

MINUTES
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
February 25, 2014

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. Present were Commissioners Scott Kuhn, Kay Findley, Nancy Wilms, Al Benzoni, John Silverthorn, Noah Puni and Chair Hughes. Student Commissioner Thomas Kutzer was absent. Council Liaison Richard D. Schneider, M.D. was present. Staff Liaison Debby Figoni was present.

2. MINUTES

Minutes from the January 28, 2013 meeting were approved by Commissioner Puni and Commissioner Benzoni; all members present were in favor, 7 – 0.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

None.

4. CITY TREE REMOVALS

Water Conservation Analyst Debby Figoni stated that Arborist Maravilla had no tree work to report. Figoni informed the Commission that the City's new tree list was going to include native and non-native trees appropriate for planting in South Pasadena.

5. CITY'S TREE TRIMMING & REMOVAL REQUIREMENTS

The commissioners discussed the city's tree trimming process and schedule as well as issues with Southern California Edison. They thought it would be helpful to have representatives from West Coast Arborists and Southern California Edison present at an upcoming meeting. Staff liaison Figoni will set it up for March and also invite City Arborist Gonzalo Maravilla. All commissioners are to email Figoni the questions and issues they have regarding the City's trees by March 11, 2014. Figoni gave a presentation, originally given to City Council by Public Works Director Paul Toor, regarding South Pasadena's urban forest that included information about the City's tree inventory. It was estimated that the value of the urban forest is \$55 million. There was discussion about the trees in the Arroyo and the need for supplemental water for young trees. There was also a question regarding a tree removal on Alta Vista Circle.

6. CHARGING STATIONS

Water Conservation Analyst Figoni stated that there is no new information on this item. Grants Analyst Tracy Perkosky has applied for matching grant funds from the Air Quality Management District.

7. HERO/PROPERTY BILL FINANCING PROGRAM

The Commissioners are concerned about up-front costs, fees, residents getting confused and getting in over their head, especially seniors. Since the HERO program could result with liens on resident's homes, they wonder if a home equity line of credit is better. They wondered how the program checks out contractors and are concerned with potential deceptive advertising. The Commissioners would like to keep a watch on the program and consider adding a disclaimer when advertising in our City.

8. WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS & BUDGET REVIEW

Water Conservation Analyst Figoni updated the Commission on the Water Conservation and Water Shortage Plan which was presented to Council on February 5, 2014. Council requested NREC proceed on this ordinance with water reduction percentages tied to each Stage. Stage one is a recommended 10% reduction, Stage 2 is 20% and Stage 3 is a 30% reduction potentially tied to yearly usage. The second modification to the draft ordinance was the word "designated" was placed in front of the allowed number of watering days tied to each Stage. The various Stages would likely come into effect based on what is declared by the State, Metropolitan Water District and/or Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, or if the City has problems with the pumps or wells. The Stage and effective date would be at

the discretion of the City Council based on supply and/or emergency issues such as maintenance on supply lines. Violations will be given based on the Article V of the Violations and Penalties section.

The NREC voted on the percentage reductions, one option for the three Stages was 10%, 15% and 20% which was voted for by Commissioner Findley. The second option was 10%, 20% and 30% which was voted for by Commissioners Hughes, Kuhn, Wilms, Benzoni, Silverthorn, and Puni. The various reductions in Stages 1 through 3 are recommended while Stage 4 is mandated.

9. SYNTHETIC TURF

The commission discussed the use of synthetic turf and reviewed a “Pros and Cons” list put together by Water Conservation Analyst Figoni. Last year, the commission approved synthetic turf in the draft Parkway Ordinance and would like to proceed with the ordinance as is. The draft ordinance will be given to City Council for review at an upcoming meeting. Discussion over whether the draft ordinance should first be reviewed by the Public Works and/or Planning Commissions was discussed. Since this is only being provided to Council as a discussion item, it will be up to Council to send it to other Commissions for review.

10. UPDATE ON ORDINANCES

The Water Conservation and Shortage ordinance went to City Council on February 5, 2014 and was sent back to NREC for more details. Turf removal and toilet exchange programs went to Council on February 5, 2014 and were both approved with a \$20,000 budget for toilets and \$50,000 for turf removal from front yards only. The commission would like to proceed with the Plastic Bag Ban no matter how the State is proceeding. Other draft ordinances heading to City Council soon include Low Impact Development and Parkway.

11. UPCOMING EVENTS

Water Conservation Analyst Figoni has secured a Mulch and Compost Giveaway Event for Saturday, May 31st. She has set up six water wise workshops taking place March through May. In addition, she will host a booth at several community events and be presenting at the Senior Citizen Center.

12. CONCERT SERIES/CLEAN CAR SHOW

Proposed dates for the sustainably fair and clean car show, which will also include a health run, are July 13th or 20th. Figoni will be working with Community Services on this event.

13. COMMUNITY GARDEN

Chair Hughes talked with Richard Tom who has been working with the Parks and Recreation Commission on the next steps to lease space from CalTrans. Mr. Tom is checking with the Community Services Manager on the details. The ad hoc committee is still proceeding with the garden needs.

14. LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS FOR FRONT YARDS

No update, but this item will remain on the Agenda as NREC continues to follow the status of the draft Parkway ordinance.

15. WATER USE AT THE CITY’S GOLF COURSE

Water Conservation Analyst Figoni informed the commission that an audit is scheduled at the golf course in the next few weeks. The consultants will look at the efficiency of the sprinklers and irrigation controller and actually make the retrofits necessary to help conserve water.

The City’s parks have had water audits. At Garfield Park, approximately 50% of the nozzles were upgraded to a more efficient nozzle. In addition, 350 square feet of overhead nozzles were converted to drip in the rose garden area. City staff will lay mulch to finalize that project. At Arroyo Park, 2 soil sensors were installed to help water more efficiently. The consultants could not upgrade the sprinkler heads due to water pressure issues. The irrigation controllers at both parks were already state of the art.

16. CHAIR COMMUNICATIONS – Gave a belated welcome to new Commissioner Puni.

17. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS – Commissioner Findley mentioned the water break in front of her house and how Public Works took care of the issue in a prompt and professional manner. Commissioner Benzoni discussed the City's capital improvement projects which cover reservoirs, streets and sidewalks. He would like to know the Public Works Department has looked into the benefits of using permeable pavement or cement when appropriate.

18. STAFF LIAISON COMMUNICATIONS – n/a

19. COUNCIL LIAISON COMMUNICATIONS – n/a

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m. approved by Commissioners Puni and Commissioner Kuhn, and all members were in favor, 7-0.

NEXT MEETING - The next regular meeting of the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission will be held on Tuesday, March 25, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers.


Kimberley Hughes, Chair