



## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

**March 5, 2008**

Administration Building  
701 Alma Street, Menlo Park

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m.

**Commissioners Present:** Jeanne Durnford (Chair), Dan Kocher, Mitch Slomiak, John Nash, Jeff Jahnke, Doug Scott, Jim Schott

**Commissioners Absent:** None

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

**Public present:** Kristin Duriseti, Richard Rollins, Kurt Hafer, Milton Borg, Charlie Bourne, Dave Muffly, Walter Levison, Barrie Coate

**A. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

### **B. BUSINESS ITEMS**

1. **Approval of February 6, 2008 Meeting Minutes:** Unanimously approved.
2. **Oak Knoll School Plans to Remove Heritage Trees:** Ms. Duriseti, Mr. Rollins, Mr. Hafer, Mr. Borg and Mr. Bourne all spoke in objection to the School District's anticipated Negative Declaration related to remodeling plans for Oak Knoll School, and two letters from Sue Swezey and Erika Bailey opposing it were presented. The residents stated that the development plan would require removal of several heritage oak trees, loss of recreational space, increased stormwater runoff from the new parking lot, possible damage to heritage trees adjacent to the school property, and other negative environmental impacts. They asked the Commission to urge the City to express its concern about the plans. Commissioners commented that they have not seen the school development plans and the City does not have jurisdiction over public school property, except where it relates to traffic, drainage and grading. The Commission voted unanimously to send an advisory memo to the City Council asking them to encourage the school district to use every reasonable effort to preserve heritage trees on the property and to minimize the impacts from construction on heritage trees on adjacent private properties.
3. **Street Tree Reforestation Program and Comments on Survey Proposals:** Ruben Nino stated that four proposals from consulting arborists to conduct a survey of about 2,000 street trees were submitted at his invitation. He had asked them to propose and quote on the survey which would include visual

inspection of large street trees (identified from existing data), rating their condition and prioritizing for removal, analyze locations, and preparing a removal priority list for further evaluation and write-up, which would be useful in convincing residents that trees would have to be removed. Commissioners commented that they had advised over a year ago that all medium to large street trees be surveyed (approximately 15,000 trees) and that a comprehensive reforestation plan for the next ten years be prepared in order to accomplish the necessary removals and replacements in a coordinated manner. Ruben Nino replied that he thinks of this survey of 2000 trees as an extension of the pilot project started in fall of 2006, where one neighborhood was evaluated and trees were removed and replaced. The City could build a long term plan after trying this out. Commissioners commented that during that pilot, many residents asked why there was no master plan for Citywide reforestation and that they felt heavily impacted. It was suggested that careful consideration should be given to neighborhoods where there are many priority removals found, and that main artery streets should be targeted. All agreed that education of residents would take a major effort, but some wondered how much say property owners should have about removal of street trees deemed structurally dangerous. The City is liable as soon as a street tree is found to be hazardous. Hazardous condition is not limited to trees of old age and large size, and structural and disease problems are not always visible. Commissioners were concerned about the proposed time schedule for the project, which showed trees being removed in early spring of 2009. They would like to see replacements installed by the end of February 2009. Proposing arborists Barrie Coate, Walter Levison and Dave Muffly also offered comments and answered questions about their proposals.

4. **Arbor Day Planning:** Jeff Jahnke and Jeanne Durnford reported that it wasn't possible to schedule Arbor Day tree planting during the week of March 7<sup>th</sup> (California Arbor Week), so it will be held on April 17 at La Entrada School at noon (a week before National Arbor Day).
5. **Selection of Representative for Climate Action Plan team.** Mitch Slomiak volunteered and Commissioners unanimously approved.

## **C. REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**