



**CITY OF PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA
REGULAR MEETING OF THE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

City Hall Council Chamber
11 English Street
Petaluma, CA 94952

**DRAFT MINUTES
Wednesday, August 16, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Bill Cover, Eberle Ewing, Howard Formby, Taryn Obaid, Darren Racusen, Marianne Bertuccelli
ABSENT: Roger McErlane

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

During **General Public Comment**, the public is invited to make comments on items of public interest that are within the City Council's subject matter jurisdiction and that are not listed on the current agenda. Public comments are limited up to three minutes per person. Depending on the number of persons wishing to address the Council, time will be allocated in equal shares totaling no more than twenty minutes, subject to the Council's discretion (Cal. Gov't. Code §54954.3(a), Petaluma City Council Rules, Policies and Procedures, III).

PRESENTATIONS

1. Urban Forestry Management Grant Planting Plan Update – ReLeaf Petaluma

Caroline with ReLeaf was here to present the Urban Forestry Management Grant update. She shared her slides, explained what trees would be planted, and how grant money would be spent. Communication will go out to the public/community (signs with QR codes at parks, flyers, etc.). They will have a Q&A with the community as well.

She reviewed each placement map explaining what trees will be planted at each park.

The Committee shared their questions/concerns, held a discussion on this project, tree recommendations, fungi and shared their appreciation for work from ReLeaf.

PUBLIC COMMENT OPENED

There were no comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Approval of Minutes for the meeting of May 17, 2023

Minutes deemed approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

3. Communication and Outreach Ad Hoc Committee Progress Update
Committee Member Racusen stated they had some meetings, met with Cindy Chong regarding Urban Forestry Management Grant, and developed a plan to work with Ben Anderson. Met with Ben as well to discuss/review plan going forward.
Met with Bjorn and Ken E. from Public Works about street trees and reviewed McErlane's draft plans for D. St. Quick-Build Project. Had ideas for box trees, specifications, and this was very productive. Christopher Bolt supports this as well.
Meeting with Brian Barnacle to discuss trees and prior meetings with city staff and he had some good ideas as well, Tree Advisory Committee potential, very productive.
Internal meeting discussed a volunteer program to replace ghost trees.
Committee Member Obaid stated there will be a lot of great stuff in the future, organizing framework, etc.
Chair Formby shared maybe add another Ad Hoc regarding ghost trees replacement. Committee Member Racusen agrees with that idea for future discussion.
PUBLIC COMMENT OPENED
There were no comments.
PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED
4. Heritage Tree List Ad Hoc Progress Update
Committee Member McErlane absent, table to next meeting.
5. Street Tree List Ad Hoc Progress Update
Chair Formby met with Ad Hoc via email and requested recommendations for preferred additions to the list. Goal is to rewrite the list and make it more user friendly and comprehensive.
Met with Cindy Chong and discussed the idea of Heather granting permission for a quick fix on tree ordinance. Currently with tree permits, only approved trees on this list can be planted. Tree Advisory Committee can recommend otherwise. Impressed by Palo Alto street trees, exceptional shade, inspiration for Petaluma, we just need more trees. Encouraged others to look at the Sycamore trees near Crooked Goat, would love to see more in the

city.

The committee discussed the importance and inspiration for street trees, which can provide shade canopy, resources for birds, insects, beautiful streets, etc.

Street Tree Ad Hoc can add more members and will be discussed at a future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT OPENED

There were no comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED

6. North Riverfront Project Support Letter

Letter of support from Tree Advisory Committee (TAC) is requested. Friends of Petaluma River members took on this project to save the wetlands along Lynch Creek Trail to Denman Flats. Chair Formby thinks it's a good idea for TAC to provide a letter of support. Chair Formby is happy to do this, if a TAC member volunteers to write the letter and he can present to City Council as public comment.

Committee Member Obaid volunteered to create a draft letter.

Motion for the Tree Advisory Committee to designate Chair Formby to prepare a letter, publicly deliver to the City Council, expressing support for the Friends of the Petaluma River Parkway Concept as they've outlined and represented in their map.

Motion: Taryn

Second: Racusen

Vote: 6-0

Motion Passed

PUBLIC COMMENT OPENED

There were no comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED

7. Discussion of formation of a Policy Ad Hoc Committee

Chair Formby would like to get more clarity on this, as his understanding is we are an advisory committee

Committee Member Racusen: the more we discuss with city stakeholders/decision makers, and it's been brought up, Ben Anderson is an effective voice for policy and gives us feedback, updates etc. and seems to work as a form of communication to Tree Advisory Committee.

Committee Member Obaid: cannot overstate how anxious she is about 1.5 years going by and if we don't conclude the work within 6 months, she's worried we may lose the CalFire grant, how will we get an ordinance, UFMP, and concerned there isn't a signed contract with Ben Anderson.

Racusen shared with new members the ideas of this ordinance/policy AdHoc, does it duplicate work/communication team is doing, and doesn't want to double up on work.

Staff Liaison Chong stated there is no communication from the City Council that they are looking for Tree Advisory Committee assistance. This is more of a planning project and Roger McErlane can and should be our communicator.

Committee continued to discuss ideas/concerns.

Staff Liaison Chong shared background on ordinance update, grant specifics, and explained how to create a productive AdHoc and add to agenda if they'd like to form one.

More to discuss on the next agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT OPENED

There were no comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Chair Formby referred to Staff Liaison Chong's email regarding right of way tree removal moratorium, two Sycamore trees removed due to safety reasons and approved by City. Chair Formby disagreed with the removal and sent a letter to City Council, Public Works, etc.

Tree maintenance letter sent as well, encourages City to educate the public/private landowners about right of way trees. Should be a moratorium on pruning trees during specific times of year.

N. McDowell Blvd trees will be planted (met with Ken E., Committee Member McErlane, and ReLeaf).

Plan completed for Fox Hollow Park trees being planted.

Prince Park – Live oak tree, not a threat according to state arborist, city arborist recommends removal, Ben Anderson recommends not cutting down.

Committee Member Ewing inquired about street trees on N. McDowell and what is recommended. Howard stated what was chosen.

Howard mentioned areas that have blacktop as medians and no trees.

Committee Member Obaid: can you share who at city hires tree arborist that says Grand Oak needs to be cut down? Can we put on agenda to write a letter to expand the arborist list?

Committee Member Racusen: update from Planning, saw the Spirit Living Mixed-Use Development plan proposal and they voiced to add more trees and green living space if trees not possible. Also discussed downtown zoning overlay.

STAFF COMMENT

Staff Liaison is working with Ben Anderson and has a contract in route, and he has made good progress so far. Discussed expanding his scope to possibly include some

street trees. Software used is recommended by Ben and it is our GIS that will be great to use.

CalFire was almost a year late in awarding the grant, so we weren't so behind, we had to compress everything within their timeline. Ben is committed to our work.

She has a meeting with planning and will give an update next month. She will continue to give grant updates too. Plantings with ReLeaf will move forward.

Kenilworth Park revitalization – pulled back scope to avoid removing newly planted trees. Once plan is in place then tree planting can start again.

One area for committee to be aware of is LAD's issues, need some plantings, may reach out to ReLeaf for plantings.

Westridge Park/Trail – would like more trees, watering may be an issue, needs to find a solution/plan for that.

Federal inflation grant – won't know until October if we received or not.

Looking for solutions and will keep committee updated.

Committee Member Ewing asked who is responsible to maintain/prune all of these new trees planted, etc. Staff Liaison Chong hopes to get a routine schedule for pruning, etc.

Committee Member Obaid: can we invite PW&U to discuss history of street trees re: responsibility, enforcement, etc.?

Staff Liaison Chong can reach out to staff to come and discuss.

Chair Formby suggests the city put out moratorium information in community update.

ADJOURNMENT

5:04PM