



Staff Liaison
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**DRAFT MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Urban Forest Committee**

Monday November 9, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
VIA TELECONFERENCE

<https://elcerrito.webex.com/elcerrito/onstage/g.php?MTID=e9b6ebbf2eaeab7f71800b0acedcfbe6>

Event ID: 146 627 8919

Event Password: JoinECUFC

Join by Phone: 1-408-418-9388

Access code: 146 627 8919

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 member Abelson, Staff Liaison Stephen Prée, members of the public Dave Weinstein, Paul Duncan.

- 2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Dave Weinstein invited the UFC community to participate in volunteer events sponsored by the EQC and El Cerrito Trail Trekkers to clear French broom from Madera open space on December 13; he reported that there had been three previous events and there would be more to come. Vice Chair Hrubes expressed his appreciation for this work. Cathy Bleier said that the UFC has discussed fire prevention work and is looking forward to more collaboration.

- 3. COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS / CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA**

Chair Torrusio reported that she had attended the October EQC meeting where the topic of wildfire prevention was a priority, and their work plan includes collaboration with other committees. Vice Chair Hrubes reported that he had attended the October PRC meeting and had struggled to find substantive overlap with the UFC outside of discussion of Hillside Natural Area signage.

- 4. PRESENTATION – East Bay Regional Parks District Wildland Fire Resiliency Plan and Planned Work in Tilden Park and Wildcat Canyon.** Mike Mathiesen Assistant Fire Chief introduced himself, and Fire Captains Kent Simpson and Patrick McIntyre who each provided their professional backgrounds and description of their job duties. Assistant Chief Mathiesen, provide an organizational overview, referenced the [EBRPD Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan](#), the current fire fuel reduction strategies employed by the District including vegetation management by tree

removal, tree canopy reduction, goat grazing, prescribed burning. Captain Simpson provided a history of fire as it was used to manage the land by native American people and the changes to land use from grazing grasslands to the wooded wildland urban interface (WUI). He described the characteristics and behavior of wildfire with various fuels and the separate treatment plans required for each stand of trees to maintain biological diversity with species of concern. Fuel mitigation projects have been funded by Measure CC and a \$4.65 million FEMA grant. Chair Hrubes asked what the district is doing to remove Eucalyptus; Simpson said there is no clearcutting just selected removal, thinning, and canopy reduction based on biological conditions. Captain McIntyre said there are thirty -nine discrete vegetative treatment areas that are managed based on CEQA with a watershed management approach and wildlife considerations. He described specific projects located near El Cerrito. Eucalyptus removal is limited to a percentage based on fuel loading influenced by slope, aspect, funding source, special species, and erosion- all influenced by a previous lawsuit. Eucalyptus sprouts are treated based on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) considerations. EBRPD works with ECFD for private property mitigation and abatement notices. Residences should not have wood shake roofs and be otherwise fire hardened; fire risk is closely associated with the location of the home.

Discussion: Linhart asked- Can Eucalyptus be replaced with native species? Kent: Oaks and Bays. Hrubes asked- Is cross jurisdictional consultation feasible? Kent: there are always opportunities for outreach. Bleier asked about Eucalyptus removal and goat costs. Kent: \$14-20K/acre and \$330-1200/acre; thinks goats are valuable as they reduce the mechanical mowing frequency from 10 years to 3 years. Mitchell inquired about problems with goat grazing. Kent: Indiscriminate eaters, may not eat poison oak; difficult in sensitive areas, inventory protected plants and use electric fencing.

5. COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS- Council Liaison Abelson provided an update on the City Council election results as well as the BART directors and WCCUSD election results. She reported on the status of new housing developments within the City and answered questions from Vice Chair Hrubes on the potential benefits of development to the financial health of the City and specifically to the City's urban forestry program: new development requires building and transportation fees be paid to the City, increases the tax base and creates more revenue for local businesses.

6. ACTION ITEMS- Consider a motion to adopt minutes from the October 12, 2020 meeting. Motion, Mitchell; 2nd, Hrubes. Approved unanimously.

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

Discussion regarding EBRPD presentation: Hrubes commented that speakers making presentations to the UFC need to be given clear direction on how to gear their presentations and be more focused on who they are speaking to. He said that the presentation could have been more substantive. Bleier said that she had made the arrangements for the speakers and thought that she had oriented them to the UFC's level of knowledge and experience. Hrubes would have preferred more dialog: what

works, what does not work, project costs, cross jurisdictional work for El Cerrito, etc. Mitchell suggested more consultation with EBRPD regarding encouraging native plant groups.

- A. UFC Recruitment- A brief discussion of Bleier's recruitment letter led to Mitchel's comment regarding the loss of too many members to term limits, Councilmember Abelson said that City Council is interviewing now for BCCs, Hrubes said there should be no term limits, Linhart agreed. Abelson commented that matching the technical expertise on the UFC was difficult.
Motion to adjourn meeting, Mitchell, 2nd Hrubes, no vote taken.

8. NEXT MONTH'S CITY COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE ASSIGNMENTS

- EQC meeting - November 10: Cathy Bleier.
- PRC meeting – November 25: Chair Torrusio

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- UFC Recruitments
- Friends of El Cerrito Urban Forest
- Work Plan
- Arbor Week March 7-14
- Potential speakers and programming

- 10. ADJOURNMENT-** Chair Torrusio adjourned the meeting at 9:15 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 October 12, 2020 as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison