

MINUTES
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
April 28, 2015

Roll Call - The meeting was called to order at 7:13 p.m. Present were Commissioners Scott Kuhn, Kay Findley, Nancy Wilms, Al Benzoni, Noah Puni, Student Commissioner Maddie Magee, and Chair Kim Hughes. Commissioner Stephen Leider was absent. Council Liaison Michael Cacciotti was present and Council Member Mahmud attended. Staff Liaison Debby Figoni was present.

Minutes – Minutes from March, 2015 were approved (Kuhn, Benzoni 6-0).

Public Comments and Suggestions – n/a

1. City's Urban Forest Update – Senior Management Analyst Debby Figoni provided Public Works' tree update stating in March 661 trees were trimmed, 17 trees were removed, and 5 were trees planted on Orange Grove to replace those that fell as a result of an accident. In April, 20 trees are scheduled to be removed and replaced. Public Works Operations Manager Gabe Nevarez provided Figoni several lists detailing tree watering and tree planting. The lists were unclear and confusing so NREC requested a meeting with Public Works Director Paul Toor, Nevarez, City Arborist Gonzalo Maravilla, as well as a West Coast Arborists representative. The Commission would like additional information on how much is being spent for tree maintenance and planting.

There was a discussion about the status of the dying trees being removed on Chelton Way. The NREC would like clarification, as there is concern of these potentially hollow trees. The other issue discussed was the request of a report with the watering schedule of newly planted trees.

2. City's Tree Planting Plan – Information was provided but needs clarification from Public Works (see #1 above).

3. West Coast Arborists' Contract – There is no update. The Commissioners again voiced concern over the contract. Findley is to send Commission comments and corrections about the contract to Figoni.

4. Water Conservation and Drought Actions – Stage 2 Serious Drought was adopted by City Council and will be active on May 7, 2015. This allows for two days a week watering (addressed ending in even numbers water on Monday and Thursday and addressed with odd water on Tuesday and Friday) and a recommended 20% water reduction. Under the Governor's Executive Order, the State Water Resources Control Board has set a goal for South Pasadena to reduce water use by 28% (this would be residential water use of 131 gallons per person per day). This overrides the City's Ordinance and will be communicated in all outreach materials. Due to the conflicts in conservation percentages, Council Member Mahmud suggested the NREC review the City's Water Conservation Ordinance and update it to allow for flexibility with other City or State mandates.

Figoni provided a report, collected from Global Water data, of the highest water users for the month of January 2015. Figoni is contacting these customers and offering conservation assistance. The Commission requested more drought outreach including PSAs from Metropolitan Water District for the City's public access channel. The NREC wants more programs and incentives from staff, including a Strategic Plan with month by month action items. It wants programs, rebates and outreach for laundromats, restaurants, churches, and schools. It would like a watering table detailing the days and minutes each type of irrigation device uses. It is also concerned with enforcement and wants to know who is going out every day – or night - looking for violators. It would like to know how many people have been tagged for water waste, how many have been tagged more than once and how many letters sent. There was discussion as to if postcards would be more cost effective than letters. The NREC suggested having each customer get a letter with their specific water use for the past two years and show how it compares with the city average. The Commissioners passed a motion requesting additional assistance for Figoni due to increased workload resulting from the drought response. (Hughes, Wilms 6-0).

5. Water Conservation Programs - Figoni stated the turf rebate program is unbelievably busy but many of the residents interested are already the low water using consumers. The water conservation banner has been moved to Mission Street and the water conservation car magnets are on all City vehicles. Council Liaison Cacciotti recommended a higher rebate for residential high efficiency toilets and encouraging more commercial toilet retrofits by doing a request for proposal to obtain one company to do all installations in the City.

6. Educational Outreach on Watering - The Commission recommended that a comprehensive process be developed in the near future to deal with water waste, reporting and enforcement so the City's residents understand what is expected and how violations will be addressed. It recommends more outreach to residents and businesses, and would like another mailer with the City's water conservation rules from the SPMC Section 35, a regular ad in the South Pasadena Review and flyers clearly stating what can be done. It recommends that drought information be on the homepage of the City's website and lead straight to the water conservation page. Figoni shared that water wasters are given a violation notice detailing their waste issue and that all violations are noted by code enforcement in a spreadsheet.

7. Greywater – Commission to work on a greywater ordinance (Benzoni and Kuhn, 6-0).

8. Charging Stations – Staff had no update. Council Member Cacciotti wanted an update of where things are at. He is interested in applying for additional funds for more charging stations.

9. Upcoming Events - Earth Day event was a huge success. Figoni is working on the Green Living Expo for July 19, 2015. Figoni taught several successful workshops over the last month. A Mulch and Compost Event is scheduled for May 2nd. They requested NREC's booth be moved to the back during the concerts in the park for more visibility.

10. Renewable Energy Committee – A few applications have come in.

Chair Communications – Chair Hughes handed out several water related articles and shared what Los Angeles was doing for water violations.

Commissioner Communications – n/a.

Council Liaison Communications – Council Member Cacciotti talked about the SCAQMD lawn mower exchange events coming up. The planning of the Trans San Gabriel Valley Golden Streets is on time and on budget, a big ceremony event will be held May 23, 2016.

Staff Liaison Communications – n/a

Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m. (Benzoni, Kuhn 6-0).

NEXT MEETING - The next regular meeting of the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission will be held on Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers.



Kimberley Hughes, Chair