THE CITY OF
EL CERRITO
PUBLIC WORKS

Staff Liaison
Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685
spree@ci-el-cerrito.ca.us

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE

Monday January 13, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

El Cerrito City Hall
City Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

7:00 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. **ROLL CALL -** Chair Cathy Bleier; Vice-Chair Robin Mitchell; Members: Robert Hrubes Jennifer Kaczor, Yan Linhart

2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC and INTRODUCTION BY INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE ADVISORY BOARD**
   Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first, remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.

3. **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE / CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA/** (*10 minutes*)

4. **CITY COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS-** *(5 minutes*) City Council Liaison Quinto and / or City Staff may report on Council policies, priorities, and significant actions taken by the City Council, and / or matters of general interest to the Urban Forest Committee (UFC).

5. **ACTION ITEMS:** *(15 minutes)*

   A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Consider a motion to adopt the minutes from the December 9, 2024, UFC meeting

   B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Consider a motion to adopt the minutes from the December 10, 2024, joint UFC, EQC meeting

   C. RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: Consider a motion to recommend to the El Cerrito City Council the reappointment of Jennifer Kaczor to the Urban Forest Committee for a term of four years beginning March 1, 2025

   D. RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: Consider a motion to recommend to the El Cerrito City Council the reappointment of Robin Mitchell to the Urban Forest Committee for a term of four years beginning March 1, 2025.

6. COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE
(2 *minutes*) Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the EQC.

7. COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
(2 *minutes*) Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the PRC.

8. URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR, AND WORK PLAN:
(60 *minutes)* Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible actions that correspond with development of the Urban Forest Committee Work Plan and calendar of events.

A. Arbor Week 2025- March 7-14

B. UFC 2025/26, 2026/27 WORK PLAN VISIONING (*Kazor*, *All*)

- Draft Plan Discussion and Refinement

9. ITEMS FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION
(5 minutes)

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS- hear committee member suggestions for future UFC meeting items *(5 minutes)*

- Work Plan Adoption
- Election of Officers
- Recommendation to City Council of the appointments of new members
- Urban Forestry Grants and Fundraising (Hrubes, Kaczor, Mitchell)

11. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, 510-559-7685. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at El Cerrito Recycling Center during normal business hours.

THE CITY OF
EL CERRITO

Public Works Department

Staff Liaison
Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685
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DRAFT
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Urban Forest Committee
Monday December 9, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

El Cerrito City Hall
City Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

CONVENE REGULAR MEETING: *Chair Bleier* called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL:**
   Present: Chair Cathy Bleier, members: Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor, Yan Linhart.
   Absent: Vice Chair Robin Mitchell
   Also present: Members of the Public –Akhil Iyer, Rahul Iyer, Arnold Henderson, Randi Jiménez, and Staff Liaison Stephen Prée

2. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:** Randi Jiménez, Rahul Iyer, Akil Iyer, and Arnold Henderson introduced themselves.

3. **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE /CHANGES TO THE MEETING AGENDA:** *Linhart* shared several forestry-related books and offered to give them away to anyone interested.

4. **COUNCIL / STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS:** *Staff Liaison Prée* provided a brief update on the past month's street tree pruning projects and recent communications with PG&E who discussed offering free trees to the City. Prée reminded the UFC of the Richmond Street Complete Streets Project survey and the upcoming State of the City address by outgoing Mayor Tessa Rudnick on Tuesday December 17.

5. **ACTION ITEMS:**

   A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Consider a motion to adopt the minutes from the October 14, 2024 UFC meeting **Motion:** *Hrubes*; **2nd:** *Kaczor;* ***Ayes:*** Unanimous of those present.

   B. ADOPT THE 2025 UFC MEETING CALENDAR. Consider a motion to adopt the UFC Meeting Calendar for 2025. **Motion**: *Linhart* **2nd***: Hrubes;* **Ayes:** Unanimous of those present.

6. **COLLABORATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE –***Vice Chair Mitchell* was not present to report.

7. **COLLABORATION WITH THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION-** *Kaczor* reported no update.

8. **URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES, CALENDAR, AND WORK PLAN UPDATE-**

A. UFC 2025/26, 2026/27 WORK PLAN VISIONING – *Kaczor* took notes and made edits based on a UFC group discussion regarding the following: how to identify the appropriate amount of staff time required for specific actions; prioritizing actions based on importance; fundraising and staff time; collaboration with other agencies; desired achievements; a Friends-of group; planting more trees; metrics related to the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan; updating the City's 2007 Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP).

9. **ITEMS FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION:**

- *Kaczor* will revise and *Prée* will distribute the UFC draft work plan
- *All-* Review and consider work plan additions/edits
- *Kaczor* will take lead on UFMP discussion (UFC Workplan)

10. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** –

- Reappointment of *Kaczor* and *Mitchell*
- UFC Work Plan Refinement
- Arbor Day Planning
- PG&E communications update

11. **ADJOURNMENT-** *Chair Bleier* adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular Urban Forest Committee meeting of December 9, 2024, as approved by the Urban Forest Committee.

_____
Cathy Bleier, Chair or Vice Chair Robin Mitchell

_____
Stephen Prée, Staff Liaison

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THE CITY OF
EL CERRITO

PUBLIC WORKS

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DRAFT MINUTES

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE **Environmental Quality Committee and Urban Forest Committee**

Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

CONVENE SPECIAL MEETING Staff Liaison Leard called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

1. ROLL CALL – Present: Chair Cathy Bleier (UFC); Vice-Chairs Fred Bialy (EQC) Members Buddy Akacić, Pamela Austin, Howdy Goudey, Heather Hayashi, Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor, Yan Linhart, Sean O'Connor, Paloma Pavel, **Absent:** EQC Chair Simrun Dhoot; UFC Vice-Chair Robin Mitchell; Members Eleanor Pilling Chappelear (Youth Member), Mark Miner, Sheila Tarbet **Also Present:** Christina Leard, EQC Staff Liaison; Stephen Prée, UFC Staff Liaison; Karineh Samkian, Senior Program Manager; and Chase Beckman, Battalion Chief

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
Public comment was provided by El Cerrito resident Steve Price on the upcoming Green Mobility Fair that is planned for April 2025.

3. COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS
Staff Liaison Prée introduced new Operations and Environmental Services Division Manager Amelia Timbers.
Staff Liaison Leard provided the following updates:

- Civic Spark Fellow for Operations & Environmental Services Division to begin in January and will work on projects related to the Hillside Natural Area (HNA) and Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP).
- Holiday Closures/Hours:
  - Recycling Center will be closed 12/24, 12/25 & 1/1; Closing early 12/31 at 12:00; No Household Hazardous Waste collection on 12/31
  - No curbside collection on 12/25 & 1/1; collection shifts by 1 day
- State of the City address on Tuesday Dec. 17 by Mayor Rudnick, New Council members will be sworn in.

4. DRAFT FINAL HILLSIDE NATURAL AREA FIRE RESILIENCE AND FOREST CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
Committee members received a presentation from City Staff, participated in discussion and considered possible action items regarding the Draft Final Hillside Natural Area (HNA) Fire Resilience And Forest Conservation Management Plan.

Public Comment was received from:

- Jim Hansen of the CA Native Plant Society with recommended changes for the HNA Plan.
- El Cerrito resident Audrey Liese with recommendations to protect natives.
- Paulina Lara, Karin Budi, and Quetzalli Ruiz, interns with Friends of 5 Creeks,

shared their findings from their Dusky-footed Woodrat survey in the HNA.

- El Cerrito resident Brian Richmond (HNA Stakeholder Advisory Group representative for Make EC Fire Safe, Trail Trekkers member, and founder of Friends of the Hillside) expressed gratitude for comments incorporated into the Plan, and expressed support for Jim Hanson's comments & recommendations provided at the meeting.

Move/Second: Austin / O'Connor **Action:** Passed a motion to recommend the Draft Final HNA Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan to Council with the following changes proposed by the California Native Plant Society's Conservation Committee Chair: 1) include additional wording in the Plan's Summary Recommendations table and 2) include conservation of sensitive natural plant communities in the "Special Status Plants" categories. **Ayes:** Members Akacić, Austin, Bialy, Bleier, Goudey, Hayashi, Hrubes, Kaczor, Linhart, O'Connor, Pavel **Noes:** None

5. EQC & UFC FUTURE COLLABORATION

Committee members heard updates, participated in discussion and considered possible action items regarding future collaboration between the Environmental Quality Committee and the Urban Forest Committee.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8.59 p.m.

_____
Simrun Dhoot, EQC Chair

_____
Cathy Bleier, UFC Chair

This is to clarify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Special Joint Environmental Quality Committee and Urban Forest Committee meeting of December 10, 2024 as approved by the Environmental Quality Committee and Urban Forest Committee.

_____
Christina Leard, EQC Staff Liaison

_____
Stephen Prée, UFC Staff Liaison

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BIENNUAL WORK PLAN
FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026-2026/2027
URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE

Chair: Cathy Bleier; Vice-Chair: Catherine (Cassie) Hughes; Members: Robert Hrubes, Jennifer Kaczor, Robin Mitchell, Yan Linhart

Staff Liaison
Stephen Prée | 510-559-7685
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Public Works Department

MISSION STATEMENT:

Resolution No. 2007-96:

The Urban Forest Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, other commissions, and the citizens of the City with regard to the growth, maintenance, and location of trees within the City:

- To recommend programs, policies, and ordinances to implement and promote the City's Master Street Tree Plan and Urban Forest Management Plan and coordinate with Public Works Department staff regarding management and maintenance efforts;
- To promote and foster public awareness, education, interest and support for urban forestry efforts, foster volunteer opportunities for tree planting and irrigation along the city's streets and in residential front yards, and educate El Cerrito residents regarding selecting, planting and maintaining trees; and
- Promote and foster public awareness and education about potential hazards of trees near underground and above ground utilities and the appropriate tree species for avoiding such hazards.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: (Brief discussion regarding when the commission/committee was established and how it has changed over time) The Tree Committee (later renamed to Urban Forest Committee) was established by Council Resolution 2007-96. The Committee's first five members (Ralph Boniello, Sheauchi Cheng, Janet Hittle, Steve Price and Mike Srago) were appointed to terms starting 9/11/12 through 1/1/2016. Since that time, additional members included Karen Christian, Shannon Lee-Rutherford, Cathy

Bleier, Michael Charlton, Yan Linhart, Robert Hrubes, Mary Torrusio, Robin Mitchell, Jennifer Kaczor, Catherine (Cassie) Hughes, Melissa Feudi.

FISCAL YEAR (xxxx/xxxx - xxxx/xxxx)
Items listed in priority order

Goal or Objective	Proposed Activities	Estimated Staff time needed	Timeline For Completion
1. Increase revenue streams and make recommendations for how funds should be used advance Urban Forest priorities	El Cerrito Urban Tree Fund – this fund can be used to plant more urban trees as well as fund maintaining them (initial watering, etc) 1. Pursue the opening of the existing city tree fund, 2. Determine how the funds would be used, based in part on input from the public (web based survey, etc) 3. Help develop management guidelines for the fund 4. Develop a set of proposed projects to be implemented in the next FY, based on public feedback from #2 above 5. Start public campaign to accept contributions, once the projects are determined.		1. 4-6 months 2. 4-6 months 3. 4-6 months 4. 4-6 months 5. 6-12 months Ongoing
	Review and allocate the annual UFC budget, appropriated by the El Cerrito City Council.		July 1 of each year

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	Research grant opportunities to support city UF goals and HNA management plan activities		ongoing
	Explore opportunities for financial support from city organizations (such as the El Cerrito Rotary Club) and businesses, including members of EC Chamber of Commerce		6-12 months
2. Recruit more Urban Forest Committee members *(move under 4?)*	Develop and implement outreach strategy to inform the public about ECUFC 1. Develop subcommittee to explore options 2. Recruit a youth member		Ongoing
3. Grow and sustain El Cerrito's urban forest	Identify and implement opportunities to increase and maintain El Cerrito's urban forest inventory, potentially using funds from the El Cerrito Urban Tree Fund see section A above) 1. ~~Plant more trees~~ *Pursue and support efforts to exceed the number of trees planted by the city and avoid reduction of the tree canopy, year over year; Check Tree Keeper periodically to assess growth or reduction of tree canopy* 2. Geolocate street tree planting opportunities, to prepare for upcoming grant opportunities, such as EEMP (Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program)		

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	3. *Respond to urban forestry issues and opportunities via city staff, that arise from utilities and other agencies* 4. Update El Cerrito's Urban Forest Management Plan (from 2007) 5. Revise Master Tree List as needed 6. ~~Work with other UF groups in surrounding communities~~ *Consider community groups as potential resources for EC UF projects, funded via grants or city funds:* Urban Tilth, Watershed Project, Groundwork Richmond 7. Encourage development of a "Friends of EC Urban Forest" group		
5. Review and give input on city plan documents	Ongoing UFC input, facilitate public review, and advocacy for upcoming projects, including 1. Implementation and funding of the HNA Plan 2. Street tree planting for the Richmond Complete Streets project		
4. Increase awareness and support of ECUF and activities by EC residents	Develop, evaluate, and implement public activities based on estimated impact and effectiveness 1. Tree planting workshops 2. Tree care workshops 3. Library events to educate children and adults about trees 4. Work with EC school environmental classes / clubs to present information on trees (elementary and high school)		

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	Evaluate 2023 UFC Arbor Week library events and adjust to continually seek high impact on community 1. Continue to work with schools (Fairmont Elementary, Prospect Sierra 2. Continue to involve the El Cerrito Garden Club when practical 3. Organize an Urban Street Tree Tour 4. Add a fall tree planting event in addition to the spring Arbor Day event?		
	Improve communication about the UFC and the EC urban forest 1. Update the UFC website as needed to provide more information about the UFC, tree planting activities, etc 2. Green Happenings – make sure to include an article about EC urban forest in every issue		

ONGOING PROJECTS

Project	Activities	Funding and other Resources requested	Estimated Staff time needed
Maintain El Cerrito's Tree City USA status	Fill this out based on Tree City USA requirements ● Arbor Day Event ● Arbor Day proclamation		

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	• Maintain Tree Board (UFC) • Investigate Growth Award (we received one a few years ago)		

PRIOR FISCAL YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Updated annually by July 1 and provided to City Council on Consent

Goal/Objective	Activites Supporting Goal	Status

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