



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2007

Burgess Recreation Center
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Doug Scott (Chair), Bob Swezey, Dan Kocher, Martin Engel, Jeanne Durnford, Rick Stevens

Commissioners Absent: Jeff Jahnke

Staff present: Dianne Dryer, Environmental Programs Coordinator
Ruben Nino, Assistant Director of Public Works

Public present: 15 residents of Cotton Street

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. **Approval of Minutes of November 1, 2006:** Approved unanimously.
2. **Election of Commission Officers for 2007:** Doug Scott was elected unanimously as Chairperson. Bob Swezey was elected unanimously as Vice Chairperson.
3. **Appeal of Permit to Remove Six Street Trees on Cotton Street:** Dianne Dryer reviewed the reasons for the proposed removals as part of the City's Pilot Reforestation Project in the neighborhood. On October 20, 2006, seven street trees on Cotton Street were proposed for removal by the City due to their poor condition. Replacements were proposed for each location. Bill and Barbara Brown filed an appeal request on October 25, 2006 for all of the trees stating that the removals were not necessary or desirable due to the good condition of the trees and the aesthetics of the neighborhood. Ruben Nino reported that Menlo Park provides more frequent evaluation and maintenance of street trees than many other local cities. Street trees are pruned on a five year rotating schedule and dead or hazardous street trees are removed and replaced. In order to ensure beautiful canopy on the streets for the long term, more trees in poor condition should be removed and replaced. Resident Glenn Rossman asked how their neighborhood was selected for the Pilot Project. Dianne Dryer explained that it was selected due to the very high number of problematic street trees (particularly liquidambar, ash trees and camphor trees). Mr. Rossman commented that there doesn't seem to be a long term plan about how frequently removals will occur, and

thinks that a third arborist opinion should be obtained. Ms. Dryer explained that the Pilot Project was conducted to learn about the condition of the trees, educate and involve the residents, and learn about the response from the residents, so that future plans could be designed for citywide reforestation. Plan development will begin soon. Russell Berg noted that half of a liquidambar street tree once fell on his garage, but a 15 gallon red oak sapling doesn't "replace" the old tree. His main concern is aesthetics. John Conomos stated that although camphor trees may be decaying and dying, the liquidambars are not in bad health. His opinion was that they have not been properly maintained and that more funding is needed for tree work. Dan Lockwood stated that he is afraid of improper installation of replacement trees. He also doesn't want removals in close proximity to each other. Barbara Brown said that she's dealt with the street trees in front of her property for 30 years, so they feel like "her trees". She wants an individual consultation about her tree. Ming Liu (representing resident Nina Hong) stated that she objects to proposed removal of 2 street trees on her corner property, although she agrees that the camphor tree should be removed due to its diseased condition. Allen Odian noted that it will take many years to remove so many bad trees and replace them. Susan Lockwood objected to three trees being removed that are in close proximity to each other. She wants uniformity of replacements. Bill Brown suggested that neighbors confer on which species from the Pilot Project list would be suitable for replacements. He will convey their preferences to Dianne Dryer by January 22nd. Commissioners voted unanimously to deny the appeal on tree #9, tree #24, tree #62, and tree #63. They voted to uphold the appeal on tree #19 and tree #41 (will not be removed at this time).

4. Recommendation to City Council for Priority Project FY2007-08:

Commissioners agreed that their recommendation is the reforestation program be funded for acceleration citywide due to the high number of street trees that should be replaced in the next few years. They instructed Dianne Dryer to draft a statement, which will be circulated for their comments before submission to the City Manager's office.