



## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

**September 12, 2005**

Administration Building  
701 Laurel 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, Dan Kocher, Frank Carney, Bob Swezey, Sarah Granger

**Commissioners Absent:** Rick Stevens, Martin Engel

**Staff present:** Dianne Dryer, Environmental Programs Coordinator  
Justin Murphy, Development Services Manager

**Public present:** Mary Kenney, Steve Schmidt, Don Brawner, Alan Mench, Vincent Bressler, Elaine Breeze, Walter Bemis, Robert Shuttle, Lisa Van Dorn, Walt Fujii

**A. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

### **B. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Dianne Dryer announced that Martin Engel had been appointed by the City Council to the Environmental Quality Commission. He is out of town for the September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. She also encouraged everyone to study and fill in the City Budget Survey and submit it before Oct 3, 2005.

### **C. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**1. Approval of Minutes of July 27, 2005:** Motioned (BS/DK); approved unanimously.

#### **2. Review of Proposal to Remove 49 Heritage Trees and Relocate 3 Heritage Trees at 75 Willow Road in Connection with a Proposed Residential Development Project**

Elaine Breeze, representing the development company Summer Hill Homes, gave an overview of the proposed project to demolish the existing office building and build 33 detached homes. She noted that their planning approach always includes preserving as many healthy existing trees as possible. They are proposing to remove 49 heritage trees, preserve 50 heritage trees, and relocate 3 heritage trees out of a total of 199 trees on the site. She noted that most of the trees proposed for removal are 40 to 50 years old already and are in crowded conditions. The developer proposes to plant 64 replacement trees, less than the usual 2 to 1 replacement ratio for commercial properties, due to the lack of space on the property to support more trees. However, they propose to plant larger replacement specimens (36 inch box), so that they will fill in faster. Owners of the proposed homes will not be allowed to remove the trees in the

future. They will also relocate 3 heritage trees, a process they have done successfully several times before.

Commissioners focused on several red iron bark (eucalyptus) trees on the southwest edge of the property, which presently form an effective screen between the property and the apartment buildings along that side. These heritage trees are proposed for removal due to their heavy maintenance requirements and structural problems. Commissioners asked if it would be better to let the new home owners decide whether to remove them or not. The City's consulting arborist stated that these trees were old, showing signs of stress, and would have to be removed within a few years anyway. He suggested that it would be better to plant new appropriate screen trees sooner, so that they would last longer and be less trouble for the owners. Commissioner Scott's suggestion was to plant some trees on the apartment side of the fence if possible to help with screening.

Commissioners asked for more information about the relocation of the three trees, in particular the proposed locations, and assurance of professional care and maintenance for the first couple of years. There was also some discussion of the possibility of requiring additional replacement trees to be planted off site, e.g. along El Camino Real, so that the 2 to 1 replacement ratio could be achieved.

Commissioner Carney objected to the project as a whole, saying that the current office building and forested campus are beautiful and well maintained. Commissioners Granger and Scott expressed support for more housing in the city.

Two members of the public spoke. Don Brawner, a resident of the adjacent apartments, stated that he objects to the removal of the red iron bark trees. Vincent Bressler objected to the entire proposed project, stating that it will cause environmental degradation.

The purpose of presenting the project and proposed removals and replacements at this meeting was for staff and the developer to receive comments and suggestions from the Commission and the public. The final plan will return to the Commission in 2006, after comments are received from the Housing and Planning Commissions and the preparation of an EIR and a Traffic Study.

### **3. Recognition of Outgoing Commissioner Mary Kenney**

The Commission presented to Mary a card with their appreciative notes and a Valley Oak seedling, and thanked her for serving the community on the Commission for the last six years. Mary acknowledged the contributions of the other Commissioners, her predecessor Karin Nelson and former Commissioners Kevin McCarthy, Bill Halleck, Theo Keet, Brielle Johnck, Mark McBirney and Dalbir Negi. She also noted Frank Carney's involvement in the community and seven years on the Commission, and praised staff's dedication and hard work. She encouraged the Commission to consider the public good in all of their decisions and recommendations.