



## MINUTES REGULAR MEETING OF THE Urban Forest Committee

November 18, 2019

Staff Liaison  
Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685  
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Hillside Room  
El Cerrito City Hall  
10890 San Pablo Avenue  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

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**CONVENE REGULAR MEETING:** Chair Torrusio called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

- 1. ROLL CALL – Present:** Members Cathy Bleier, Robert Hrubes, Yan Linhart, Robin Mitchell, Steve Price, Michael Srago. **Absent:** none.  
Also present: Council Liaison Gabriel Quinto, Staff Liaison Stephen Prée; members of the public, Mark Siffling, Mark Mendell, Nerissa DeJesus, Sue Duncan, Paul Duncan Kirsten Medar, Gisele Verrier.
- 2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS –** Attending members of the public introduced themselves; there were no public comments.
- 3. COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS-** Michael Srago asked the Committee how he should proceed with his offer to give a presentation on plant pathology; a discussion followed regarding the presentation timing, duration and whether it could be included as one component of a multi-topic education and outreach event; the Committee deferred the question to the UFC activities agenda item.
- 4. COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS -** Staff Liaison Prée reported on recent urban forestry activities including his attendance at the City of Richmond Arbor Day event on October 12; summary of the October 27 windstorm damage to El Cerrito City trees; progress on the 2019 Natural Areas Fire Fuel Reduction Project; conclusion of the 2019 Creek maintenance activities related to the City's CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Routine Maintenance Agreement; his participation with Steve Price in a Richmond Trees volunteer street tree maintenance event on November 16; he reported that he had currently directed the contract pruning of 191 City trees on San Pablo Ave. and reminded the UFC of the City Clerks Brown Act training on December 2. He also informed the Committee that as of January 1, 2020, Steve Price and Mike Srago will have reached the end of their second four-year term of service to the UFC and their term limit. The Committee discussed details of the above items and specifically raised questions regarding the City policy on term limits of other City boards, commissions and committees. Price asked if it is permissible for him to serve as a volunteer after his term ends.

## 5. ACTION ITEMS

- Approval of the October 14, 2019 meeting minutes: **Moved / Second:** Hrubes / Price; unanimous.

## 6. URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR AND WORK PLAN UPDATE-

- 2019/2021 Work Plan Refinement- hear from Work Plan ad-hoc subcommittee, discuss and consider possible action:

Chair Torrusio lead the Committee review and discussion of the latest Work Plan draft. Cathy Bleier recommended that committee members volunteer to work on specific Work Plan Goal/ Objectives:

- A. Become a Tree City USA- *Hrubes / Prée*
- B. Promote Volunteer Tree Care Corps- *Mitchell / Price / Prée*
- C. Address Community Fire Concerns- *Bleier / Hrubes / Srago*
- D. Enhance Web presence / public education- *Bleier / Mitchell / Torrusio*
- E. Collaborate with other E.C. B.C.&C.- *Mitchell / member rotation to meetings*
- F. Recruit more UFC members- *Bleier / Srago / Torrusio*
- G. Educate residents on U.F. topics- *Mitchell / Price*

Discussion of submitting applications for Arbor Week and other U.F. grants- Bleier: there is limited access due to El Cerrito having mid-range disadvantaged community status and carbon accounting requirements; need to identify specific projects first. Price- Council members want trees planted in specific places.

Discussion of Changes to Work Plan draft: number goals & objectives, refine schedule, edits- Prée will refine and return final draft and schedule City Council presentation.

- Volunteer tree care corps development:

Mitchell & Price distributed an outline of their meeting recommendations for activities and locations. Discussion: Srago- UFC needs to recruit to generate participation. Group- activities may generate public interest in UFC. Price described volunteer activities with Richmond Trees, their flyer, challenges with watering during tree establishment period. Prée described process for residents to receive new street tree. Hrubes commented that the process required considerable administrative responsibility and asked how this would be assigned; Prée- more discussion needed.

Price- skill level certification required for City tree care volunteers.

- Possible actions to address community wildfire concerns- deferred (time)
- City tree planting opportunities- deferred (time)
- Historic native landscapes- UFC asked the origin of this item, deferred (time)

## 7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS / NEXT MONTH'S CITY COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE ASSIGNMENTS

- Cathy Bleier will not be present for the December Meeting but will meet with ad-hoc committee to address community fire concerns (Hrubes & Srago)
- Chair Torrusio will attend the EQC December 10 meeting
- Addressing community wildfire concerns
- Development of a tree care corps
- Historic native landscapes
- Street tree planting opportunities
- Tree care presentation (Prée)

8. **ADJOURNMENT**- Chair Torrusio adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

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Mary Torrusio, Chair or Robert Hrubes, Vice Chair

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular Urban Forest Committee meeting of November 18, 2019 as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

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Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison