festival- Chair Torrusio led a discussion on tabling & informational items and she solicited volunteers. Bleier volunteered to format the Tree List for distribution. Chair Torrusio, Vice Chair Hrubes, Price and Staff Liaison Prée volunteered to staff the table.
- II. Mike Srago's Strategies for Attracting Volunteers to Committees- Dr. Srago led a discussion asking why each person volunteered to serve on the UFC, after all had answered, he suggested that the core motivation of the UFC members is to *improve and influence* the community but the Committee lacks a consistent message. Discussion: recruit members of diverse ages and backgrounds, refine mission statement or tagline.

**8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- 2019/2021 Work Plan- discussion of modifications to Work Plan template
- Mark Mendell, Developing Information Resources on Street Trees for El Cerrito Residents

**9. ADJOURNMENT-** Chair Torrusio adjourned the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

Mary E. Torrusio  
Mary Torrusio, Chair

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular Urban Forest Committee meeting of June 10, 2019 as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Stephen M. Prée  
Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison