

Environmental Quality Commission



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 11/20/2024
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Teleconference and
City Hall Downtown Conference Room, 1st Floor
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park. CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Chair Schmidt called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Hedley, Hill, Meyer, Vice Chair McKenna, Pelegri-Llopert, Chair Schmidt
Absent: Kissel
Staff: Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer, Management Analyst II Liz Tapia

C. Public Comment

- Brian Schmidt spoke on concerns related to Climate Action Plan carbon reduction goals.

D. Regular Business

D1. Approve the October 16, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Hedley/ Hill), to approve the October 16, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission minutes, passed 6-0-1 (Kissel absent).

D2. Recognize Chair Schmidt's service on the Environmental Quality Commission.

Commissioner Hedley introduced the item.

- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of Chair Schmidt's time on the Environmental Quality Commission.

The Commission discussed their appreciation for Chair Schmidt's service to the Environmental Quality Commission.

D3. Discuss updates to the Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative guidelines recommendations (Presentation) (Attachment)

Chair Schmidt introduced the item.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer made a presentation.

- Scott Marshall spoke in support of updating the Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative guidelines and on concerns related to identifying heritage trees before starting projects.
- Megan Green spoke on concerns about identifying heritage trees before projects beginning,

determining fees and new builds impact on urban forest.

Commissioner Hill made a presentation.

The Commission discussed additional recommendations for the Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative guidelines.

ACTION: Motion and second (Hedley/ Pelegri-Llopart), to recommend staff to pass along all comments related to the Heritage Tree Ordinance to the tree team inclusive of the tree valuation formula and in line edits, and evaluate the tree valuation formula inclusive of multipliers as part of the Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative guidelines update and directed staff to explore solutions for proactively informing property owners of heritage trees on their property, passed 6-0-1 (Kissel absent).

D4. Review additional urban forest recommendations from Heritage Tree Ordinance Administrative Guidelines Ad Hoc Subcommittee (Presentation)

Chair Schmidt introduced the item.

Commissioner Hedley made the presentation.

The Commission received clarification on the difference between canopy coverage and tree inventory, heritage tree determination and the City of San Jose Tree Disclosure form.

- Scott Marshall spoke in support of the proposed Heritage Tree Ordinance Administrative Guidelines recommendations.

The Commission discussed the proposed Heritage Tree Ordinance Administrative Guidelines Ad Hoc Subcommittee recommendations and funding for the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP).

ACTION: Motion and second (Meyer/ Hedley) to recommend that City Council continue to support the protection and expansion of the urban forest, including the creation of the UFMP using Heritage Tree Ordinance Administrative Guidelines Ad Hoc Subcommittee recommendations, as part of the annual budget process, with a particular emphasis on reducing canopy inequity across the city, passed 6-0-1 (Kissel absent).

ACTION: Motion and second (Hedley/ Pelegri-Llopart) to recommend that City Council take steps to enact an ordinance to require real estate disclosures from sellers to buyers upon transfer of property about our urban forest, Heritage Tree Ordinance and number of heritage and potentially non-heritage trees on the property, passed 6-0-1 (Kissel absent).

The Commission took a recess at 8:07 p.m.

The Commission reconvened at 8:15 p.m.

D5. Review and discuss approach for the Love Our Earth Festival (Presentation)

Chair Schmidt introduced the item.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer made the presentation.

The Commission received clarification on requested feedback for the Love Our Earth Festival, partner conflicts and budget.

The Commission discussed event date preference and budget.

- D6. Update on compliance with Senate Bill (SB) 379 permitting for residential solar energy systems (Presentation)

Chair Schmidt introduced the item.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer made the presentation.

The Commission discussed SolarApp+ usage, program details, purpose of the SolarApp+, application cost, adding battery storage to the solar permits and permit streamlining.

E. Reports and Announcements

- E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

Management Analyst II Liz Tapia reported out on the Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment voucher program and the Home Upgrade Program.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer reported out on the Environmental Quality Commission recruitment, Bay Area Air Quality Management District meeting on Dec. 4, and California Energy Commissions building performance strategy and recommendations report for Senate Bill 48.

Commissioner McKenna reported out on Menlo Spark fully electrifying a six unit affordable housing building in Belle Haven, passage of Menlo Park City School District Measure U and the Nov. 14 passing of the Menlo Park City School District resolution on climate resilience and sustainability.

Chair Schmidt reported on Menlo Park City School District Measure U, the City Council downtown parking discussion Nov. 19 and Coleman and Ringwood transportation discussion.

Commissioner Pelegri-Llopart reported out on the City Council downtown parking discussion Nov. 19.

Commissioner Hedley reported out on Acterra's electric home tour Nov. 16.

F. Informational Items

- F1. 2024-25 Environmental Quality Commission work plan (Attachment)

G. Adjournment

Chair Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 9:11 p.m.

Management Analyst II Liz Tapia

Minutes approved at January 15, 2025 Environmental Quality Commission Meeting

Considerations for Tree Removal Valuation

**HERITAGE TREE ORDINANCE
ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES
AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE**

**NANCY HEDLEY
SUSANNAH HILL
JEFF SCHMIDT**

D3-ATTACHMENT

**Impacts of removals
across health, climate,
environment,
geography, and
aesthetic
considerations**

Tree removals impact community priorities

Tree canopy size and health

Property values

Climate change resilience

Public health

City actions always consider all residents' interests

Expanded Valuation to Reflect City-wide Impacts

Urban Canopy Reduction

Decades of investment in Menlo Parks urban canopy are valued by Menlo Park's residents and are embodied in Heritage Tree Ordinance

Shared Air Quality

Cumulative impact of city-wide tree removals reduces Menlo Park's shared air quality

City's Desirability

Cumulative impact of city-wide tree removals reduces Menlo Park's beauty as it appeals to new home buyers

Full Neighborhood Impact

Tree removal impacts its property parcel and also adjacent parcels, immediate neighborhood, and magnitude of canopy's diminishment

Multiply base valuation figure by important factors

$$V_{tree} = V_{base} \times M_{air} \times M_{canopy1} \times M_{canopy2} \times M_{removal} \times M_{input}$$

$V_{base} \times M_{air} \times M_{canopy1} \times M_{canopy2} \times M_{removal} \times M_{input}$

Factor	Factor	Intent	Calculation
V_{base}	Baseline value	Today. Existing calculation from arborists commonly used formula	per today's HTO formula with arborists society data set
M_{air}	Impact on air quality	Neighborhoods with poorer air quality can less afford the loss of a tree, since it contributes to air quality improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data: census tract air quality from County. Variable: 10% of tracts with highest pollution get highest weighting, down to 10% with least pollution
$M_{canopy1}$	Impact on canopy of neighborhood	The density of tree cover in the immediate neighborhood affects the value of a tree. A lone tree has more canopy value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data: tree census by Arborist at site and city-wide Variable: Highest weighting for lack of trees
$M_{canopy2}$	Time to replace canopy impact	Years for proposed replacement tree to reach the same size, volume, canopy as removed tree, to account for the prolonged absence of the tree's benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data: Comparison of new with removed tree for measurement and species Variable: Highest weighting for no replacement tree, lowest rating for identical tree
$M_{removal}$	Recent tree removals	A neighborhood with many tree removals requires increased canopy protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data: permits, citizen reports, City Arborist reporting Variable: Highest weighting for (tract? ¼ mile?) with most healthy trees removed past 5 years, lowest weighting for no healthy trees removed
M_{input}	Community input (where applicable)	Community input multiplier, reflecting quantity and quality of residents' input in a specific case <i>example - large development with many removals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data: City Arborist office summary of written and in person input from community about tree removal Variable: in cases where this variable applies, the Environmental Quality Commission determines the qualitative weight of reasons given by commenters and their standing/how impacted they would be