MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
TREE COMMITTEE

Monday March 11, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
El Cerrito City Hall
Hillside Conference Room
10890 San Pablo Avenue

1. Roll Call – 7:00 p.m.
   Present: Committee Members: Bleier, Boniello, Christian, Cheng, Hittle, Lee-
   Rutherford, Price, Srago.
   Council Liaison Lyman, Staff Liaison Prée, Tree Committee applicant
   Michael Charlton were also present.
   Absent: None

2. Comments from the Public- El Cerrito resident Ken Hirano inquired on the process for tree
   removal and replacement of the tree in the Public Right of Way at his address. A discussion of
   criteria for resident initiated tree removal followed.

3. Report from Council Liaison Greg Lyman- Reported on highlights of Council Meetings
   a) that the City will participate in the Sustainable Tools for Assessing Rating Communities
      (STAR) program. El Cerrito is one of just 30 other American cities and the only City in
      California participating. It is an assessment for improving livability in a City and trees play
      a role, it is similar to LEED. The program is sponsored by ICLEI Local Governments for
      Sustainability and the Green Building Council. Details are available on the City website
      Council meeting agenda for February 19.

     http://www.el-cerrito.org/Archive.aspx?AMID=43
     http://www.starcommunities.org/communities
   b) Draft Climate Action Plan open for comment until March 15; final approval expected April
   c) Community Garden proposal for Fairmont Park recognized as a community organization.

Action Items-
   a) Approval of the minutes from the Tree Committee Meeting on January 14, 2013
   Action: Moved, seconded, carried (Boniello, Price) to approve the minutes. Vote: Unanimous

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION
To request a meeting agenda in large print, Braille, or on cassette, or to request a sign language interpreter
for the meeting, call Mary Dodge, Staff Liaison at 215-4310 (voice) at least FIVE (5) WORKING DAYS
NOTICE PRIOR TO THE MEETING to ensure availability.

10940 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530 Tel: 510.215.4300
E-mail: fdodge@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us
4. **Report from Staff Liaison**- Prée reported a) A tree fell in the City PROW on Elm due to root failure b) Davey Resource Group continues to collect for the City Tree Inventory.

5. **Report on Activities for Arbor Day 2013**- Prée & Bleier reported on the completed planning details with the EC Garden Club a.) Project is March 12 at 1:00 with the Portola Middle School 7th grade science class and is being covered by the E.C. Patch b) Bleier purchased Arbor Day badges for the attendees.

A short general discussion of the Brown Act regarding distribution of materials was initiated: Lyman: Consensus cannot be built on an item outside of a public forum or prior to agendizing the item; that would constitute a Serial Meeting. General and readily available information may be exempt but the recommendation is to send all communication through the Staff Liaison for distribution to the committee. More public meetings would speed committee approval processes along.

6. **Report from Tree Selection Criteria Subcommittee (Boniello, Hittle, Price)**-
   - Price: recommends evaluating and prioritizing the general list; How do we determine what characteristics would knock a tree off the list entirely? e.g. weak wood. (Then will the specific species recommendation go to a new subcommittee)
   - Srago: suggested limiting the size of City trees for ease of maintenance.
   - Lyman: then maintenance requirements should be a criterion for tree selection.
   - Boniello: the issue is species selection, not size of tree; some tree species require more maintenance than others.
   - Price: Tree care is a separate discussion. Each criterion should include the reason why it is a criterion, e.g. surface rooting because it may blow over or lift sidewalks. Are these criteria for selection or are these advisory? Who is the target for the list, City Staff?
   - Chen: Invasive species and Fire Hazard are “knock off” criteria.
   - Bleier: So far the “knock off” list is Invasiveness, Temperature Hardiness, Disease resistance, Air Pollution Tolerance, Structural Integrity, Fire Resistance (pyrophytic species prohibited)
   - Price: The next phase—the actual selection of species—will require the participation of the more informed committee members.
   - Chen: add toxicity to the “knock off” list.
   - Boniello: Pest and disease resistance.
   - Lyman: Consider site selection criteria next.
   - General discussion of maintenance requirements, structure and water requirements ensued.
   - Lyman: Site selection criteria should not be confused with attributes.
   - Hittle: Organize the lists based on site selection
   - Boniello: develop p. 34 (UFMP) list into more graphic format.
   - Lyman: It can be organized based on site specific questions to make groupings more intuitive.
   - Bleier, et. al.: determine what sites concern us, e.g. median, park strip, parks, hillside, City facilities, natural areas, hillside, and flatlands
   - Lyman: What needs to be known about the tree before the species is selected? & what needs to be known about the site before the tree is selected e.g. presence of overhead and/or underground utilities, size of planting space, soils, and flood zone.
Bleier: Does the City have explicit policy to plant natives in the natural areas?
Prée: Not per se; it is implied. The Memorial Grove is planted with several non-native species
Native Requirement & Irrigation Present should be site selection criteria.
General discussion regarding convening a special meeting with a van to visit various representative
sites and provide public access to the meeting
Lyman: the group could meet in groups of four without violating the Brown Act but cannot overlap
groups.
Price: because of our productive discussion this last hour we now have working lists of site
selection and general selection criteria.
Srago: can the subcommittee provide the notes from this Tree Selection Criteria meeting to test in
the field for the special meeting?
Prée: send notes to staff liaison for distribution.
Price: subcommittee will meet before submitting the list
All committee members expressed interest in a field meeting, the date to be determined.

7. Discussion of City Tree Budget- Prée reported on the year to date distribution of the
Landscape and Lighting Assessment District annual funding amount of $270K; the tree
maintenance budget is derived from this source. Other activities that share this funding source:
• Landscape Park and Median Maintenance (~$180 annually)
• Pest Control
• Sidewalk Repairs
• Tennis Court Resurfacing ($25K)

8. Announcements and Future Agenda Items-
• Recommend to Council that Michael Charlton be appointed to the Tree
  Committee
• Tree Selection Criteria Subcommittee Report and Discussion
• Public Outreach Subcommittee discussion

10. Adjournment – 9:25