



# ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

## MINUTES

**August 6, 2003**

Burgess Recreation Center  
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

**CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order by Vice Chairperson Mary Kenney at 7:30 p.m.

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Laura Teksler, Theo Keet

**Staff present:** Dianne Dryer, Environmental Programs Coordinator  
Juan Alvarez, City Arborist

**Public present:** Bill and Barbara Gray, Jack Reynolds, Harry Harrison

### A. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Harry Harrison commented about the Burgess Park renovation plan and thought the Environmental Commission should get more involved with it.

### B. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dianne Dryer reported that the City Council is considering the inclusion of a 50 meter pool in the Burgess Park renovation plan, at the request of a master swimmers group. Additional heritage trees would be removed if the plan is approved.

Dianne Dryer announced a Computer Recycling Event in Menlo Park on September 20, site to be determined.

Dianne Dryer announced that the September meeting of the Environmental Commission will be changed to either September 10 or 17 due to the time needed for staff to analyze and develop changes to the procedures for Heritage Tree removal applications and possible amendments to the Heritage Tree ordinance. Commissioners and the public will be notified of the final date in advance.

### C. BUSINESS ITEMS

**1. Approval of Minutes of July 1, 2003:** M/S McCarthy/Kenney, approved.

**2. Appeal of Heritage Tree Removal Permit Denial at 415 Lemon Street.**

The City Arborist reported that the oak tree is healthy. Many older oaks have cavities that are not causing problems. He did not see evidence of oak root fungus or heart rot. He stated that potential hazards can be reduced by pruning off end weight on certain branches. The applicants presented two arborists' reports stating that the tree should be removed. Commissioners discussed the problem of conflicting arborists' opinions, but noted that the private arborists' reports did not present compelling evidence and

definitive reasons for the tree to be removed at this time. A motion was made to deny the appeal (M/S Carney/McBirney), which carried four in favor and one abstention (Digrande). Staff and Commissioners strongly encouraged the applicants to have professional pruning conducted to reduce potential hazards and to eliminate watering under the tree.

### **3. Appeal of Heritage Tree Removal Permit Denial at 861 Stanford Avenue**

The City Arborist reported that the oak tree is in good health, with no signs of decay or fungus. The applicant stated that he wants to remove the tree due to structural defects, including the previous removal of a large mainstem, decay, and a cavity. He reported that the tree is very close to the house and there have been several limb failures in the past. The Commissioners observed that the tree is in decline, major limbs have been removed or fallen, and there have been safety issues in the recent past. A motion was made to approve the appeal with the condition that a replacement tree from the City's recommended tree list be planted on the property.

### **4. Selection of Environmental Quality Award Recipients**

The Commission selected two out of four nominations for awards: Trees for Menlo Inc. for the El Camino Real Tree Planting Project, and the Joustra home at 2030 Santa Cruz Avenue for resource conservation features.

## **D. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.