

Community Forest Advisory Board Meeting
January 18, 2006
11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.
City Administration Bldg. -12th Floor, Closed Session Room

Minutes

- 1) **Call to Order** with a quorum at 11:47. *Scott Peters and Donna Frye joined us to thank Nancy for her service to CFAB and provide her with a small token of gratitude – a special commendation proclaiming Wednesday January 18, 2006 Nancy Hughes Day in the City of San Diego. Scott and Donna both agreed that Nancy educated them about what the City can and should do to pay more attention to trees. They both agreed to continue working towards Urban Forestry and Urban Farming, and they asked Board members to let them know if they want to be considered for nomination on any Boards or Commissions.*

- 2) **Introductions** - Members and guests – *Members present were: Nancy Hughes, Marty Poirier, Bill Tall, Dan Simpson, Jon Becker, Mike Singleton, Jean Zagrodnik, Jolaine Harris, Walter Odening, Tershia d’Elgin, Drew Potocki, Tony Gangitano, Mona Favorite-Hill, Michael Marika, Luis Generoso, Maureen Hall. Guests present were: Scott Peters, Council President; Donna Frye, Council Member, District 6; David Rodriguez, Urban Corp; Lisa Adams, Urban Corp; Sam Lopez, Urban Corp; Laura LiMandri, People For Trees; Dean Brown, BID Council; Scott Kessler, BID Council; Tim Knowd, SDG&E; Bruce Taylor, SDG&E; Mario Sierra, General Services Streets Division; Gus Brown, General Services Streets Division; Guy Preuss, Skyline Paradise Hills Community; Ruby Alejandria, Collaborative Services; Vicki Estrada, Estrada Land Planning; Kathy Evans-Calderwood, CHAPC & PAC City Heights; Jeff Harkness, Park & Recreation.*

- 3) **Approval of the October Minutes** – *Approved with changes*

- 4) **Chair’s Announcements and Update** – *Nancy let everyone know that this was the best group ever, everyone had a common vision and so much happened in terms of Urban Forestry and benefits for the City’s citizens during her term as Chair. She thanked everyone for their gifts. Nancy introduced Vicki Estrada, Chair of the Canyonlands Committee, as a possible replacement as the Chair. Vicki is also on the Arts and Culture Board. Vicki is willing to take on the Chair position. She runs excellent meetings and is very good to people. Nancy is impressed with Vicki and enjoys working with her. Nancy will write a letter to the Mayor endorsing Vicki for the chairmanship. She will miss everyone and she hopes everyone will come to visit when they are in the Northern CA area. She will be moving in the summer.*

- 5) **Discussion Items**
 - a. **Mayor/Council President, Future Role Of CFAB, Funding For Tree Planting** – *Council President Scott Peters – Marty shared with Scott Peters how CFAB reports on the open policy of accounting of what the City spends in the public right-of-way to*

plant and maintain trees. This is a wonderful accounting that wasn't available 7 years ago. He also shared how there is, unfortunately, not enough money that is given towards Urban Forestry. There are numbers in place for Council to have a good idea of how to go forward. Streets and sidewalks really need to be in the forefront.

Mike shared with Scott an idea for revenue for Urban Forestry using a garbage collection fee. He asked if the City could put forward an initiative to look at that potential revenue source for use for trash pick-up, curb maintenance, graffiti and litter control, and trees packaged into one fee.

Scott told the Board that the first ½ of the year is focused on budget implementation, the second ½ of the year is focused on budget shortfalls. After that is all handled the City can then talk about putting things on the ballot. Packaging it as maintenance can be effective, but places with Maintenance Assessment Districts may vote no thinking that they already have it.

- b. *Update from General Services Department Regarding Urban Forestry Funding For 2006/2007 – Mario Sierra – Mario recognized Nancy with a Lifetime Tree Hero Award and presented her with a plaque made of Red Gum Eucalyptus. Mario then shared that this has been a unique year because of all the transitions and told how this year the budget process will be very different than in the past. The level of funding should remain the same, but there are no guarantees. There are no specific numbers that can be shared today, but the commitment to trees will remain the same. Advocacy from community groups should remain strong and will help move it forward.*

Mario was asked what form of advocacy does he need. Mario said to show up at Council meetings, be there even if you expect them to go forward, and still speak in favor of the item.

Tree planting contracts are slow going forward because of the new signing process. Luis told how we had a competitive process on the tree planting contracts to satisfy City requirements, but it still is slow going in the approval process. Urban Corp and BID Council have signed contracts, People For Trees is still in the approval process due to an insurance requirement, which Laura says should be resolved now.

A question was asked – How do we know the new Mayor will support trees? Unfortunately, we don't. Contact your Council Person and have them impress upon the Mayor the importance of urban forestry. Mike stressed that the Board needs to find more permanent funding sources so we don't have to rely on money given to the program by the Mayor. The Board could recommend to the Mayor that ½% of additional funds the Mayor may get from the State go towards Urban Forestry. Get to know the new administrators that are coming in to get them on Urban Forestry's side.

- c. Tree protection Nominations –Drew Potocki – *Tabled till next meeting*
- d. SDG&E Vegetation Representatives – Tim, Bruce – *SDG&E joined us at this meeting because of a problem brought forward by Tershia involving a number of trees being taken out due to wires. Bruce Taylor from SDG&E met Tershia and Drew on-site to discuss this also. There is an agreement between the City and SDG&E that trees be replaced 1 to 1, but that agreement is only valid if the property owners are willing to water and take care of the trees. Many of the trees removed are in alleys or are on paper streets, therefore there is no property owner who can take care of the trees and the tree canopy is lost. There were 10 to 13 trees removed that Tershia knew about, but 113 total are being taken out City-wide. That is 113 trees that the community is no longer profiting from. Replacement is based on maintenance, and these trees weren't being maintained before.*

There is nothing within CPUC guidelines that say trees can be removed without City permits. District representatives are notified when these trees are removed, unless the tree is deemed hazardous, then any trees considered hazardous are not placed on the Tree Removal List.

According to Drew, CFAB is the lowest authority for deciding what trees can and can not be removed if they are deemed hazardous. The City has worked with CPUC and SDG&E, along with our City Attorney, on this. The City will deny any permit if the City feels that the tree can be saved.

What is the solution? Is there some way these trees can be cared for? Can we get contracts for care with Urban Corp or People For Trees? That won't happen unless the City comes up with money for said contracts.

Establishment of Tree Smart in 1997 and 1998 covers this. SDG&E's Tree Smart Program is a vegetation management effort aimed at working with neighborhoods and qualified tree-expert companies to prune or remove trees that threaten people's safety or the reliability of their electric system.

While SDG&E strives to keep electricity flowing safely and reliably, the people at SDG&E also want to protect the environment. That's what the Tree Smart Program is all about.

When is Tree Removal Needed?

Removing a tree may be necessary because of disease and insect infestation, or because there is little chance of the tree developing a natural structure or stability. If a palm tree is growing into a power line, it may need removal. That's because palms grow rapidly and, unlike trees with branches, they have only one growth tip.

If a tree poses a threat to human life or property, removing the tree is necessary. Children climbing a tree near a school or park risk injury or electrocution if that tree contacts a power line.

When necessary, SDG&E will have trees removed in the public right of way that pose a hazard. Through its Tree Smart program, SDG&E's goal is to replace--one-for-one-- every tree that has to be removed with a tree that won't grow into power lines. In most cases suitable trees are planted back in the same neighborhood.

Why?

It is Required by Law:

SDG&E and all other utilities in the state were required to achieve clearances from primary electrical power lines by January of 1999 in accordance with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Order 95 - Rule 35. In addition, trimming within CDF areas must also be completed to achieve compliance with the even stricter Section 4293 of the Public Resources Code.

How Is The Tree Trimming Carried Out?

The trimming is done according to arboricultural standards and in compliance with American National Standards Institute(ANSI) A300-1995 by local tree trimming companies supervised by certified arborists. Directional pruning techniques, promoted by the International Society of Arboriculture, are used to retain the natural shape of the tree and reduce sprouting of weak branches.

For further information SDG&E recommends people visit the Tree Smart Website.

<http://www.sdge.com/safety/trees.shtml>

New trees will not be planted under lines and SDG&E will pay for removal of trees that are under lines.

Bill Tall asked if undergrounding can be changed to save trees. Answer: That is built into the franchise by the CPUC.

A question was also asked – Who makes the judgment calls on trees not put on the removal list? Answer: Bring those trees to the Board.

SDG&E can be creative with new trees planted and where planted. Who from CFAB can take this on? Tershia? Drew? Urban Corp? There were no volunteers.

SDG&E was asked why advanced tree planting isn't being done to start growing trees ahead of time before tree removals, so more mature trees will be available to be planted. Also on this matter, SDG&E did notify the community and no one came forward to maintain the trees. A suggestion was made to the SDG&E representatives that they go to the Community Planning Group instead of just the neighbors around the tree.

It was asked of Drew to bring a list of hazardous tree removals to the Board each month, Drew agreed.

Two motions were made and passed unanimously:

Motion 1 – CFAB requests that Streets Division provide a list of trees being considered to be removed for line clearance purposes, that will be included on the monthly tree removal list. Exceptions to line clearance removals required listing can include: dead trees, trees in imminent danger of falling, trees with major structural flaws, or palms that are so close to the lines that the pruning of the spiral meristem will result in its death.

Motion 2 – CFAB requests that the City Urban Forester develop a better methodology for replacement trees for line clearance removals where the typical right of way and adjacent maintenance agreements are not possible, where large tree masses are not fully replaced with a 1:1 15 gallon ration replacement trees or near natural areas, open space and canyonlands.

- e. *Tree Protection Related Code Provision Draft - Tony Gangitano – The Council Policy subcommittee came up with changes to the text of the Landscape Regulations. The next step is to take other information from the Policy and put it into the Landscape Standards and Guidelines. The Code update should happen in the next 3 months.*

Guy asked for a root barrier diagram be placed on Page 5. It will occur in the Landscape Standards and Guidelines instead. Guy also wanted it noted that item “E” under Brush Management on Page 25 was setting a dangerous precedent.

6) Quick Business – None

7) Reports – Items not already on agenda - 3 minutes each report (unless otherwise noted)

a. *Education & Outreach Committee – No report*

b. *Planning Committee – No report*

c. *Implementation Committee – No report*

d. *Finance Committee – No report*

e. Staff Reports

i) *Michael Marika, Park and Recreation Dept. Arborist – He has a tree and a site picked out for a tree planting in Nancy’s name. It will probably be planted in Balboa Park near Morley Field.*

ii) *Drew Potocki, Street Division Urban Forester – The 92102 palm trimming contract is finished, Streets is now focusing on coast streets for trimming.*

Update on the NTC Palms – Streets has identified 4 or 5 questionable palms because of crown problems or disease. Trees are all being used on-site with some shuffling. The project is being monitored well and they are letting Drew know when palms are moved or removed. As long as the trees are staying as a public resource, Mike is okay with that.

iii) Velmo Watson, Code Compliance Officer – *No report*

iv) Mona Favorite-Hill, General Services, Senior Public Information Officer –
No report

v) Tony Gangitano, Development Services Dept., Senior Planner – *No Report*

vi) Luis Generoso, Staff Representative to CFAB – *The press release on
the Conserve-A-Tree nominations should go out today.*

8) Referrals to Committees – If applicable - *None*

9) Public Comment - *None*

10) Next Regular Meeting – February 8, 2006, 11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.

11) Adjourned at 1:20