



Public Works Department

# MINUTES

## REGULAR MEETING OF THE TREE COMMITTEE

**Monday June 8, 2015 7:00 p.m.**  
**El Cerrito City Hall**  
Hillside Conference Room  
10890 San Pablo Avenue

**1. Roll Call :**

**Present:** Chair Cathy Bleier, Vice Chair Ralph Boniello, Sheauching Cheng, Karen Christian, Steve Price, Mike Srago and Staff Liaison Stephen Prée

**Absent:** Members Michael Charlton and Council Liaison Jan Bridges

**2. Comments from the Public on non agenda items:**

ABC News reporter Allan Wong and cameraman Andrew Sheppard were present in response to the June 6 tree failure in Arlington Park and inquired if the tree failure was drought related.

El Cerrito resident Vivian Jacobs does not like the way the tree in front of her house looks, said that the tree is declining and drops twigs, is requesting that the City “do something”, said there are not enough trees on the 1300 Block of Elm St.

**3. Report from the City Council Liaison:**

Councilmember Bridges was not present thus no report was given.

**4. Action Items -**

- Motion to adopt the minutes from May 11, 2015: Price, 2<sup>nd</sup> Srago, passed unanimously with Boniello abstaining due to his absence in May.
- The Committee voted to recommend to City Council that Yan Linhart be appointed to the Tree Committee: Motion- Srago, Boniello 2<sup>nd</sup>, passed unanimously.

**5. Report from the City Arborist-** Prée reported on the White Alder tree failure at Arlington Park on June 6 and relayed that a consulting arborist will conduct an investigation; once completed the report will be available for review. He reported that the current drought is effecting several tree species particularly conifers in the Bay Area. The committee discussed how stressed trees are more susceptible to insects and disease.

**6. El Cerrito Urban Greening Plan Comment Review**

Chair Bleier distributed a letter that an ad-hoc subcommittee drafted in comment to the City’s draft Urban Greening Plan (UGP) specifically addressing the UGP tree species lists, the definition of certain tree categories, e.g. shade trees and the function of the tree lists. Boniello observed that the UGP does not specifically call-out trees for use under utility wires. Srago inquired why the consultant creating the plan did not address the Tree Committee directly and

why the consultant made a tree list separate from the City tree list. The Committee inquired on the editable state of the UGP final draft, i.e. if additional comments will yet be incorporated. Regarding the tree list, Price suggested exchanging the term “indigenous” for the term “native” and made the observation that most indigenous trees are not suited to be used as street trees due to additional maintenance requirements when used in the constraints of the urban environment. The question of the function of the tree list, i.e. advising for private trees and/or public trees, was raised separately at different times during the discussion by Boniello, Srago and Price. Boniello commented that a list of trees to be used in biofiltration treatment areas is misplaced in the UGP because too little empirical data has been collected to warrant a list at this time. The issue of pollinator plants was discussed and since so many insects (including flies) and birds are pollinators, the point of including this list was questioned - if the intent is to attract bees, then make the list about bees and the plants that attract them. Boniello recommended that the inclusion of the Hillside Natural Area in the UGP should include maintenance and habitat conservation plans; he also recommended that the UGP stipulate that all projects involving trees require consultation with the Tree Committee and/or the City Arborist.

Because the deadline for UGP comments is July 3, the ad hoc subcommittee recommended that the Tree Committee authorize the ad hoc committee submit comments on behalf of the entire Tree Committee: there was no objection.

#### **7. Update on Revised City Tree List**

Boniello summarized progress to date on the City Approved Tree List including the addition of tree water use requirements (WUCOLS), bird information and new species. He explained that the list is dynamic and that now there is a process for vetting, so new tree species can be reviewed accordingly. Specific species and the process for vetting including the use of the Cal Poly Select -a- Tree website were discussed.

#### **8. Calendar of Events and Work Plan Update**

- No one on the Committee was available to host a table at the Independence Day “World One” celebration at Cerrito Vista Park.
- The Revised City Tree Ordinance ad-hoc subcommittee will be revisited after the majority of work is completed on the Approved City Tree List

#### **9. Announcements and future agenda items**

- Price requested a tree pruning workshop be scheduled for the fall and discussed at a future meeting
- The Committee elected to suspend meeting in July. Motion Boniello, 2<sup>nd</sup> Christian: unanimous

#### **10. Adjournment**