



Staff Liaison
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MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Urban Forest Committee

December 9, 2019

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

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

CONVENE REGULAR MEETING: Chair Torrusio called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL – Present:** Members Robin Mitchell, Robert Hrubes Steve Price, Michael_Srago. **Absent:** Cathy Bleier, Yan Linhart.
Also present: Staff Liaison Stephen Prée; members of the public, Sandra Sprague, Marlene George, Nick Zamorno, Mark Mendell, Jonathan Marshall, Paul Duncan, Scott Perry.
2. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – None**
3. **COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS-** Robin Mitchell said that Councilmembers Fadelli & Lyman had responded to the email she sent them regarding committee term limits. A discussion followed regarding the reduction of members to 5, now that Price and Srago had reached the limit of their terms. Hrubes asked if either Price or Srago were interested in serving another term; Price may be interested in serving a shorter 3rd term and may still participate in ad-hoc UFC activities.
Price recounted to the Committee, his November presentation to the El Cerrito Rotary Club regarding the importance of trees and urban forestry, the work of the UFC, and volunteering for same.
4. **COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS -** Staff Liaison Prée reported on recent urban forestry activities.
5. **ACTION ITEMS**
 - Approval of the November 18, 2019 meeting minutes: **Moved / Second:** Mitchell / Hrubes; unanimous.
 - Recommendation to City Council for the reappointments to the UFC of
 - a) Robert Hrubes: **Moved / Second:** Mitchell / Srago; unanimous.
 - b) Mary Torrusio: **Moved / Second:** Mitchell / Srago; unanimous.

6. URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR AND WORK PLAN UPDATE:

- 2019/2021 Work Plan refinement update-City Council Presentation January 21: Prée reviewed minor edits with the Committee. Hrubes recommended that a column be added to record progress milestone dates. The UFC concurred.
- Volunteer tree care corps development- Price summarized the ad-hoc subcommittee (Mitchell, Price) recommendations and gave examples of other local volunteer & non-profit urban tree care groups: Richmond Trees , Our City Trees. The ad-hoc subcommittee is recommending a pruning workshop with classroom and practical components. Prée would teach and lead the technical elements.
Discussion: Srago asked what the goal is; Mitchell – to form a group to help care for trees, raise interest, recruit UFC members and potentially form a non-profit tree care organization in the future. Torrusio asked about next steps; Price- agree on a date and commit. Hrubes doesn't understand the goals, or what it would do on a "landscape level". Price said that he plans to remain active as a volunteer in this effort. Ad-hoc subcommittee will refine and bring update to the next meeting.
- Community wildfire prevention- Hrubes summarized the ad-hoc subcommittee meeting recommendations: take a landscape approach to action, look beyond El Cerrito to adjoining communities and agencies, collaborate. See Dr. Joe McBride's study regarding managing fire the SF Bay Area Urban Interface: (<https://www.publish.csiro.au/wf/Fulltext/WF18107>).
Srago added that we need to understand efforts already under way.
Recommendations: Conduct a listening session or special meeting at a large venue.
Discussion: Torrusio, Mitchell- official survey with blank areas for opinions. Hrubes- logistics, when to host, survey may be premature. Prée – plan an event *after* collaborating with other departments and committees. Mitchell- create a workshop with a facilitator.
Public comment- Marlene George told the committee that a wildfire prevention action group had been formed with County Supervisor John Gioia, Diablo Canyon Conservation and local fire departments. El Cerrito Fire Safe plans to bring a resolution to Council for the City to provide a comprehensive action plan. Nick Zamorno appreciates the UFC's work and hopes for support for the resolution. Hrubes- what does the resolution say? George- the importance of wildfire as a priority budget item. The resolution will be ready in January. Scott Perry- showed photos of the El Cerrito hills in the 1930's without trees, said that grasslands are low combustion and recommended everyone read Joe McBride's report.
Discussion: regarding the value of trees on the hillside, very high

risk zones, East Bay Regional Park District's fuel mitigation activities, El Cerrito's historic and future fire mitigation plans.

- City tree planting opportunities- deferred (time)

7. NEXT MONTH'S CITY COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE ASSIGNMENTS

- Vice Chair Hrubes will attend the January 14 EQC meeting
- Chair Torrusio will attend the Park and Recreation Commission meeting January 22

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Tree care corps
- Arbor Week
- Community wildfire prevention
- Tree planting opportunities

- 9. ADJOURNMENT-** Chair Torrusio adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m. after thanking Steve Price and Michael Srago for their service to the El Cerrito community as members of the UFC since 2012.

Mary Torrusio, Chair or Robert Hrubes, Vice 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 December 9 , 2019 as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison