



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

MINUTES

Regular Meeting

October 2, 2002

Burgess Recreation Center, Room 112
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Frank Carney at 7:25 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Frank Carney, Deirdre Digrande, Mary Kenney, Kevin McCarthy, Mark McBirney, Theo Keet

Commissioners Absent: Brielle Johnck

Staff present: Dianne Dryer, Environmental Programs Coordinator
Walt Fujii, Contract Arborist
Justin Murphy, Principal Planner

Public present: Doug and Maureen Teeter, Harry Harrison

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Maureen Teeter stated her dissatisfaction with the Council's overturning of the Environmental Commission's denial of the heritage tree appeal for 1155 Santa Cruz Avenue.

B. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Commissioner Kevin McCarthy introduced himself. He has been working professionally in the recycling industry for many years and is very interested in environmental concerns related to Menlo Park's residents and businesses.

Dianne Dryer announced that on October 12, 2002 the City will host a Bike Donation Day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. behind the old Police Dept. building off Laurel Street. Bikes received will be donated to needy families through a County program aimed at educating the public about the values of giving away, rather than throwing away. Volunteers are needed to help at the Menlo Park event.

Deirdre Digrande discussed her concerns regarding the Commission's parliamentary procedures. She reminded the group that during a public hearing there should be clear times for public comment, for the appellant's comments and for the Commission's questions and discussion. Everyone in attendance at a hearing should be made aware of the rules of order and the process for input. The Commission should be allowed time for its own discussion without interruption from the public or the appellant.

C. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Approval of Minutes of September 4, 2002: Minutes approved as amended (change date in item C-2 from 2002 to 2003), M/S: McBirney/Carney.

2. Review of Heritage Tree Ordinance Procedures:

Dianne Dryer reviewed the statistics for the first nine months of 2002:

Total applications:	147
Approved permits	138
Denied permits	14
Permits appealed	6
Permits for dead trees	17

About 90% of the permits approved were for trees that were diseased and/or hazardous.

Justin Murphy reviewed the current City practices regarding record keeping, noticing and posting. There is a section on the City website under the Planning Division for information and current heritage tree processing, including a list of pending applicants. Files are kept back to at least 1996. Staff uses the eight considerations in the ordinance in section 13.24.040 when evaluating if there is good cause for approving a permit. Mary Kenney offered a draft worksheet, including the eight considerations, for the Commissioners to use when evaluating an appeal.

Walt Fujii reviewed his evaluation methods and procedures when he visits the sight and observes the tree. Often there are small lots with one or more large trees, which present complications. All permits require at least one replacement tree to be planted within thirty days of removal, except during construction.

The Commission discussed the question of whether Commissioners should be required to visit the site before an appeal hearing. It was decided that Commissioners are strongly advised to visit the site, but not required.

Several Commissioners thought that it is important that a representative appear at all City Council appeal hearings on heritage trees to make a statement about the Commission's decision. The representative would have to write up a statement in advance of the Council meeting and get it approved by the Commission at a meeting beforehand.

3. Environmental Quality Awards planning: No nominations have been received yet. Dianne Dryer passed out more nomination forms, stating that she will forward them again by email also. The form has been put on the City website and distributed to City locations. The deadline is October 25, 2002.

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

None