

MINUTES
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
January 27, 2015

Roll Call - The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. Present were Commissioners Scott Kuhn, Kay Findley, Nancy Wilms, Al Benzoni, Noah Puni, Stephen Leider, Student Commissioner Maddie Magee, and Chair Kim Hughes. Council Liaison Michael Cacciotti was present. Staff Liaison Debby Figoni was present.

Minutes - Minutes from the December meeting were approved (Kuhn, Puni 7-0).

Public Comments and Suggestions - None.

1. Election of Commission Chair and Vice Chair for 2015 - Due to no other nominations, Kim Hughes was once again voted and approved as Chair (Benzoni, Findley 7-0). Scott Kuhn was voted and approved as Vice Chair (Wilms, Puni 7-0).

2. Presentation to outgoing Chair – n/a. The Commissions welcomed Stephen Leider to the Commission.

3. Tree Removal Discussion - 1325 Oak Hill Place -

Anil Singh is the property owner of 1325 Oak Hill Place. Construction on this new/remodeled house started about two years ago. The house has been unoccupied for over a year. Daphne Abergel of D Design, Inc., architect of this project, presented the need to remove one tree at this location due to a proposed remodel of a single-family home, garage and new driveway. Presently, there are two, large Shamel Ash trees in the front of this property that serve as parkway trees (there are no sidewalks on this street). Ash tree #49 is at the southeast corner, has a trunk diameter of 37" and is approximately 60' tall. Ash tree #50 is located in the northeast corner of the property, has a trunk diameter of 27" and is approximately 50' tall.

The Planning Commission approved the building of the remodeled home if the tree removed would be replaced with four new trees. Due to objections from nearby neighbors, it was requested that this issue be brought to NREC for the Commission's approval to remove a tree. Planning also requested the design be flipped so the smaller tree could be removed.

South Pasadena residents Robert Conte, Greg Weber, Rich Besocke, Rich McNabb and Jennifer Sullivan attended the NREC meeting to contest the removal of either tree at 1325 Oak Hill. They all reside on Oak Hill Place and do not believe either of the trees should or have to be removed for the home remodel. In addition, they appreciate their street's tree canopy and believe it represents South Pasadena's tradition of proud urban forest management.

Singh stated that he was given the approval to remove one tree as long as he flipped his design to remove the smaller tree and if he replaced that tree with four new trees. The Commissioners recommended keeping both trees and installing the driveway by tree #50 with oversight from the City's Arborist who could provide assistance during grading and construction to minimize the impact to the trees roots. Public Works Operations Supervisor Gabriel Nevarez informed the Commissioners that any changed to the existing approval would have to be run by the Public Works Director and Building and Planning Director.

- 4. Parkway Trees on Chelten Way** – Nevarez explained that there are nine intermittent Carob trees on Chelten Public Works has targeted for removal due to hollow inside open cavities, fungus growth and other issues. The 60 to 70 year old trees are subject to be replaced with Coast Live Oaks. Street work needs to be done on the street, but tree removal decisions need to be decided first. Nevarez stated that at the public meeting, there were two residents who did not approve of the tree removals on Chelten Way. They wanted to know how sick the trees really were and if they all had to be removed, and requested the most recent tree trimming schedule. South Pasadena resident Lisa Boyd attended the meeting and requested confirmation that the trees really had to be removed. Nevarez said a metal bar could easily be pushed through these hollow trees. A recommendation was made and approved to remove the nine earmarked trees after a review by the community via a field trip, which the commission is to be invited to (Hughes, Kuhn 7-0).
- 5. City's Urban Forest Update** – Nevarez stated that 85 trees were planted all around the City including Crape Myrtles, a good parkway tree. No tree removals. The Commission wants to remind Public Works to plant the right tree in the right place. The Commission would like Southern California Edison to provide a tree trimming schedule via quadrants. Nevarez explained that while Crape Myrtles do not encourage tree canopy, they fit best in many parkways.
- 6. City's Tree Planting Plan** – Nevarez stated a plan would be provided soon.
- 7. West Coast Arborists' Contract** – The contract is now back with the City Attorney.
- 8. Urban Water Conservation Drought & Drought Actions** – The Commission requested the water master report from Water Operations Manager Anteneh Tesfaye as well as an update on the balance in the efficiency fee fund.
- 9. Water Conservation Programs Update** - Figoni stated that the turf removal program was still going like gang busters. The library partnership is moving along with a dozen events and workshops. The water conservation banner is finished and will be hung this month. She is in the process of ordering water conservation magnets to stick on the sides of all City vehicles. The toilet rebate program is very popular with single family and multi-family customers. The demonstration turf replacement project on Huntington Drive is completed. She is encouraging Public Works to reduce its turf area in the parks and replace with mulch.
- 10. Synthetic Turf** – Figoni stated the item would be on the City Council Agenda in February.
- 11. Charging Stations** – No update.
- 12. Upcoming Events** – Plans for an Earth Day event and garden tour in a neighborhood where several homes have completed the turf removal program. Vendors and potential speaker from Tree People invited for this block party event. Talk to Public Works staff about having Southern California Edison offer a free tree giveaway.
- 13. Renewable Energy Committee** – No update.
- 14. Banning Gas Leaf Blowers** – This item will be removed from the agenda until the South Coast Air Quality Management District provides more information on their website, which is scheduled to occur in the next few months.

15. Styrofoam Ban – Reach out to the community to get feedback to see how they feel about the ban, including whether the ban should be extended to restaurants and/or at grocery stores.

16. Water System and Grey Water Recycling in the Event of a Natural Disaster – The Commission requested clearer direction on this item.

Chair Communications – Chair Hughes shared articles on encouraging a 20% reduction in water use, cutting back as reservoir levels drop and cities looking at future changes in their water usage. She also mentioned working with neighboring cities to educate the community on the Shot Bore Beetle.

Commissioner Communications – n/a

Council Liaison Communications – Council Member Cacciotti explained that he is working with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to expand our bicycle path and arroyo projects. The City is working with the American Green Zone Alliance to convert Garfield Park to an all electric maintenance park. He would like to include the Environmental Protection Agency and South Coast Air Quality Management District in our partnership.

Staff Liaison Communications – n/a

Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m. (Puni, Wilms 7-0).

NEXT MEETING - The next regular meeting of the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission will be held on Tuesday, February 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers.



Kimberley Hughes, Chair