



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

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Urban Forest Committee

Monday October 12, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
VIA TELECONFERENCE

<https://elcerrito.webex.com/elcerrito/onstage/g.php?MTID=e2500be467d82006220af70a870f24aff>

Event ID: 146 503 0212

Event Password: JoinUFC

Join by Phone: 1-408-418-9388

Access code: 146 503 0212

CONVENE REGULAR MEETING: Chair Torrusio called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL– Present: Chair Mary Torrusio, Vice Chair Robert Hrubes, Members Cathy Bleier, Yan Linhart, Robin Mitchell.

Also present: Staff Liaison Stephen Prée; members of the public Susan Duncan, Paul Duncan.

2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – There were none.

3. COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS / CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA –
There were none.

4. COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS –

Staff Liaison Prée informed the UFC that the rustic log benches given to the City by Rotary

International have been installed in the Hillside Natural Area with the location of one bench

moved in response to UFC comments; two contracts were awarded for the 2020 Fire Fuel Reduction Project and work is anticipated to be completed by December 1. Prée thanked Cathy Bleier and Yan Linhart for attending the September Park and Recreation Commission meeting and for expressing their support for the rustic benches and fire fuel reduction projects during his PRC presentation.

5. PRESENTATION – “Make El Cerrito Fire Safe & FirewiseUSA®”

Sue Duncan, El Cerrito resident, co-founder Make El Cerrito Fire Safe, provided an overview of her and her husband Paul’s efforts to reduce fire risk in El Cerrito in forming Make El Cerrito Fire Safe and by establishing the first FirewiseUSA® neighborhood in West Contra Costa County. She explained the differences between a Fire Safe Council and a FirewiseUSA® neighborhood; described the FirewiseUSA® neighborhood “El

Cerrito 1” boundaries, the FirewiseUSA® neighborhood application process, and described their FirewiseUSA® 3 year Action Plan including specific house hardening and landscape management actions for fuel reduction.

Discussion: Fewer households are participating than had been hoped possibly due to Covid 19. ECFD is supportive and encouraging. Need to strengthen vegetation management on evacuation routes. City website needs clarity and improved access to the Cal Fire, Fire Hazard Severity Map. Past and future Vegetation management goals and activities in the City’s Hillside Natural Area (HNA) including organizing volunteers, Poison Oak removal, and Eucalyptus management/removal. Potential UFC assistance in the formation of more FirewiseUSA® Neighborhoods in El Cerrito.

6. ACTION ITEMS –

- Approval of the Minutes from the September 14, 2020 meeting: Motion, Hrubes; 2nd: Mitchell; approved unanimously.

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

- A. UFC and community wildfire prevention – Cathy Bleier informed the UFC that she had contacted East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD), Assistant Fire Chief Mike Mathieson, who has agreed to address the UFC during the November meeting.
 - B. UFC activities during the Covid-19 public health restrictions- The City’s Website could post links to educational webinars and videos (Torrusio). The website should have a map and links to areas of greater fire risk (Linhart). Cal Fire Map is the most definitive source and should be linked (Hrubes). City website is not readily navigated (Bleier). Discussion: How to address City website deficiencies. (Prée will communicate with ECFD and City Manager’s office.)
Valuable web events on fire fuel reduction and fire ecology (Mitchell). Forest ecology is most relevant to the UFC; could healthy trees reduce fire severity? (Hrubes). List fire prone species (Torrusio). Water your trees for longevity, tree care presentation- healthy trees as fire preventors (Bleier).
- Curious Trees – Greenwich, CT has created a town-wide arboretum, and labeled its city trees; could be public or private trees, with permission (Torrusio). Maps for tree walks with nature notes could be created (Bleier). Develop a walk map (Mitchell).

8. NEXT MONTH’S CITY COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE ASSIGNMENTS

- EQC meeting - October 13: Chair Torrusio. November 10: Cathy Bleier.
- PRC meeting – October 28 Vice Chair Hrubes. November 25: Cathy Bleier

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- UFC Recruitments
- Friends of El Cerrito Urban Forest
- Work Plan
- Arbor Week March 7-14
- Potential speakers and programming

10. ADJOURNMENT- Chair Torrusio adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

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 October 12, 2020 as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison