MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
TREE COMMITTEE
Monday August 8, 2016 7:00 p.m.
El Cerrito City Hall
Hillside Conference Room
10890 San Pablo Avenue

1. Roll Call:
Present: Chair Ralph Boniello, Vice Chair Steve Price, Members Cathy Bleier, Karen Christian, Robert Hrubes, Yan Linhart, Mary Torrusio, Mike Srago. Council Liaison Janet Abelson and Staff Liaison Stephen Prée were also present.
Absent: Members Michael Charlton,

2. Comments from the Public on non-agenda items: Mike Srago reported that the Bradford Callery Pear trees in the City Right-of-Way in front of his neighbor’s house are in decline.

3. Report from the City Council Liaison: Janet Abelson reported that recent Council meetings had been well attended and of extended duration regarding agenda items such as the Mayfair property development, which is the largest project since the adoption of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan; the Summit K-2 school proposal to expand to grade 12; the El Cerrito Library ballot measure; and the annual Fire Hazard Abatement public hearing. Ms. Abelson asked Prée to describe the Fire Hazard Abatement process: Prée described the process led by the El Cerrito Fire Department to reduce fire hazards at residences in which occasionally he is asked to verify the death of certain trees.

4. Action Items:
Motion to adopt the minutes from the July 11, 2016 meeting with a specific modification to item 7: Bleier, second: Srago; approved unanimously with Boniello and Hrubes abstaining due to absence.

5. Report from the City Arborist: Prée updated the Committee on a.) Drought related tree deaths are reported in exceedingly high numbers throughout California (66 million since 2011) in the August 7, 2016 issue of The San Francisco Chronicle in a front page article by Kurtis Alexander. b.)Tree Committee Agendas are being emailed now to those who signed-up with TC interest on July 4. c.) Increased drought related city tree deaths on city streets and in Hillside Natural Areas may be eligible for grant funding pending research. d.) Diablo Firesafe fuel mitigation grant work at the future Dorothy Rosenberg Park. e.) Asked the Committee who would be available to water the young Arborweek trees at Cerrito Vista Park. f.) Vice Chair Steve Price asked Prée about the pruning schedule for certain San Pablo Avenue trees that may be covering business signs. Prée reported that several blocks of trees had been pruned in 2015/16 and more would be scheduled this fall/winter.

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6. Tree Committee Activities, Calendar and Work Plan Update:

   A. 2016-2018 Tree Committee Work Plan Development: Prée had technical difficulties with the printing of the complete edited Work Plan. Yan Linhart presented his findings in researching other City Boards, Committees and Commissions agendas and minutes for areas of potential collaboration and liaison activities with the Tree Committee; he did not research Parks and Recreation or the Environmental Quality Committee for reasons of obvious overlap. Steve Price said that during his appointment on the Design Review Committee they did not review public (street) projects and that he gave a photo-imaging presentation to the DRC on street trees that was well received. Cathy Bleier thanked Linhart for his research, Hrubes agreed; general discussion followed regarding the need for and multiple benefits of Greening (with trees); the T.C. has more to do with streets than other committees; distributing tree related information to the other City Boards, Committees, and Commissions; climate change related outreach to schools and other groups; the need for a standard tree benefit related presentation with a targeted audience. The Work Plan goal for Outreach may include the refinement of a standard tree benefit related presentation to be used for multiple events and audiences; some excellent material has already been developed for this purpose and is now available publicly.

   B. Revisions to the City Tree Ordinance: After general discussion regarding goals, scope and purpose of revisions the Committee asked the ad-hoc subcommittee on this subject to reconvene and report back next month.

7. Announcements and future agenda items: no announcements were made.

Future Agenda Items:

- 2016-18 Work Plan
- Revisions to the Tree Ordinance

8. Adjournment- 9:10