



## PUBLIC WORKS

### Staff Liaison

Will Provost | (510) 559-7684  
wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

## AGENDA

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE Environmental Quality Committee

Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

### JOIN VIA ZOOM:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89530730300?pwd=MW9JUDR6Z2NmYlJ2TVFVdXRmM0U4QT09>

**Meeting ID:** 895 3073 0300 **Password:** 2154350  
**or Dial in:** 1-408-638-0968

This advisory body is currently meeting by teleconference, consistent with the Brown Act as amended by AB 361 (2021). Under the amended rules, teleconference restrictions of the Brown Act are suspended and the City will not provide a physical location for members of the public to participate in the teleconference meeting. Any person wishing to speak to the Environmental Quality Committee on any of these matters is invited to participate via web-conference as described above. The City encourages submission of written comments in advance to the Environmental Quality Committee by emailing [wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us) prior to the meeting.

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### 7:00 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair Neil Tsutsui; Vice-Chair Beth Molnar; Members Buddy Akacić, Howdy Goudey, Rebecca Milliken, Mark Miner, Sean O'Connor, Paloma Pavel, Ellen Spitalnik, Sheila Tarbet, Rose Vekony, and Dave Weinstein
2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC** *(Estimated time: 5 minutes)*  
*Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person, and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first, as well as introduction by individuals interested in serving on the advisory body. Remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.*
3. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS** *(5 min.)*  
Staff and/or Mayor Pro Tem Lisa Motoyama may report on policies, priorities, and significant actions taken by the City Council, and/or on matters of general interest to the EQC.
4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** *(5 min.)*  
Consider a motion adopting the minutes of the EQC meeting on January 11, 2022.
5. **CLIMATE PRESENTATION FROM EL CERRITO YOUTH** *(35 min.)*  
Hear a presentation from youth activists in the city of El Cerrito on climate change and climate action, ask questions, and participate in discussion.
6. **COLLABORATION WITH THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE** *(10 min.)*  
Hear updates, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the City's Urban Forest Committee.
7. **ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND RACIAL FRAMEWORK** *(20 min.)*  
Discuss potential next steps for the EQC to promote diversity and inclusion, and the idea of developing an environmental, social, and racial framework to guide future EQC efforts.
  - Ad-Hoc Subcommittee report

## 8. **EQC BUDGET AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS** (15 min.)

Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding planning, logistics, and expenditures for the EQC calendar of events, including:

- Educational Events, Films, and Workshops
  - Green Team 2022 Cleanups / Broom Pulls:
    - Jan. 15, Broom Pull - Debrief
    - Feb. 20, Sunday, Cerrito Creek
    - Apr. 23, Saturday, Earth Day, neighborhood cleanups, locations TBD
    - Jun. 5, Baxter Park (with regular Baxter volunteers)
    - Aug. 14 Sunday, Cerrito Creek
    - Oct. 1, Saturday, Northern Gateways
    - Dec. 4, Sunday, Baxter Park (with regular Baxter volunteers)
  - Recycling Center 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in 2022
    - Draft City Council Resolution
    - Budgetary Needs
  - Earth Day 2022 – April 23, 2022
  - Hillside Festival – May 14-15, 2022
  - East Bay Green Home Tour – May 14-15, 2022

## 9. **CLIMATE ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION** (10 min.)

Hear updates, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

- MCE Clean Energy & California Public Utilities Commission Updates
- San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Update/EIR – EQC Comments

## 10. **EQC THEME FOR 2022 – “GO ELECTRIC!”** (10 min.)

Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding implementation of the EQC’s workplan theme for 2022 to “Go Electric!”.

- Electrification Education
- Community Organized Induction Burner Loaner Program
- MCE Deep Green Enrollment

## 11. **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** (5 min.)

Hear committee member announcements and suggestions for future EQC agenda items. Potentially engage in discussion and make decisions regarding logistics of EQC consideration of items including:

- EQC Return to In-person Meetings
- Climate Adaptation, Severe Weather Events, and Emergency Preparedness
- Integrated Pest Management Report from City Staff
- EQC Collaboration with Young People in El Cerrito
- Tool/Toy Lending Library
- Urban Greening Plan Implementation
- Community Member Suggestions (e.g. Meatless Green Mondays)
- Real Property Transfer Tax Rebates for Energy Efficiency – Education

## 12. **ADJOURNMENT**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, Will Provost, at (510) 559-7684. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center (7501 Schmidt Lane) during normal business hours.



## PUBLIC WORKS

### Staff Liaison

Will Provost | (510) 559-7684

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## DRAFT MINUTES

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE Environmental Quality Committee

Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

### JOIN VIA ZOOM:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89556067875?pwd=MTVEYS9oaHpUNXBOV0d4Qkk2RWYvUT09>

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**7:00 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING** Chair Tsutsui called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Chair Neil Tsutsui; Vice-Chair Beth Molnar; Members Buddy Akacić, Howdy Goudey, Rebecca Milliken, Mark Miner, Sean O'Connor, Paloma Pavel, Ellen Spitalnik, Sheila Tarbet, Rose Vekony, and Dave Weinstein  
**Also Present:** Will Provost, Staff Liaison
2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**  
El Cerrito resident and the City's current Poet Laureate, Eevelyn Mitchell, introduced herself and shared her interest in the work of the Committee.
3. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**  
Staff Liaison Provost highlighted for the EQC that the Committee has a new Council Liaison, Mayor Pro Tem Lisa Motoyama. He also noted that the City Council adopted a resolution on December 21, 2021, in support of the existing net energy metering programs that incentivize residential solar in the state, and in alignment with a motion and recommendation made by the EQC on December 14, 2021. Provost also announced that City buildings and lobbies will be open by appointment only through the month of January, to limit the spread of COVID-19.
4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**  
Consider a motion adopting the minutes of the EQC meeting on December 14, 2021.  
**Move/Second:** Members Akacić/Goudey **Action:** Passed a motion to adopt the Minutes of the December 14, 2021 EQC meeting. **Ayes:** Unanimous **Noes:** None **Abstain:** Pavel and Tarbet
5. **COLLABORATION WITH THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE**  
Urban Forest Committee member Robin Mitchell highlighted updates from the recent UFC meeting, including that the City is currently completing routine tree pruning work around the City and that the UFC is assisting the City in applying for a grant to update the Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan. She also let the group know that Arbor Week is coming up in March.
6. **ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND RACIAL FRAMEWORK**  
The Committee discussed next steps for the EQC to promote diversity and inclusion. Members exchanged ideas and discussed reviewing the recently approved EQC Workplan from an equity lens. The Ad Hoc Subcommittee formed previously agreed to research the Contra Costa County Environmental Justice Assessment Tool, shared by Goudey, to see if that may be a good model to emulate for the Committee.

## 7. EQC BUDGET AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Staff and Committee members provided updates on recent events the EQC has supported and discussed plans for future events in 2022, including:

- Educational Events, Films, and Workshops
  - Presentation from El Cerrito Youth activists
  - Green Team 2021 Cleanups / Broom Pulls:
    - Jan 15, 2022 Broom Pull
    - 2022 Events – Weinstein shared that he has developed a calendar of events for all of 2022
  - Recycling Center 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in 2022
    - EQC Members discussed a variety of ideas to celebrate the Recycling Center's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Ideas included having the Poet Laureate speak, showing a film at the Recycling Center or at the Cerrito Theater, burying a time capsule, setting up a lending library for induction burners, and/or doing a portion of the event that was forward looking. A tentative date of August 5 was suggested.
  - Earth Day 2022 – April 23, 2022
  - Hillside Festival – May 14-15, 2022
  - East Bay Green Home Tour – May 14-15, 2022

**Move/Second:** Members Weinstein/O'Connor **Action:** Passed a motion to support the planning of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event at the Recycling Center and honoring Joel Witherell  
**Ayes:** Unanimous **Noes:** None **Abstain:** None

Akacić mentioned the upcoming Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Celebration in El Cerrito, taking place on January 17, 2022.

## 8. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

EQC Members heard brief updates on items relating to implementation of the Climate Action Plan, including the following:

- BART Corridor Access Plan
- MCE Clean Energy & California Public Utilities Commission Updates
  - CPUC Net Energy Metering Proposal(s) and City Council Resolution
- San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Update/EIR – EQC Comments
- EQC Recommendations to City Council Ad Hoc Subcommittee

## 9. EQC THEME FOR 2022 – “GO ELECTRIC!”

The Committee participated in discussion regarding implementation of the EQC's workplan theme for 2022 to “Go Electric!”. Goudey and Milliken offered to do research and share resources on recent policies in other communities prohibiting natural gas in new construction.

- Electrification Education
- Community Organized Induction Burner Loaner Program
- Researching Prohibiting Natural Gas in New Construction
- MCE Deep Green Enrollment

## 10. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Staff and committee members made announcements and suggestions for future EQC agenda items:

- EQC Return to In-person Meetings
- Climate Adaptation, Severe Weather Events, and Emergency Preparedness
- Integrated Pest Management Report from City Staff
- EQC Collaboration with Young People in El Cerrito
- Tool/Toy Lending Library

- Urban Greening Plan Implementation
- Community Member Suggestions (e.g. Meatless Green Mondays, Leaf Blowers)
- Real Property Transfer Tax Rebates for Energy Efficiency – Education

Goudey expressed interest in reviewing statistics from the City's Real Property Transfer Tax Rebate Program.

## 11. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM.

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Neil Tsutsui, Chair

This is to clarify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Environmental Quality Committee meeting of **January 11, 2022** as approved by the Environmental Quality Committee.

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Will Provost, Staff Liaison

Agenda Item No. **EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL PROCLAMATION**

**Recognizing Joel Witherell for his decades-long successful effort to create and sustain a vibrant recycling center in the City of El Cerrito**

WHEREAS, The El Cerrito Recycling Center, called E.C.ology at the time, opened as a volunteer-run “pilot project” to see if recycling would work in El Cerrito, on August 5, 1972 – 50 years ago; and

WHEREAS, by January 1973, the mayor reported that the center had “proven quite successful and is now about the biggest in the area;” and

WHEREAS, the volunteers who had created the center, which was open only two day a month, understood from the start that for it to function effectively and for the long-term it should be staffed and run by the city of El Cerrito; and

WHEREAS, Joel Witherell joined the city of El Cerrito in January as its park and recreation director, serving as staff liaison to E.C.ology and embracing the recycling cause; and

WHEREAS, Joel Witherell was an early member and president of the newly formed Northern California recycling Center from 1973, promoting recycling regionally; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, Joel Witherell got the first sizable funding for the Recycling Center, a \$45,000 grant the California Solid Waste Management Board for a “curbside source separation demonstration project” that would lead to the center’s first household recycling pickups.

WHEREAS, in 1976 Joel Witherell worked with the City Council appointed Citizens Solid Waste Committee to develop a recycling commitment and plan more robust than a new countywide plan; and

WHEREAS, Joel Witherell helped plan and oversaw a series of expansions and improvements at the Recycling enter: moving from being open every other Saturday to two Saturdays a mont in January 1977, and increasing the range of materials collected; and

WHEREAS, The city took over operation of E.C.ology on July 1, 1977 with the goal of eventually recycling 25 percent of the city’s solid waste, with Joel Witherell in charge; and

WHEREAS, with Joel Witherell in the lead, 1977 and 1978 saw major expansions at the center, thanks to more grants, more employees paid by a federal jobs program, and construction of the first building on site, the 6,000 square-foot “pole barn,” which would remain in place until 2011; and

WHEREAS, throughout the rest of Joel Witherell’s tenure at the Recycling Center, he promoted expansion and improvements in recycling, both at the center and curbside – making curbside collection free, rather than via subscription; providing recycling buckets to homeowners;

overseeing the popular Book Exchange; working with volunteers to create the citywide garage sale; and much more; and

WHEREAS, Joel Witherell, throughout all of this, oversaw city parks, the swim and community center, and a robust recreational program; and

WHEREAS, in 1989/1990 Joel Witherell proposed and the City Council adopted policies to ensure the Recycling Center's fiscal health through a recycling fee on garbage bills, increased garbage rates, and small garbage "mini-cans" to increase recycling and decrease material sent to landfills; and

WHEREAS, Joe Witherell, who retired in 1993 after overseeing the Recycling Program for 20 years, its longest tenured supervisor, did more to ensure the Recycling Center's success and continuance than any other individual, and

WHEREAS, in discussing Joel Witherell's career at the city of El Cerrito, the West County Times in 1994 referred to him as "the best of all combinations to look for in a public servant," and, "a visionary with his feet on the ground;" and

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of El Cerrito does hereby salute Joel Witherell for his contributions to the city AND WHAT. Name something for him? Install a permanent plaque?

Dated:

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Gabe Quinto, Mayor