MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Urban Forest Committee
Monday February 13, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82540135588?pwd=TG80WnlYcHEwVC9uTUdpV1g0T0Jodz09
Meeting ID: 825 4013 5588 Passcode: 669 101
or dial in 1-408-638-0968

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

1. ROLL CALL:
   
   Present: Chair Robin Mitchell, Vice Chair Cathy Bleier; members: Catherine (Cassie) Hughes, Robert Hrubes, Susan Kuchinskas, Jennifer Kaczor. Absent: Yan Linhart.
   
   Also present: Staff Liaison Stephen Prée; members of the public: Sue Duncan, TJ Gehling.

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: members of the public introduced themselves to the UFC. Hrubes asked Sue Duncan if she would consider joining the UFC; she said that she is interested in the UFC’s work but declined to join.

3. COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS /CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA: Bleier said that a radio journalist had contacted her regarding the City’s View Ordinance. Hughes recommended changing the agenda to hear switch the order in item 8 and to include a report from Kuchinskas and Linhart regarding Pocket Forests. Kuchinskas and Linhart summarized the relevant points of a Miyawaki Mini Forest webinar that they attended -the presenter also offers consulting services at $100/hour. Discussion regarding what role the UFC would play (Kuchinskas), CalFire Grants to fund (Bleier) mini forest installation on local school grounds (Mitchell), overall costs of program being $10,000 / 1000 square feet (Linhart). Mitchell suggested adding Pocket Forests to next meeting agenda.

4. COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS – Staff Liaison Prée reminded members and the public that the State of California’s Covid Emergency Order is ending February 28 and future meetings will be held in-person in City Hall Council Chambers. Prée informed attendees of the recent Moeser Ln. tree removal notification he received from PG&E and his unanswered inquiry regarding steps the utility will make to mitigate for tree removal. Bleier said that she had written PG&E previously about mature Oak tree removal, Mitchell recommended this item be added to next month’s agenda and to circulate Bleier’s letter to the UFC.

5. ACTION ITEMS
A. **Adopt the minutes from the January 9, 2023, UFC meeting.** Motion: *Hrubes*; 2nd: *Kuchinskas*; Ayes: 7; Noes: 0.

B. **Recommend to City Council the reappointment of Yan B. Linhart to the Urban Forest Committee.** Motion: *Hrubes*; 2nd: *Kuchinskas*; Ayes: 6; Noes: 0; Abstentions:

C. **Appoint up to 2 UFC members to the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) Stakeholder Advisory Group.** Nominations: *Bleier* and *Mitchell*. Motion: *Linhart*; 2nd *Kaczor*; Ayes: 7; Noes: 0.

6. **COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE** – Chair *Mitchell* reported that she had shared the UFC’s notable trees initiative with EQC and received an inquiry regarding the City tree list.

7. **COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**- *Kaczor* reported that the Arlington Park improvement project draft plans include accessible parking and picnic area improvements; the budget is $280,000.

8. **URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR, AND WORK PLAN UPDATE**-

   A. **Arbor Day 2023 Activities**: *Prée* will lead a tree walk in Canyon Trail Park on Saturday March 11 at 3:00. *Mitchell* said that the El Cerrito Garden Club will contribute $100 toward a tree planting with school aged children; *Prée* will work with WCCUSD to establish a planting site and provide details to the UFC.

   B. **Urban Forest Management Plan**- *Bleier* raised concern about timing revisions to the UFMP as City staff resources are especially limited now with the HNA Wildfire Resilience and Forest Conservation Plan grant. *Hrubes* asked what should the new plan do? *Bleier* said the current plan has several goals and objectives that have not yet been met. *Mitchell* said the current UFMP says the City needs more money to maintain its urban forest and thinks the City should take advantage of the grants that are currently available to revise the UFMP. *Bleier* asked what is the vision; how will the City harness the UF to mitigate climate change. *Hrubes* recommended all UFC members review the UFMP and return to the next meeting ready to vote on whether to proceed now with a revision or not. Discussion: City management needs to determine if resources are available now, even with grant writer contract; succinct goals and objectives needed.

   C. **Notable Trees List**- *Kuchinskas* will circulate an article for the nominations process.

   D. **UF Grants** – deferred.

   E. **Future speakers**- deferred.
9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS –
   - Arbor Week March 7-14, 2023
   - Urban Forest Management Plan Update
   - Tree Fund (Hrubes, Kaczor, Mitchell)
   - Tree Inventory Demonstration
   - Diversity and Inclusion (Hrubes, Mitchell)
   - Richmond Trees /Tree Corps
   - Education & Outreach (Hughes, Kuchinskas, Linhart)
   - UF Grants (Hrubes, Kaczor, Mitchell)
   - Coastal Conservancy Grant HNA Management Plan Updates
   - Future Speakers

10. ITEMS FROM TONIGHT’S MEETING THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION:
   
   a) All- review the 2007 Urban Forest Management Plan, be prepared to present a case for updating the Plan, or not, and to vote accordingly.
   b) All- consider attending the City Arborist’s All Ages Tree Walk at 3:00 on March 11 in Canyon Trail Park (details to follow)
   c) Susan and Yan will create a summary of a potential Pocket Forest project for discussion
   d) Stephen will send more Arbor Week events information and collaborate with Susan, Yan and Cassie as needed to plan activities and send announcements.

11. ADJOURNMENT- Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular Urban Forest Committee meeting of February 13, 2023 as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Robin Mitchell, Chair or Cathy Bleier, Vice Chair

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison