



Staff Liaison
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MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Urban Forest Committee
Monday March 14, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81126280008?pwd=cStqMXQrVTdPL0U5a0poNDRxc2I5QT09>

Meeting ID: 811 2628 0008 Passcode: 911276
or dial in: 1-408-638-0968

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

1. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Robin Mitchell, Vice Chair Robert Hrubes; Members, Cathy Bleier, Jennifer Kaczor, Susan Kuchinskas, Yan Linhart.

Absent: Catherine (Cassie) Hughes.

Also present: Council Liaison Paul Fadelli, Staff Liaison Stephen Prée; members of the public: Sue Duncan.

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: There were none.

3. COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS /CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA:

Council Liaison Fadelli announced the March 26 HNA Broon Pull event with the Green Teams and invited anyone to attend.

4. COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS - *Council Liaison Fadelli* reported on efforts by Council to address issues of the un-housed community in El Cerrito including a presentation to Council by the County outreach service, CORE, and the potential allocation of revenue from Cannabis dispensaries to un-housed services. Mr. Fadelli queried the UFC on their level of interest in dedicating Measure V generated revenues to rebate individual properties for fire hardening work- especially for the removal of Juniper and other fire prone plants. Discussion: *Bleier* commented on the difficulty of establishing consensus of fire prone plants. *Mitchell* suggested that the rebate for fire prevention work would require categorization. *Councilman Fadelli* reported that council had approved funding two City FTEs (employees), he also announced a new fundraising effort to support the El Cerrito July 4 festival.

Staff Liaison Prée reported that routine street tree pruning would continue through the next few weeks. Discussion: *Susan Kuchinskas* asked why the City would be pruning during bird nesting season. *Prée* responded that the City makes a real effort to limit pruning to non- nesting times but that it scheduling is very challenging with municipal tree pruning contracts ; all City tree contract workers participate in an annual wildlife

awareness training and certification program.

5. **ACTION ITEMS** – Consider a motion to adopt the minutes from the February 14 UFC meeting with minor edit- Motion: Hrubes; 2nd: Kuchinskas; Ayes 6, Noes 0.
6. **COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE** – *Chair Mitchell* reported that the EQC is working to incorporate diversity and inclusion in their activities. Events being promoted include April 23 Earth Day, Green Home Tour May 15 & 15, Green teams Baxter Creek cleanup June 5. The EQC's 2022 theme is "Go Electric".
7. **COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**- *Jen Kaczor* reported that the El Cerrito Tennis Club has submitted preliminary plans for an Arlington Park Tennis Court Garden Project (see [PRC Agenda packet 2/23/2022](#)) . Discussion: what would be the effect on park trees, who will review the plans prior to approval?
8. **URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR, AND WORK PLAN UPDATE-**
 - A. Arbor Week 2022, March 7-14, Debrief- Staff Liaison *Prée* described and showed photos of planting a Redbud tree with the second-grade students from the Harding Clubhouse after school program on March 10 and mentioned the Memorial Grove tree mulching event on March 6 in which *Bleier* and *Mitchell* were participants. Discussion: *Chair Mitchell* recommended that the UFC develop an annual calendar for this and similar events, *Kuchinskas* volunteered to provide a first draft.
 - B. Work Plan Presentation to City Council April 5 - *Chair Mitchell* reviewed with the Committee the slide presentation she had prepared and welcomed comments.
 - C. Tree App- deferred until further notice.
 - D. Wildfire Community Preparedness Day May 7, 2022 – *Sue Duncan* described potential activities stress individual home hardening such as clearing around buildings to establish a 5' buffer fire break, said that she would be sending educational emails and reminders; she is working with the City Manager's office to publicize the event. Discussion: *Cathy Bleier* said she will be out of town that week but suggests the UFC may wish to promote National Preparedness Day in September and make this a future agenda item. *Chair Mitchell* suggested publishing an article in the City Manager's Update, *Ms. Duncan* said she has already started that.
 - E. Urban Forestry Grants – *Prée* reported that he had completed the pre -application for a Coastal Conservancy Wildfire Resilience Grant and thanked the ad-hoc subcommittee for their collaborative efforts.
 - F. Earth Day Activities- The UFC may participate as individuals; there was no

discussion that concluded with a UFC sponsored event.

- G. Community Group Connections- *Cathy Bleier* reported that the community organizations that she researched are all for hire and this warrants additional research. *Prée* will invite Richmond Trees to a future UFC meeting.
- H. Tree City USA Growth Awards – ad hoc (*Bleier & Hrubes*) reported that efforts to schedule a meeting with *Prée* had not been successful, will try again.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS –

- UFC Calendar
- Wildfire Community Preparedness Day / National Preparedness Month
- Urban Forestry Grants
- Community Group Connections
- Tree City USA Growth Awards
- Tree Board University

10. ITEMS FROM TONIGHT’S MEETING THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION:

- a) Develop UFC annual activities calendar draft for next meeting- **Susan** via Stephen
- b) Comment on (attached) UFC Work Plan Presentation to City Council slide show by noon Wednesday March 16- **Any member so inclined**
- c) Schedule Tree City Growth Awards strategy meeting – **Cathy, Robert, Stephen**

11. ADJOURNMENT- Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 9:05 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 March 14, 2022, as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

Robin Mitchell, Chair or Robert Hrubes, Vice Chair

Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison