



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

April 6, 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

Public present: Don Naugle, Christine Griffin

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

B. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Frank Carney announced that Trees for Menlo will hold a ceremony dedicating a plaque honoring donors to the El Camino Real tree planting project at Menlo Center at 1:30 p.m. on April 30th. Dianne Dryer announced that on April 26th the City Council will consider extending the contract with BFI for garbage and recycling collection services until the end of 2010. The South Bayside Waste Management Authority (SBWMA) has entered into a 15 year contract with BFI for waste disposal at Ox Mountain Landfill and extended BFI's contract for operating the Transfer Station and Recycling Station owned by the SBWMA. She also announced that there will be a Brown Act Training for elected officials, commissioners, staff and interested public on May 3rd in the Council Chambers at 7 p.m.

C. BUSINESS ITEMS

- 1. Approval of Minutes of March 2, 2005:** Motioned (BS/RS); approved unanimously.
- 2. Selection of Vice Chairperson:** Rick Stevens was elected unanimously.
- 3. Update on Revisions to Street Tree Master Plan:** Juan Alvarez is checking with other cities about their lists of approved street trees, both deciduous and non-deciduous. Commissioners suggested native trees and tall growing trees be included. When there are power lines overhead, the City plants a species that doesn't grow high. It was suggested that removals and replacements be prioritized where there is heavy street use. Some property owners are resistant to removal of

a street tree in front of their property, even if the tree is in poor health or structurally unsound. To convince them to cooperate with the removal, it was suggested that an evaluation from an outside independent arborist be obtained, that educational materials be developed and distributed, that the assessment fee be waived for one year, that the property owner be allowed to appeal the proposed removal to the Commission for decision, and/or that if the owner refused to allow removal by the City crew, then once the tree dies or falls the owner would be responsible for paying for its removal.

- 4. Appeal of Heritage Tree Removal Permit at 744 Coleman Avenue:** The property management company for the apartment complex applied for removal of three heritage trees. One was permitted, one was denied with a recommendation for pruning and the third for a healthy redwood tree was ultimately denied by the City Arborist. Don Naugle, representing the property manager Spieker Companies, stated that the company was making landscape and other improvements at the property and the redwood tree roots were damaging a concrete patio. Neighbor Christine Griffin spoke about the inaccuracies in the applicant's arborist form and the poor quality of recent pruning on other trees on the property. She showed an aerial photograph indicating an area around the apartment complexes, which has very few trees. Two tenants residing at the complex also wrote to the City objecting to the proposed removal. Commissioners asked why, if the concrete patio had been already been replaced and roots were cut in the vicinity before the new patio was installed, was there a need to remove the tree? They saw no evidence of property damage or potential property damage. Motion (MK/DS) to uphold the denial of the permit passed unanimously.
- 5. Planning for Environmental Quality Awards:** Mary Kenney and Bob Swezey are scouting nominations. Anyone may submit by April 29th.
- 6. Planning for Arbor Day Ceremony April 22nd:** Rick Stevens, coordinator of the program, will contact La Entrada School about having the tree planting there.