

**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION  
MINUTES – January 24, 2017**

**Roll Call** – The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Present were Commissioners: Chair William Kelly, Al Benzoni, Kay Findley, Noah Puni and Nancy Wilms. Absent were Commissioner Stephen Leider, and Student Commissioner Hailey Bugg. Also present was Staff Liaison Jenna Shimmin, and Council Liaison Robert Joe.

**Minutes** – Minutes from November 22, 2016 were approved with minor edits (Benzoni, Findley 6-0; Absent: Leider).

Minutes from December 8, 2016 were approved with minor edits (Findley, Wilms 6-0; Absent: Leider).

**Public Comments and Suggestions** – None.

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

1. **Arroyo Seco Golf Course Subcommittee Nomination (Shimmin)** – The commission discussed who might be able to take on the responsibility. Discussed the idea of Nancy Wilms being nominated. The commission decided to discuss further at the February meeting, when the new commissioner is present.

Council Liaison Joe gave an update on the status of the subcommittee: He stated that the subcommittee is looking into the possibility of hiring a new contractor, or making improvements to the agreement with the current contractor. They are also looking into refreshing or remodeling the banquet hall, and irrigation water sources.

2. **Chair and Vice-Chair Nominations (Shimmin)** – The commissioners discussed the possibility of Bill Kelly as Chair for a second term, and Al Benzoni as Vice Chair. Plan to discuss it further at the February meeting when the new commissioner is present.

3. **Tree Removal Application Update (Courdy)** – This item was incorrectly labeled on the agenda, it is actually an update to a tree removal application that was approved in 2009 at 191 Monterey Road. The original application was granted permission to remove 24 trees; however, they are only removing 17 as of January 2017. Since the circumstances have changed, Public Works felt it best to bring this item back to the NREC for review.

Commissioner Findley: Had a question on the replacement tree figure calculation. She wanted to confirm the methodology (each diameter assessed separately versus an aggregate of all diameters). Kristine Courdy will revise the calculation prior to issuing a response to the developer.

Commissioner Benzoni: Stated that Public Works should allow all 22 trees to be native or non-native, not hold them to non-natives only (thus giving them the option). He also requested that the developer consider a 5 year warranty, instead of 2 years.

Chair Kelly: Asked about the procedure for tree removal requests, inquiring whether there was a formal procedure or not. Kristine Courdy explained that the arborist evaluates the health of the tree, and any potential impacts of the development. The planning commission and Public Works approve the removal request based on the site plan footprint and place conditions of approval on the project in accordance with the City's tree ordinance. They may require the developer to protect and save a tree(s) when possible and/or necessary.

Commissioner Benzoni: Recommended that the replacement trees should be required to be installed somewhere on the property as a screen to neighboring properties, as original trees did.

4. **Gray Water (Shimmin)** – Staff has not heard back from Craig Melicher, so this item is tabled until February's meeting.
5. **Tree Ordinance (Shimmin)** – Kristine Courdy covered a brief background on the proposed changes to the City's tree ordinance (which were taken to the Council, who sent it back for NREC review). In short, the new language spells out that a person cannot harm any tree on public property, and actually defined "harm." It does not define harm for trees on private property. There is currently no language that protects those trees from harm.

Chair Kelly: Noted that trees in Garfield Park, specifically the older larger ones, are rather sturdy. He inquired what City staff would do if children were climbing in the tree. Ms. Courdy responded that the new language is meant to keep people from actions that intentionally cause harm to the City's trees.

The commissioners all agreed that trees should be protected, but that children shouldn't be restricted from playing or other non-harmful behavior. They also expressed that this language should apply to any tree in City limits, because, for example, improper care of non-mature trees could be detrimental to their growth and long term health. It is because of this they would like the language changed to be all inclusive. Ms. Courdy replied that she would need to discuss this with the City Attorney regarding the legality of such an ordinance.

Councilmember Joe: Explained that the Council referred this item back to the NREC to ensure that it accomplished what staff intended, which was to limit liability and damage from those who had intent.

The Commission gave the following direction to staff to review with the City Attorney:

- Remove specific reference to Piñatas, use a more generic term for items used in trees
- Ensure that "all trees" are included
- Ensure that intent of harm to a tree isn't too specific, protects the City from liability and also protects the tree(s) from harm without being too restrictive
- Would also like to see a definition of a "Park"

## INFORMATION ONLY

6. **Urban Forest Update** – Kristine Courdy provided an update that Public Works and West Coast Arborist are in more of a reactive mode this month responding to downed trees and branches, and service orders as a result of recent storms. There have been forty trees planted so far. Grid pruning is on hold until spring.

Commission Findley: Inquired as to the extent of the damage caused by the bore beetles. Ms. Courdy responded that they are finding the treatments in other trees aren't helping if the tree has been heavily infested and affected. It works best on minimally affected trees or as a preventative measure. She advised that experts are saying our trees are probably too far gone for any treatment to be effective. Sycamore trees are host trees where the beetles can reproduce, and so Public Works will be introducing species of trees that they can't reproduce in.

Downed trees have mostly been private, but there was one at Fremont & Spruce that fell and Public Works had to push it onto private property for the time being in order to clear the street. As branches are falling off of trees the arborist has been inspecting the trees to ensure that there are no other issues.

7. **Upcoming Events** – Friends of the South Pasadena Library Garden Walk February 4<sup>th</sup>

**Chair Communications-** Stated that he heard conflicting messaging from various city representatives regarding the LLMD vote, and how to discuss it with the general public. Also stated the he felt the meetings were held too close to the ballot due date, and there should have been a better informational campaign. He also felt that the timing in relation to the holidays was a poor choice as many were distracted and could have forgotten about the vote in general.

He also stated that he'd like an update on the pesticides item when possible, as well as the renewables RFP.

### **Commissioner Communications-**

Commissioner Benzoni: Would like to see the Cool Roofs item as a future agenda item.

Commissioner Findley: Expressed that she was disappointed in the outcome of the LLMD vote. Stated that she would have liked to have seen messaging more directed at the weighted voters to help them better understand the benefits their parcel would receive.

Stables Subcommittee Update: They have employed Ron Hagen, a consultant, and are pleased with this work so far. He has given them good input for an RFP for a formal contract. He has provided insight on the outlook for where the stables currently are. They will not be visiting any other stables.

Commissioner Puni: No updates at this time.

Commissioner Wilms: Asked for a status update on the hiring of a new Parks Supervisor. She also stated that it would be nice to have a more formal transition process at the end of the year when there is an outgoing commissioner.

**Staff Liaison Communications-** Advised the Commission that the City is participating in a program where Edison will install 4' LED tube bulbs at all City facilities at no cost to the City. Also advised them that the Organic Waste program was passed by Council in December, and that the rate and formal ordinance adoption would be coming in the next few months. Gave an update on a meeting with the Chamber regarding the EPS ban outreach, and a possible Earth Day fair aimed at local businesses. The renewables RFP is under development and should be released in the next few weeks. The General Plan update is currently gearing up and the City is seeking individuals to participate in focus groups and advisory committees.

**Council Liaison Communication –** Informed the Commission that the Council passed a resolution adopting an Inclusion Ordinance.

Also stated that because the LLMD didn't get enough "Yes" votes, City staff will need to assess what the funds currently being collected can actually cover without general fund assistance. Last fiscal year roughly \$200,000 was used from the general fund, and he doesn't think that can happen again next fiscal year.

As a result of the recent storms there has been damage throughout the City that is going to need to be repaired, costing the City more money. A few of the problems areas include:

- Iron Works Museum flooding: there is currently a pump in place for future storms, but drainage will need to be mitigated at some point
- Orange Grove Park supply room flooded
- Garfield Park had a sink hole on Mission by the drain (5-6' deep)
- Eddie Park sun room had water inside from roof issues
- Senior Center PC lab roof has an ongoing leak
- War Memorial had lots of water in the basement
- CNG fuel pump had mud coming under the fence
- Dog Park is mostly OK
- Golf Course has two new lakes with all the standing water

**Adjournment –** Commissioner Benzoni motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m., Commissioner Puni seconded. Ayes: All (Absent – Leider), Nays: None.

**NEXT MEETING –** The next meeting of the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission will be held on February 28, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

  
William Kelly, Chair