

MINUTES OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

April 22, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

South Pasadena Council Chambers - 1424 Mission Street

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. Present were Commissioners Scott Kuhn, Kay Findley, Nancy Wilms, Al Benzoni, John Silverthorn and Chair Kim Hughes. Commissioner Noah Puni and Student Commissioner Thomas Kutzer were absent. Council Liaison Richard D. Schneider, M.D. was present. Staff Liaison Debby Figoni was present.

MINUTES

Minutes from the March 25, 2014 were tabled and will be brought to the May meeting for approval.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

None.

1. CITY TREE REMOVALS

Water Conservation Analyst Figoni received an update from City Arborist Gonzalo Maravilla that 17 city trees will be removed and replaced. Maravilla stated the City is no longer planting Camphor or Pepper Trees in the parkway. The commissioners are concerned about some of the dying trees. They would like a follow up from West Coast and Maravilla regarding planting, maintenance and watering, particularly in respect to contract compliance issues. The commissioners recommend that there is accountability for placing the right tree in the right place and want to know who is in charge for the final write off. They requested Public Works Director Toor and Maravilla attend the May meeting with an update.

The updated list of native and drought tolerant trees was discussed. Figoni stated an updated resolution to Chapter 34 was heading to City Council. It will provide information on which trees are affected by native tree trimming laws as well as a detailed list of drought tolerant trees.

2. SYNTHETIC TURF

At the March 19, 2014 City Council meeting, Council requested the Parkway ordinance move forward for a first reading and introduction with all suggestions (36" maximum plant height, 30% maximum hardscape, 18" access path every 15' and provisions for street trees in new dwellings) except synthetic turf. Council requested the NREC work with the Design Review Board, and the Cultural Heritage, Public Works and Planning Commissions. The NREC would like representatives from these commissions to attend a future NREC meeting for discussion on this subject.

3. CHARGING STATIONS

Figoni stated that there is no new information on this item. She has not heard anything on the matching grant funds from the Air Quality Management District. A reminder for Benzoni to talk to the property management company at the Bristol Farms shopping center to encourage them to install a charger.

4. WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Figoni discussed the continued popularity of the \$2 per square foot turf rebate program and participation in the various water wise landscaping workshops. The \$100 high efficiency toilet program is active and she is promoting this program in a variety of ways, including through the senior newsletter. The hose nozzles continue to be popular while the 1.75 gallon per minute low flow showerheads provided by Upper District are not due to color or logo imprint. She met with the YMCA on indoor conservation rebates and will soon work with restaurants on not serving water, unless requested, as well as offering rebates.

5. UPDATE ON ORDINANCES

Figoni updated the commission on the second reading and adoption of the proposed Water Conservation and Water Shortage Plan ordinance and Plastic Bag Ban ordinance to Council on May 7, 2014. The proposed Parkway ordinance will be brought back in June.

6. UPCOMING EVENTS

The Mulch and Compost Giveaway Event will be Saturday, May 31st. Four Water Wise Workshops have taken place, all have been very successful. There is one more on May 17th. Figoni will have a booth the South Pasadena Beautiful Garden Tour on April 27th. Figoni is working with Barbara Eisenstein to hold a 10 year event at the Nature Park on October 18th. She will also work with Athens for the October 11th Dumpster and Donation Day.

7. CONCERT SERIES – Green Living Expo

The Living Green Expo and Concert will be on Sunday, July 20th from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. There will be a variety of vendors and green cars. The race will take place earlier in the day. Figoni is working closely with Community Services on this event.

8. LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS FOR FRONT YARDS

No update and the decision was made to table this item.

9. WATER USE AT THE CITY'S GOLF COURSE AND PARKS

The commission recommends exploring avenues to reduce turf areas around the golf course and how things can be reconfigured to reduce turf acreage without jeopardizing the aesthetics of the golf course. For water reduction purposes, the commission would like staff to talk to experts about conservation. The commission requested researching

the possibility of building a second reservoir to use for watering City trees. A motioned was made by Commissioner Silverthorne and seconded by Commissioner Kuhn with all in favor, 6-0.

10. CITY'S ACTIONS TO CALIFORNIA DROUGHT

The City continues to be proactive about watering the parks, medians and golf course. Staff continues to move forward on the demonstration project on Huntington to remove the turf and install water wise plants.

11. ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

In early March, Los Angeles City voted to ban the use of e-cigarettes, just like their ban of traditional cigarettes. The commission recommends that the sale and usage of e-cigs fall under the existing restrictions of our present cigarette ordinance. The commission would like to add in the restriction of all vaping devices into the existing City ordinance, similar to the actions taken by the City of Los Angeles. Chair Hughes motioned that the City Attorney explore this action. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Silverthorne with all in favor 6-0.

12. LOW EMISSION VEHICLE PURCHAING POLICY

The commission looked at this policy in 2011. Councilmember Schneider noted the present idea is not just to look at the 10% cost difference, but at the lifetime benefits. Since there are so many items, values, trade-offs and details to consider, the commission believes the purchase of each vehicle needs to be addressed on a case by case basis.

13. ANTI-IDLING POLICY AROUND SCHOOLS

The commission feels the school traffic of parents picking up students is moving properly and due to safety and traffic flow, the subject of air quality from idling is not a serious concern at this time. The commission also discussed the air quality of idling cars at the train crossings but no suggestion for improvement was made on this subject.

CHAIR COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Hughes talked about the Colorado River water and shared an article on bees. Hughes attended the City's budget meeting and mentioned the proposed budget provided an additional \$200,000 for the City's Urban Forest.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Wilms brought up the issue of Global Water and wanted an update on how things were progressing with this contractor. Commissioner Benzoni mentioned he had stubbed out his house for gray water.

COUNCIL LIAISON COMMUNICATION

No update.

STAFF LIAISON COMMUNICATIONS

No update.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m. with motions by Commissioners Kuhn and Benzoni, with all members in favor, 6-0.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission will be held on Tuesday, May 27, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

Kim Hughes 6/4/14
Kimberley Hughes, Chair