

**CITY OF
SOUTH PASADENA
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MINUTES – July 12, 2018**

1) Call to Order/Roll Call – The meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were: Chair Kelly, Vice Chair Benzoni, Commissioner Jones, and Commissioner Leider. Absent was Commissioner Puni. Commissioner Wilms and Commissioner Findley had an excused absence. Council Liaison Dr. Schneider was present. Staff present: Kristine Courdy, Public Works Operations Manager.

2) Approval of Minutes – Meeting of May 22, 2018
Minutes approved as submitted. (Leider, Benzoni; 4-0)

3) Public Comment
No Public Comment.

4) Discussion/Action Items:

A. Continued Tree Removal Hearing for 1701-1703 Hill Drive – The applicant attended the meeting to present a tree plan to assist the Commission in identifying the correct trees for removal. The applicant presented the plan and answered questions of the Commission. The Commission noted that the Tree Removal Permit Application had an error and staff noted that they would work with the applicant to issue the permit for the correct tree. Staff noted that they would correct the application to include the 27-inch Chinese Elm as the tree approved for removal. The Commission requested that the applicant replace the tree with native trees onsite.

A motion was made to approve the removal of the 27-inch Chinese Elm tree, direct staff to correct the tree permit removal application, and request the applicant to mitigate the tree removal by planting as many of the tree replacements on site with native trees. (Benzoni, Jones; 4-0)

B. Preliminary Tree Removal Review – 181 – 187 Monterey Road – Staff Liaison Courdy gave a brief overview of the proposed tree removal application. She noted that this tree removal application is a preliminary review to provide comments to the Planning Commission.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed project, tree replacements, and project alternatives to preserve some of the trees

The NREC Commission compiled the following list of comments for the Planning Commission:

- 1) Look into site design alternatives that preserve more of the trees onsite.
- 2) Provide a design alternative that better balances the tree removals with nature.
- 3) Provide tree replacement mitigation per the Municipal Code.
- 4) Provide a list of how many trees that the applicant is preserving onsite.

- 5) Provide an Arborist report to demonstrate the condition of the proposed trees removed.
- 6) Provide a landscape plan with proposed tree replacements after construction, elevation and perimeter views from the street and neighboring properties.
- 7) When selecting replacement trees select larger trees that have shade and tree value versus only ornamental small trees, and identify on the plans where there is going to be green space for planters and trees.

The Commission expressed concern that a higher regard is given to maximizing unit density at the expense of removing large Oak trees.

- C. Tree Removal Hearing – 728 Bonita Drive** – The applicant’s Architect gave a brief overview of the proposed project and the purpose for the tree removal. Staff is requesting the Commission to provide comments to the Planning Commission. The applicant confirmed that the trees offsite (Trees 12 through 15) are not being removed or considered under the tree removal application. The applicant is requesting that trees one through three (California Pepper, Canyon Live Oak, Orchid) are considered for removal as these conflict with the proposed Project construction. The Commission commended the applicant on their tree application.

Discussion ensued regarding site alternatives related to the Oak tree, proposed project and replacement trees.

The NREC Commission compiled the following comments for the Planning Commission:

- 1) The Commission requested that the applicant consider alternatives for the deck to preserve the Oak tree number 3.
- 2) The Commission was satisfied with the proposed tree replacement quantities and tree species.

- D. Discussion of Potentially Recovering for the City the Value of Trees Removed for Development Projects (Kelly)** – Chair Kelly gave a brief overview regarding this item. Chair Kelly discussed that this proposed development impact fee can be used as a future source of revenue dedicated for tree replacements that are removed as part of development projects as well as a tree preservation measure to ensure that mature trees are being retained during development projects.

Discussion ensued regarding how to value the benefits of a tree, and the criteria or thresholds for development projects.

Staff noted that this proposed impact fee would need to be discussed with the City Attorney and a review of other sections of the City Code to identify consistent definitions that would trigger when a project is eligible for this type of fee. The Commission discussed the following steps to establish this type of fee: 1) determine the tree evaluation criteria; and 2) determine thresholds or types of projects that would apply.

- E. Discussion of NREC Initiative Tracking System (Benzoni)** – Vice Chair Benzoni introduced a spreadsheet for tracking NREC initiatives to compare performance on the open list of running

NREC Projects/Tasks. He proposed that the Commission review this list monthly. The Commission requested to add this item to the next agenda to discuss initiative due dates and priorities.

5) Council Liaison Comments

Council Liaison Schneider inquired if the Commission would be interested in prohibition of plastic straws. The Commission agreed and included plastic utensils. He also suggested having a better working relationship with the Planning Commission. Council Liaison Schneider requested to discuss this issue at the next meeting.

6) Staff Liaison Comments

Staff Liaison Courdy informed the Commission that she is the liaison to the Commission and that the tree ordinance is one of her priorities to complete by the end of the year.

7) Commission Comments

Commissioner Jones inquired about any regulations for tree removals in parking lots and if not, the Commission should look into creating a regulation or ordinance.

Chair Kelly discussed the effects of albedo, which is related to heat islands and that it is a serious health issue. The City needs to have a climate adaptation strategy to retrofit the City.

Commissioner Benzoni discussed the limited mention of lowering the albedo effect in the General Plan, which he mentioned at the General Plan meeting. He also mentioned the trees from Fair Oaks Avenue median to Huntington Drive, approximately 10 – 12 trees, have died. Commissioner Benzoni commented on the destroyed Oak trees on Fair Oaks Avenue north of Monterey Road by drunk drivers and the trees have not been replaced.

Updates – No Discussion Required

1. **Water Conservation Programs and Drought Update (Courdy)** – City had a total water use reduction of 23% for April 2018.
2. **Urban Forest Update (Courdy)** – Grid Pruning – 2,178; Washingtonia Palms trimmed – 483; Phoenix Canariensis Palms trimmed – 146; 109 trees planted to date.
3. **Upcoming Events** – Household Hazardous Waste Event (Culver City; Rowland Heights June 30, 2018)

Adjournment – Commissioner Benzoni motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m., Commissioner Jones seconded. Ayes: 4, Nays: 0.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were adopted by the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission of the City of South Pasadena at a meeting held on August 28, 2018.


William Kelly, Chair