



CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025, AT 6:30 P.M.

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
1424 MISSION STREET, SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030

ROLL CALL:

<u>PRESENT</u>	Chair	Emily Ng
	Vice Chair	Michael Siegel
	Commissioner	Liam R. de Villa Bourke
	Commissioner	Casey Law
	Commissioner	Michael Noe
	Commissioner	Alex Rajewski
	Commissioner	Margaret Yi

ABSENT NONE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Emily Ng

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. GENERAL (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

In Person Public Comments:

*Angelo Gladding* provided remarks to a previous South Pasadena Beautiful board member who assisted South Pasadena in establishing it's Tree City USA recognition and referenced a recent article reflecting on the current status of the city's tree municipal code.

Zoom Public Comments:  
None.

PRESENTATION

2. LIBRARY/COMMUNITY CENTER SITE PLAN – PROJECT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Cathy Billings, Director of South Pasadena Library, presented on the City of South Pasadena's South Pas Forward initiative – a comprehensive site plan aimed at reimagining

the Library Park Campus [including Library, Senior Center and Community Room]. Billings expressed that the project seeks to optimize these facilities to better serve the community's evolving needs through enhanced infrastructure, accessibility and sustainability.

## **TREE HEARING**

### **3. TREE HEARING: 1459 INDIANA AVE.**

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission (NREC) review and provide a decision of the removal of two trees at 1459 Indiana Avenue.

Michael Vartanians, Principal Engineer, presented the details of the application and staff's recommendation to approve the removal of two trees [one classified as a "significant tree"] based on the current lean and soil instability. The applicant additionally contributed to the case, specifically highlighting their efforts to manage the current landscape their trees are within and components of their replacement plan, guaranteeing planting following the decision of commissioners.

#### **In Person Public Comments:**

Angelo Gladding raised concerns over the removal of a significant tree at applicants' property without a replacement plan or arborist report. Requests greater transparency and proper mitigation measures.

Deborah Char, longtime neighbor, objected to the tree removal, citing past unmitigated removals, the trees' health and stability, and the community's strong value for mature trees.

#### **Zoom Public Comments:**

None.

#### **COMMISSION ACTIONS AND MOTION**

A motion was made by Commissioner Law, seconded by Vice Chair Siegel and approved by roll call vote for the approval of the tree removal application at 1459 Indiana Ave. The motion carried 6-0-0, by the following vote:

AYES: Ng, Siegel, De Villa Bourke, Law, Rajewski, Yi

NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

## **ACTION**

### **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2025 NREC MEETING**

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Commission review and approve the February 25, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes.

**COMMISSION ACTION AND MOTION**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rajewski, seconded by Vice Chair Siegel and approved by roll call vote for the approval of the tree removal application at 1459 Indiana Ave. The motion carried 6-0-0, by the following vote:

AYES: Ng, Siegel, De Villa Bourke, Law, Rajewski, Yi

NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

**COMMUNICATIONS****5. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMUNICATIONS**

Council member Cacciotti shared updates on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks decision – urging future input from commissions. Additionally reported on regional efforts in open space preservation, Gold Line expansion, and air quality monitoring.

**6. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Law highlighted new research showing microplastics found in human brains and the lack of enforcement of the state's Styrofoam ban, urging renewed local action to reduce plastic use and pollution.

Commissioner Rajewski shared that USC is offering free soil lead testing for those affected by wildfires.

Vice Chair Siegel expressed support for Council member Cacciotti's remarks regarding 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks. Additionally promoted the upcoming Sustainability Fair event, highlighting the free bike valet services.

Commissioner De Villa Bourke suggested revisiting membership of the plastics ad hoc committee.

**7. STAFF LIAISON COMMUNICATIONS**

Environmental Services & Sustainability Manager Arpy Kasparian addressed the questions from Commissioner De Villa Bourke regarding re-establishing the plastics ad hoc committee. Lastly, announced the upcoming Sustainability Fair on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

**8. UPCOMING EVENTS**

- *Sustainability Fair + Plant Swap + Garden Tour*  
March 29, 2025, 1pm – 4pm, South Pasadena Nature Park
- *Landscape Academy: Beautiful Gardens on Minimal Water*  
April 23, 2025 6pm – 7pm, Library Community Room  
([www.SouthPasadenaCA.gov/EnvironmentalPrograms](http://www.SouthPasadenaCA.gov/EnvironmentalPrograms) )
- LA County Smart Gardening Webinars  
(<https://www.ladpw.org/epd/sq/webinars.cfm>)
- MWD Turf Removal + CA Native Landscape Webinars  
(<https://greengardensgroup.com/turf-transformation/>)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further matters, Vice Chair Ng adjourned the meeting of the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission at 8:05P.M. PT to the next Regular Commission meeting scheduled for May 27<sup>th</sup> 2025.

Respectfully submitted:

Signed by:

*Arpy Kasparian*

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Arpy Kasparian  
Staff Liaison, Environmental Services  
& Sustainability Manager

APPROVED:

Signed by:

*Emily Ng*

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Emily Ng  
Chair

Approved at Commission Meeting: **MAY 27, 2025 NREC MEETING**