



## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

**November 2, 2005**

Burgess Recreation Center  
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

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

**Commissioners Present:** Dan Kocher, Martin Engel, Rick Stevens, Frank Carney

**Commissioners Absent:** Bob Swezey, Sarah Granger, Doug Scott

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

**Public present:** Walt Fujii, Joyce Massaro, Nancy Talbot, Ed Debbert, Brian Fleisher, Ned Patchett, Tony Gschwend, Alex Beilin

**A. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**B. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None.

### **C. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**1. Approval of Minutes of October 5, 2005:** Approved unanimously.

**2. Application to Remove 40 Heritage Trees at Phillips Brooks School, 2245 Avy Avenue**

Phillips Brooks School originally applied for a permit to remove 50 heritage trees on their campus. Subsequently the number was reduced to 40 because a section of the property is not under their lease, so they will not be removing the trees there. The reasons for removal are related to the construction of new buildings, parking lot improvements and new landscaping. Also, most of the 39 eucalyptus trees are in fair to poor condition. They want to diversify their landscaping, screen the parking lot along Avy Avenue from residential neighbors, and make the exit/entry ways safer for vehicles. They have held meetings with the neighbors throughout the planning process.

The Commission discussed the number and choices of tree replacement species, encouraging the inclusion of native species. A motion was passed unanimously to approve removal permits for the 40 trees, with the condition that the applicant plant at least 80 replacement trees, majority native species, and half of them of a 24 inch box size. Larger specimens should be planted along the road. Relocation of oaks on the property will count toward the replacement requirement.

There will be a 15 day appeal period during which the City will post notices at the site and mail notices to property owners within 100 feet of the property. If there is an appeal, it will be included in the development project public hearing process before the City Council.

### **3. Application to Remove 18 Heritage Trees at 2122 Santa Cruz Avenue**

The proposed residential subdivision project would involve the removal of 18 heritage trees and 27 non-heritage trees. The mix of heritage trees proposed for removal includes eucalyptus, coast live oaks, deodar cedars, one redwood and one liquid amber. Trees that are proposed for removal are either in poor condition or would impede development of the infrastructure, such as the street, or would be in the footprint of a future house. Members of Menlo Commons, which borders the subject site to the south, have requested that all the eucalyptus trees be removed due to the existing poor health and perceived safety hazards of the trees.

The City's consulting arborist conducted a review and analysis of all the trees on site and participated in the discussion at the meeting. The Commissioners discussed the health of the various trees and the opportunities for either preservation or relocation of some of the trees. Due to topography constraints and engineering requirements, preservation would be infeasible for several of the trees. After discussion about the feasibility of relocating the oak trees along the southern property line, it was decided that the likelihood of transplant survival was low.

The applicant presented a new alternative replanting plan at the meeting in response to comments received by a plant relocation specialist and comments received by the Planning Commission at the study session. To promote a mature landscape setting, the applicant proposed a landscaping plan that includes nine 60-inch box oak trees, including coast live oak and valley oak for variety. Additionally, the applicant proposed sixteen 24-inch box London plane trees, fifteen 15-gallon aristocrat pear, and five eight-inch diameter deodora cedar trees. Staff and the Commission were pleased with the overall size and species of the revised replacement tree proposal.

In addition to the 45 new trees, the applicant proposed to relocate tree #176, which is a healthy heritage redwood tree. The applicant proposes to relocate the tree with the other redwood trees at the entryway to the new subdivision. The Commission questioned whether relocation of the tree would jeopardize the health of the tree. The City's consulting arborist indicated that relocation of redwood trees have been done successfully, but would recommend that a bond be issued to create an incentive to properly care for the tree and increase the likelihood for survival. The tree would be appraised and a bond would be placed in that amount with the City for five years.

A motion (DK/FC) was approved unanimously to approve the removal of 18 heritage trees as proposed by the applicant, including the relocation of tree #176 (20-inch redwood). Additionally, the Commission added the following conditions: 1) The location of the replacement trees will be coordinated with staff, 2) special protection measures will be utilized during construction for tree #173 (67-inch diameter oak), 3) implementation of an irrigation system for the new 60 inch box

trees and maintenance of the others by the new HOA, and 4) post a bond for tree #176 for five years.

**4. Update on Bayfront Park Development Proposal.**

Dianne Dryer summarized the outcome of the Council meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup> at which there was significant public comment on the idea of constructing a golf course and athletic fields on approximately half of the Park acreage. The Council directed staff to negotiate an agreement with the golf company for a more detailed proposal to come back for further review and consideration by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Council. There will then be additional opportunities for public comment and an Environmental Impact Report. Commissioners expressed disappointment that the Environmental Quality Commission has not been included in the plans for review and comment. Some stated that there should be more community input earlier in the process and that there will be problems building on tidal wetland. It was suggested that the Park be transferred to the County for management or that a small fee be required of Park users, in order to help pay for maintenance and rangers. Some Commissioners felt that the City should more carefully explore opportunities for locating athletic fields elsewhere.