Public Works Department

# MINUTES

## REGULAR MEETING
## OF THE
## TREE COMMITTEE

**Monday October 14, 2013, 7:00 p.m.**
**El Cerrito City Hall**
Hillside Conference Room
10890 San Pablo Avenue

**1. Roll Call:**

**Present:** Committee Members Bleier, Boniello, Christian, Hittle, Lee-Rutherford, Price and Staff Liaison Prée
**Absent:** Committee Members Charlton, Cheng, Srago, Council Liaison Lyman

**2. Report from Council Liaison- 7:15**
Mayor Greg Lyman was not present

**3. Presentation- THE HILLSIDE NATURAL AREA (HNA) ; a dedicated volunteer's perspective**
Susan Schwartz of Friends of 5 Creeks gave a power point presentation in which she noted some of the uncommon flora in the HNA such as Red Orchid, Mariposa Lily and Oakland Star Tulip.
She spoke about her concerns for fire risk and the work that she and Friends of 5 Creeks volunteers have done to remove and slow the spread of French Broom throughout the HNA. She said that volunteers cannot do it all especially in critical, steep areas where the City should take a more active role by mowing and using low-toxicity herbicides to control the Broom. "El Cerrito should commit and follow through on permanent removal and hire professional wild land invasive plant experts to guide vegetation management in the HNA."
She stressed that the City needs to commit to a budget beyond Fire Risk reduction mowing and collaboration between staff, contractors and volunteers for vegetation management is overdo. She noted that some of the fuel reduction mowing was too low in height and may have harmed some native grasses and other plants.

**4. Comments from the Public on non agenda items-** Howdy Goudy, a member of the Environmental Quality Committee, noted that he and several tree committee members took part in the Sudden Oak Death (SOD) survey last spring. He asked the tree committee if the community is being too complacent with SOD which has migrated from Orinda to the east into Berkeley. Robin Mitchell, who is on the Park and Recreation Commission, wants to build on the synergies between her commission and the tree committee to address natural areas in the City and collaborate with volunteers in guiding management of these areas including the HNA. She voiced her support of the collaboration Susan Schwartz talked about in her presentation.

**5. Presentation- INVEST FROM THE GROUND UP campaign in El Cerrito?** Sonali Shah presented an overview of the California Urban Forest Counsel invitation to El Cerrito for a public campaign to increase public awareness of urban forestry. She challenged the committee to establish a target audience and strategy for the campaign. A committee discussion followed regarding details including a timeline and what how and where we would make the campaign. Boniello motioned that the tree committee support pursuing this outreach campaign, Bleier seconded the motion, a unanimous vote in favor followed.

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6. **Presentation- THE EL CERRITO URBAN GREENING GRANT- 8:15**
   City staff member Emily Alter updated the committee on the goals, progress made and future steps of this California Proposition 84 State funded grant to develop an urban greening plan for the City. MIG and Associates is the consultant.

7. **Action Items-** Minutes from August 12 & September 9, 2013 were approved

8. **Report from Staff Liaison –** Prée reported on the Invest from the Ground Up campaign in Albany and on the Community Tree planting Grant progress.

9. **Announcements - 8:50**
10. **Discussion of future committee actions and agenda items - 8:55**
11. **Adjournment- 9:00**

**10. Adjournment- 9:10 p.m.**