



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Urban Forest Committee

Monday August 10, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

Staff Liaison
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VIA TELECONFERENCE
<https://elcerrito.webex.com/elcerrito/onstage/g.php?MTID=e8b698e36100787366fa8651960c50627>

Event ID: 146 305 2248

Event Password: yuM8j7Nj4rV

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CONVENE REGULAR MEETING: Chair Torrusio called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL– Present:** Chair Mary Torrusio, Vice Chair Robert Hrubes Members Cathy Bleier, Yan Linhart, Robin Mitchell.
Also present: Council Liaison Janet Abelson, Staff Liaison Stephen Prée; members of the public Steve Price, Susan Duncan, Kay Starkweather.
2. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS –** there were none.
3. **COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS / CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA –** Chair Torrusio reported that in the Park and Recreation Commission meeting she attended she learned that the Recreation department has suspended nearly all rentals and revenues are down. She said that the PRC is discussing the vegetation management work scope in the Hillside Natural Area.
4. **COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS –**
Council Liaison Abelson informed the UFC of the City budget process and invited members to attend the City council Special Meeting on August 11; she reported that the City is reducing its cumulative budget by \$5.5 million.
5. **PRESENTATION- “Fire Hazard Reduction 2020”, El Cerrito Fire Marshall, Battalion Chief David Gibson –** Chief Gibson provided an overview of the ECFD’s annual fire prevention efforts comparing the last two years. More resident compliance and abatement are evident this year than in 2019-20. 50% of Noticed abatement had been completed at the time of this meeting. New abatement was required at Camp Herms.

Discussion: Cathy Bleier inquired on the status of the HNA fuel reduction work budget. Gibson said that \$70K had been earmarked annually for the next 5 years, Councilwoman Abelson added that those monies are fluid due to the Covid-19 revenue reductions. Robin Mitchell asked who allocates the money, City Council, staff, PRC? Ms. Abelson explained that all these elements work together to allocate the budget but the uncertainty of the current budget requires flexibility and adjustments. Ms. Mitchell said she would bring this matter to a City Council meeting during public comment. Councilwoman Abelson assured the UFC that Council listens to the people.

Public Comment: Kay Starkweather asked Chief Gibson if the Berkeley Country Club had been Noticed for fuel abatement, Gibson, yes numerous contacts.

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

- A.** UFC and community wildfire prevention – Public Comment: Sue Duncan announced that Make El Cerrito Fire Safe has started a FirewiseUSA® neighborhood, she described the requirements and goals, (see attached email from Ms. Duncan). She sent photos and discussed the difficulty of volunteer work in the Quarry Hill Grove due to the prevalence of Poison Oak. Discussion: The need for Poison Oak control and the various removal methods including goats and mowing and the problems of disposal. Staff Liaison Prée presented a draft work plan for vegetation management in the HNA. Discussion: Ms. Bleier inquired about the El Cerrito East Bay Regional Parks District interface and the shaded fuel break. Getting names of contacts there.
- B.** UFC recruitment, outreach, and education
- C.** UFC volunteer corps- Discussion of complications due to the Covid -19 restrictions and considerations of how to move forward

7. ACTION ITEMS –

- Approval of the Minutes from the July 13, 2020 meeting: Motion, Mitchell; 2nd: Hrubes; unanimous (roll call vote).

8. NEXT MONTH'S CITY COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE ASSIGNMENTS

- Cathy Bleier will attend the EQC meeting September 8
- Yan Linhart will attend the PRC meeting September 23

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- UFC Activities during Covid -19 restrictions
- Community wildfire concerns
- UFC Recruitments

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

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 March 9, 2020 as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison