

**MINUTES**  
**NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**  
**January 28, 2014**

**1. ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. Present were Commissioners Scott Kuhn, Kay Findley, Nancy Wilms, Al Benzoni, John Silverthorn, Noah Puni and Student Commissioner Thomas Kutzer. Chair Kimberley Hughes was absent. Staff Liaison Debby Figoni was present.

**2. MINUTES**

Minutes from the December 17, 2013 meeting were approved with two minor changes by Commissioner Puni and Commissioner Benzoni; all members present were in favor, 6 – 0.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

None.

**4. PRESENTATION BY HERO/PROPERTY BILL FINANCING PROGRAM**

Eric Rosenthal from the Renovate America / HERO program spoke to the Commission about the financial benefits and flexibility of the HERO program. He explained that HERO offered affordable ways for residents to do energy upgrades to their home and that it shows up on their property taxes therefore it is tax deductible. The Commission was concerned with liability and financial risks for South Pasadena residents and businesses but their concerns were put to rest with details of the program and how hundreds of other cities in California have been providing this financing option and/or are about to implement it for their community. Conservation Analyst Figoni will remain updated on the program and keep in contact with the HERO representatives.

**5. CITY TREE REMOVALS**

Water Conservation Analyst Debby Figoni stated that Arborist Maravilla had no tree work to report. She updated the commission on the drought and public tree situation, informing them that West Coast was not supplying supplemental water to older, existing trees and that the water they used was potable, not recycled water.

Figoni informed the Commission about a resident's concern with the City's tree trimming and removal process. This gentleman lives on Oak Street and has had several issues with power outages stemming from what he believes are the City's and other residents' failure to trim trees in the parkway. He believes the trees are neglected due to the City's stringent tree trimming process and would like the Commission to review the guidelines. Staff informed this resident that trees in the utility easement were maintained by South California Edison. Commissioner Silverthorn commented on how poorly Edison trimmed the City's trees and wanted to work with Edison on improving their process and guidelines. The Commission requested a representative from Edison attend an upcoming meeting to discuss tree trimming. In addition, it was requested that a representative from West Coast attend to be a part of a comprehensive tree trimming discussion.

**6. BEE POPULATION & IMPACT OF PESTICIDES**

There is no new information on this item. The Commission requested removing this item from the Agenda and possibility adding it back when a new Public Works Superintendent is hired.

**7. ELECTRIC CHARGING STATIONS**

Water Conservation Analyst Figoni stated that there is no new information on this item. She is still waiting on grant opportunities.

**8. WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS & BUDGET REVIEW**

Water Conservation Analyst Figoni discussed the turf removal rebate and toilet exchange programs and explained how they would be heading to City Council in February. Figoni has been very busy with water audits which residents really appreciate. She is working on teaching four more water wise workshops in combination with the upcoming turf removal rebate program. She is still working on the Huntington Drive landscape retrofit project as well as water audits and retrofits at the City's parks and golf course.

**9. UPDATE ON ORDINANCES**

The Water Conservation and Shortage ordinance is complete and heading to City Council on February 5, 2014. Also the turf removal and toilet exchange programs are heading to Council on February 5, 2014. Low impact development and green streets are in progress and the plastic bag ban is moving along. The parkway ordinance is waiting for direction.

**10. UPCOMING EVENTS**

In 2014, Water Conservation Analyst Figoni is still working with Athens Services and TruGreen Landcare to hold three Mulch and Compost Giveaway Events. In addition, she plans to host several water wise workshops. Finally, the Commission discussed partnering with Southern California Edison on a tree giveaway event. Due to the drought, they voted to postpone this event and revisit it in the fall with Chair Hughes present. Arborist and tree teacher Matt Ritter will be speaking at the library in June. There are also opportunities to reach out at community events, such as Relay for Life, the Egg-stravaganza Event, Doggie Event, etc.

**11. COMMUNITY GARDEN**

No new information.

**12. LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS FOR FRONT YARDS**

Until the parkway ordinance has been settled, the Commissioners requested this item be removed from the Agenda.

**13. WATER USE AT THE CITY'S GOLF COURSE**

Commissioner Silverthron and Water Conservation Analyst Figoni performed a walk through audit at the golf course with the on-site superintendent. Their irrigation practices are good, but there seems to be room for improvement. The course is back to using water from the Arroyo since the temporary construction that took place up stream is over. In the next month, Figoni will be working with a consulting firm to have a professional audit including irrigation retrofits performed. Furthermore, she is working with the Community Services Manager, Shelia Pautsh to investigate additional conservation measures. The Commission suggested looking into the future water supply options like building a second reservoir at the golf course to store more water coming down the Arroyo and looking at redesigning the golf course to reduce the amount of grassy, green areas. They also suggested allowing the turf to brown a little or allowing the fairways to brown, without jeopardizing the health of the trees, looking at the contract with Donovan Brothers to see if we can work with them to use less water, and considering hiring a professional from the golf course industry to make our golf course more water efficient.

**14. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIVE TREES LIST**

Water Conservation Analyst showed the Commissioners the draft native and drought tolerant tree list. This list will be finalized and brought to City Council in the near future.

**15. PRIORITY LIST FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER AT STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING AND DESIGNATE A LIAISON**

Since Chair Hughes was absent, this item was not discussed.

**16. CITY'S RESPONSE TO DROUGHT**

The Commission suggested a variety of ways to use water more efficiently including reducing irrigation in public parks to the maximum amount possible without risking the health of our trees, keeping the grass longer to reduce evaporation, examining parks for grassy areas that can be removed and replaced with mulch and/or mulch and water wise plants, replacing turf in medians with water wise plants and modifying irrigation to properly water the trees. The Commission asked Water Conservation Analyst Figoni to find out what other cities are doing to conserve.

**17. CHAIR COMMUNICATIONS – n/a**

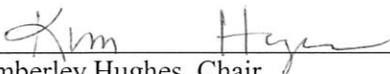
**18. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS –** Commissioner Findley updated the Commission on the Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden in Santa Barbara that has upgraded their garden to be water wise. Commissioner Wilms suggested the Commission remove items 6, 12, and 14 from future agendas and add the HERO program to the February Agenda. She also suggested educating businesses along Fair Oaks to not use water to wash down the sidewalk, and wanted to review ways to reduce planting costs for the bikeway path along the Arroyo.

**19. STAFF LIAISON COMMUNICATIONS – n/a**

**20. COUNCIL LIAISON COMMUNICATIONS – n/a**

**ADJOURNMENT -** The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m. approved by Commissioners Benzoni and Commissioner Puni, and all members were in favor, 6-0.

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

  
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Kimberley Hughes, Chair