



# MINUTES

## REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 14, 2017, 7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

10890 San Pablo Avenue

**This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible**

**Call To Order:** 7:38 PM

**Roll Call:** Chair Goudey, Vice-Chair Schaadt, Members Hargrove, O'Connor, Pavel, and Weinstein

**Absent:** Members Mackie, Milliken, Miner, Spitalnik, and Solari

**Also Present:** Maria Sanders, Staff Liaison

- Council/ Staff Liaisons Announcements and Reports** – Councilmember Janet Abelson announced City Council will be hearing the Sanctuary City resolution on March 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Comments from the public on non-agenda items** – El Cerrito resident Robin Mitchell recommended a book, *The Nature Fix*, which discusses the science behind the restorative nature of nature. She also recommended that the EQC consider helping reconstitute the Urban Greening Task Force, highlighting the need for more urban green space in the built-out areas of the city. Tom Gehling from Trail Trekkers described an incident in which the property owner of the Fairview property near the Hillside Natural Area cleared a significant portion of riparian and other woodland areas on site. Trail Trekkers read a statement that they passed regarding this incident, and requested that the EQC agendaize the topic.
- Approval of the Minutes** – Motion to approve January 10 and February 14<sup>th</sup> minutes, and defer approval of the October 10<sup>th</sup> minutes until the next meeting (O'Connor, Schaadt, Unanimous).
- EQC Member Appointment Process** – Goudey reported on the results of their interview with Becky Miller. Motion to recommend City Council appoint Becky Miller to the EQC. (Goudey, O'Connor, Unanimous)
- Biological Control of Cape Ivy**– Dr. Patrick Moran and Dr. Scott Portman, both research entomologists at the USDA Agricultural Research Service, provided a presentation on research to biologically control Cape Ivy, which is an invasive plant from South Africa that is currently outcompeting native vegetation throughout Coastal California. For the past 20 years, they have been conducting extensive research on the Cape Ivy gall-forming fly, which has been released at other test sites in California and have been shown to help control the spread of Cape Ivy. Release of the fly has received approval from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, including a CEQA review (contained in EQC binder), and received a required US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) permit. The research team approached the cities of El Cerrito and Albany on the recommendation of Friends of Five Creeks and Friends of Albany Hill, as these organizations have recommended to the USDA several possible test sites on Albany Hill and the Hillside Natural Area. As the property owners, both the City of Albany and El Cerrito will need to provide permission for this

### 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 Maria Sanders, Staff Liaison at 215-4361 (voice) at least FIVE (5) WORKING DAYS NOTICE PRIOR TO THE MEETING to ensure availability.*

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work to take place. EQC Members asked various clarifying questions about the APHIS permit and CEQA processes, the long-term safety of releasing the fly, including on plants other than cape ivy. Dr. Moran explained that the fly is hardwired to only attack cape ivy; tests of types of crop plants and even closely related plant species revealed no damage from the fly. Goudey opened public comment and mentioned favorable comments from Friends of Five Creeks and Albany Hill from the previous meeting. Robin Mitchell asked a question regarding the spread of Cape Ivy. Several questions were asked about the dispersal of the fly, and Dr. Portman said part of the study is to document the dispersal of the fly throughout the region. Dr. Portman explained that they are still conducting field studies on this. Goudey suggested creating educational materials to be available at the release sites. Robin Mitchell suggested starting a citizen science project to help track dispersal of the fly. Goudey asked about the type of fly density in the natural habitat, and Dr. Portman answered that the native range does not have a large density. Motion recommending to City staff that it proceeds with using this biological control as a method to control Cape Ivy at limited test sites in El Cerrito. (Weinstein, O'Connor, Pavel Abstains).

## 6. EQC Budget and Calendar of Events

- Green Teams:
  - Motorcycle Hill (February 25<sup>th</sup>): O'Connor reported that the event was successful and a lot of French Broom was removed. Tom Gehling offered that Trail Trekkers would like to do it again.
  - Madera Broom Pull (March 18<sup>th</sup>): Goudey announced the event will begin at 10:00 am at the end of Regency Court.
  - Cerrito Creek Spruce Up – Weinstein asked Schaadt to lead the event. O'Connor would like to also do the lower part of Creekside Park.
- Earth Day (April 22<sup>nd</sup>): No updates
- Film and Educational Events:
  - National Drive Electric Week (September 9-17): No updates.
  - *Before the Flood* Film Showing: Pavel reported that the film is going to be previewed this Sunday at 7:00 pm at the home of Mayor Abelson. The League of Women Voters and the Sierra Club is interested in co-sponsoring the film showing and to show it at the Cerrito Theater.
- Hillside Festival (May 21)—Weinstein asked for volunteers to help provide greater EQC presence at the festival.

7. **Climate Action Plan Implementation**—Goudey had no new updates and deferred until the next EQC meeting in the interest of time.

8. **Trail Trekkers' Grant Proposal Regarding Interpretive Signage in HNA**—Weinstein requested that the EQC support Trail Trekkers grant proposal, due July 1<sup>st</sup>, which will fund new signs to mark the natural trail in the Hillside Natural Area. Schaadt supports the concept. Pavel suggested that the interpretive signs use QR codes to link to on-line content. Motion to support the planned proposal to create interpretive signs. (Schaadt, O'Connor, Unanimous).

9. **Elections for Chair and Vice-Chair**—Sanders reported that she received several nominations for Miner to serve as Chair and Milliken to serve as Vice-Chair. O'Connor nominated Weinstein and Pavel for Chair and Vice-Chair respectively; however, both declined. Pavel expressed her gratitude for Goudey and Schaadt's leadership. Motion to elect Miner as Chair and Milliken as Vice-Chair. (Weinstein, O'Connor, Unanimous).

## 10. Announcements and Future Agenda Items

### Consideration of Upcoming Agenda Items

- 1 2015 GHG Inventory—April
- 2 Urban Greening Plan Implementation
- 3 Huber Park Invasive Plant Removal—Green Teams
- 4 Drones in Hillside Natural Area
- 5 Invite John Gioia – TBD

6 City Purchased Vehicles

7 Changes to Federal Environmental Policy

8 Fairview Property—how the city can avoid environmental damage on private property.

**11. Adjournment – 9:07**

***Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Environmental Quality Committee regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center Administrative Office at 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.***