



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2005

Burgess Recreation Center
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dan Kocher at 6:35 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Doug Scott, Rick Stevens, Mary Kenney, Frank Carney, Dan Kocher, Bob Swezey

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff present: Dianne Dryer, Environmental Programs Coordinator
Juan Alvarez, City Arborist
Ruben Nino, Director of Engineering

Public present: None

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

B. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dan Kocher said that he gave a report at a recent City Council meeting on the Commission's goals and priorities for 2005-06. Doug Scott suggested that the Commission receive a report from staff on progress in increasing recycling, especially with businesses. Dianne Dryer announced that Commissioner Kevin McCarthy had resigned due to his work schedule and family obligations. She also briefly reported on the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, which includes a large part of Menlo Park's baylands (website: www.southbayrestoration.org). Ruben Nino reported that staff and a committee set up by Council are talking with a developer about a preliminary proposal for a golfing facility, requiring about 70 acres at Bayfront Park, that would generate revenues for the City. Mary Kenney passed out booklets on urban forest planning.

C. BUSINESS ITEMS

- 1. Approval of Minutes of February 2, 2005:** Motioned (BS/DK); approved unanimously.
- 2. Review of Draft Street Tree Master Plan:** Ruben Nino reported that street trees and trees in city parks are evaluated and pruned at least every five years. An inventory of these trees was taken about a year ago by West Coast Arborists (WCA) in which nearly 21,000 trees were entered into a computer database, including location, species, size and condition for each. Every time a tree is pruned removed and replaced the database is updated. WCA also identified problem

species, which might cause hazards or property damage. They proposed a plan to remove problematic trees in successive geographical areas (units) throughout the city and a plan for replacements. Ruben Nino pointed out that property owners are resistant sometimes to tree removals, even though trees may have serious problems. There will need to be an extensive educational effort to inform the public about the need for phased removal of problem trees and their replacement with new trees. The Commission agreed that starting with the most problematic trees first is the best approach, rather than removing many trees in geographical areas at the same time. Staff was asked to quantify trees in the "problematic" category, and map them if possible. It was suggested that property owners be surveyed to ask if they would like a street tree removed and replaced (or not replaced). Those could be also be prioritized. Another idea was to require street tree replacement when major construction is going to take place on a property. The Commission also discussed the need for WCA or City crews to remove and replace problematic street trees at a faster pace, so that the city won't experience hazards, property damage and/or failing of large numbers of trees at the same time in the next few years. Budget for this work should be considered. The Commission also questioned the species listed in the Draft Master Plan and whether they are large enough species and appropriate for Menlo Park weather and growing conditions. It was suggested that more native species should be included because of habitat value. Staff will ask WCA for a revision of the Draft Master Plan, including these suggestions. The revised Draft Plan will be brought back to the Commission for review, probably in June.

3. **Planning for Environmental Quality Awards:** Dianne Dryer distributed nomination forms, with a deadline of April 29th. She will email them to Commissioners, issue a news release, and put the form on the City website. Commissioners were encouraged to nominate individuals, groups, and businesses. Mary Kenney and Bob Swezey are coordinating the Awards program.
4. **Planning for Arbor Day Ceremony April 22nd:** Suggestions for locations included Burgess Park, Library parking lot, Belle Haven neighborhood, and La Entrada School. Commissioners were asked to submit specific ideas to Rick Stevens, coordinator of the program, or Dianne Dryer.