



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2007

Burgess Recreation Center
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

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

Commissioners Present: Doug Scott (Chair), Dan Kocher, Martin Engel, Jeanne Durnford, Rick Stevens; Jeff Jahnke

Commissioners Absent: Bob Swezey

Staff present: Dianne Dryer, Environmental Programs Coordinator

Public present: Scott Smithers, Anne Howerton, Sally Holt

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. **Approval of March 7, 2007 Minutes:** Motion to approve passed unanimously.
2. **Heritage Tree Removal Permits for 4100-4700 Bohannon Drive:** Dianne Dryer presented the background on the proposed project to upgrade landscaping and site elements at Menlo Corporate Center (20 acres of commercial property near Highway 101). The proposal includes removal of 157 trees, including 60 heritage trees, installation of new landscaping, entry area features, signage and paving, and renovation of certain courtyards. The applicant, Lane Partners LLC, is proposing to plant 120 replacement trees on the site, most of them 24 inch box and 36 inch box sized trees, including 16 full sized Canary Island Palms. The City Arborist evaluated the 60 heritage trees and recommended that they be permitted for removal due to their age and fair to poor condition. The representatives for the applicant presented a description of the proposed improvements to the property. They thanked the Commissioners and staff for attending a tour of the site on April 2nd. Some Commissioners noted that the updates to the landscaping and trees were timely and will enhance the aesthetics and value of the property. Commissioner Engel expressed concern about the loss of so much tree canopy and the inappropriateness of palm trees. Commissioner Kocher appreciated the inclusion of native trees in the replacement list. Commissioners also discussed the importance of deep watering the new trees, as well as other proper maintenance to ensure their survival. The applicant stated that they intend to install efficient drip irrigation. A motion by Kocher/Jahnke was made and unanimously approved to approve the permits for the heritage tree removals, require replacement trees as

indicated on the submitted plans and a letter from the applicant to staff with a tree maintenance plan and warranty from the arbor company.

3. **Arbor Day Ceremony:** Dianne Dryer reported that the ceremony will be on Thursday, April 26th, tentatively at 223 Hamilton Avenue (a street tree will be planted). Jeff Jahnke will contact Belle Haven School to arrange for a class to participate. Dianne will invite the Mayor, prepare a proclamation for the Council, and send out a news release.
4. **Environmental Stewardship:** Commissioner Engel reviewed a memo addressed to the Commissioners regarding his concerns about the unclear role of the Environmental Quality Commission. He stated that though the mission statement for the role of the Commission includes many environmental subjects, it seems to be almost entirely focused on issues around trees. He would like to see the activities of the Commission expanded. He thought that proposals for Bayfront Park should have come to the Commission, as well as the establishment of a greenhouse gas emissions task force, and the Encinal School athletic field. Commissioner Stevens stated that he would like to see the Commission get involved in creek flooding issues. Commissioner Durnford said that she has been attending the Mayor's Green Ribbon Citizens Committee working on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and has volunteered to research carbon tax models for the group. Commissioner Kocher stated that he also has been participating in the Mayor's Committee and that it is open for anyone. Commissioner Scott suggested that the Mayor's Committee may evolve to a permanent place with the Environmental Quality Commission. Dianne Dryer reminded the Commissioners of their many achievements related to heritage tree preservation and street tree management over the past few years. She explained that there is a lack of funding and staff time to take on more environmental activities, unless Council directs otherwise and/or Commissioners are willing to devote a lot more time and work. Commissioners then discussed the need for ensuring compliance with the heritage tree ordinance, in particular the planting of replacement trees. Dianne Dryer will bring a list of recent permit approval locations to the next meeting for discussion of how verifications of replacements can be verified.

C. Reports and Announcements:

Dianne Dryer reviewed four recent heritage tree ordinance violations and announced that the comment period on the EIR for the Salt Pond Restoration Project would be open until April 23rd. She noted the website and the availability of a hard copy at the Library.