

MINUTES
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
September 23, 2014

Roll Call - The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Present were Commissioners Scott Kuhn, Kay Findley, Nancy Wilms, John Silverthorn, Noah Puni, Al Benzoni and Chair Kim Hughes. Student Commissioner Maddie Magee attended her first meeting. Council Liaison Richard D. Schneider, M.D. was present. Staff Liaison Debby Figoni was present.

Minutes - Minutes from the June meeting were approved by Commissioners Kuhn and Puni; with all members in favor, 7-0. Minutes from the August meeting were approved by Commissioners Kuhn and Puni; with all members in favor, 7-0.

Public Comments and Suggestions - None.

1. **City's Urban Forest Update** - Gabe Nevarez, Public Works Operations Manager, provided an update. In August, West Coast Arborists (WCA) trimmed 511 trees and removed 11 trees. The request for a tree removal of the Camphor trees at 1425 Milan was discussed. The Commission supported keeping the trees. They suggested having WCA come out and evaluate the tree and suggested to use this opportunity as a time to do outreach on how to water your trees in a drought.
2. **West Coast Arborists' Contract** – Nevarez provided an update stating the City Attorney made modifications to WCA's present contract. Once the Public Works Department has reviewed them, the contract will be sent to the NREC for review. The Commission would like to confirm that WCA has clearer direction on their duties. WCA's new tree planting plan to be finalized in the next few weeks. The city will be split into two sections instead of four. The NREC is interested in getting a local landscape expert's feedback on the proposed tree plan. The group also talked about the need for tree watering. There are reports of trees getting the bark beetles. There needs to be clear direction on a watering plan for the city's trees.
3. **Urban Water Conservation Drought & Drought Actions** – Chair Hughes discussed an article on the reduction of water reserves and groundwater replenishment. Senior Management Analyst Figoni stated that the Stage 1 watering restrictions are being advertised and well received, and that staff has a system for tracking violators. Figoni and Commissioner Silverthorne to meet with the golf course team again. Staff did a water audit at the Library/Senior Center Park. While there are no areas where turf can be removed, another water audit has been set up with Upper District. Ecotech to assist with the water and landscape audit.
4. **Water Conservation Programs Update** - The turf removal program is extremely popular with about 60 applications submitted. Residents requesting more water wise workshops. The increased rebates for water conserving devices went into effect September 8th. The group discussed additional water conservation outreach tools, such as doorhangers, banners and such.
5. **Synthetic Turf** - Commissioner Findley stated that two Commissions, Design and Review and Planning approved the installation of up to 30% synthetic turf in the parkway. Cultural Heritage was not in support. The issue must be brought back to the Public Works Commission. Figoni to compile meeting notes to review with NREC before sending to City Council.

6. **Styrofoam Ban** - Tabling until January 2015. To be removed from future Agenda.
7. **Charging Stations** - Figoni again stated that the City was moving ahead with a charger on Fairview by the Senior Center. The commission would like it in by summer of 2015.
8. **Ordinances Update** - Parkway Ordinance passed and is being implemented in the turf rebate projects. To be removed from future Agenda.
9. **Upcoming Events** - The Household Hazardous Waste and Descanso Gardens Rain Barrel & Water Wise Workshop events were successes. The annual Dumpster & Donation Day is October 11th, and the Nature Park 10th Anniversary event is October 18th. The Police & Fire Safety Fair is September 28th, Figoni will be teaching a workshop during the event. The Commission's Annual Report is due on October 19th and will be presented at the November 5th City Council Meeting.
10. **Plastic Bag Ban Education Outreach** - Figoni is working with the Chamber of Commerce, the South Pasadena High School Key Club, South Pasadena Beautiful and local sponsors to create a reusable bag and to do public outreach.
11. **Renewable Energy Committee** - Management requested NREC to form a sub-committee. Hughes and Figoni to do outreach to obtain interested residents from the community.
12. **Allowing New Water Meters** - Councilmember Schneider discussed the proposed charge for new meters and sewers. The commissioners were concerned with the idea of more demand on the city's limited supply. They requested additional information.
13. **New Dates for November and December NREC Meetings** – The November meeting was moved from the 25th to the 18th and the December meeting from the 23rd to the 16th approved by Commissioners Kuhn and Findley; with all members in favor, 7-0.

Chair Communications – Chair Hughes stated that if there is no rain by this winter, Los Angeles may go into a more severe phase.

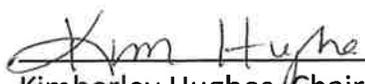
Commissioner Communications – Findley provided a positive updated on her water wise garden installation.

Council Liaison Communications – n/a

Staff Liaison Communications – Figoni reminded the Commissioners of upcoming events and asked for support. She also shared the water conservation table top sign available for restaurants.

Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m. approved by Commissioners Kuhn and Puni, and all members were in favor, 7-0.

NEXT MEETING - The next regular meeting of the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission will be held on Tuesday, October 28, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers.


Kimberley Hughes, Chair