

STAFF REPORT

DATE: April 9, 2019

TO: City Council

FROM: Ashley Feeney, Assistant City Manager
Kerry Daane Loux, Sustainability Coordinator

SUBJECT: 2019 Environmental Recognition Awards (ERA)

Recommendation

Approve nominations from the Natural Resources Commission for the 2019 Environmental Recognition Awards. The Awards will be presented at the April 23, 2019 City Council meeting, followed by a reception for the awardees and guests.

Fiscal Impact

Incidental award and reception costs are included in the FY18-19 Natural Resources program budget.

Background

The City annually conducts the Environmental Recognition Award program to encourage and recognize efforts in the community that benefit the environment and overall sustainability objectives. Started in 1995, this is a milestone 25th consecutive year for the awards program. City staff received twenty-four emails from community members with nominations and letters of support for a total of nine recommended nominees. The three standard nomination categories include businesses; non-profit organizations; and individual or groups, each requiring residency or work completed in Davis.

An honorary category was added in 2017 to celebrate the City of Davis Centennial. The Environmental Legacy Award is intended to recognize events, programs or milestones that have made a significant difference in Davis' environmental quality of life over the course of our 100-year history. Awardees in this category are decided at the discretion of the Natural Resources Commission and City Council. The first two Legacy Awards were dedicated to Unitrans last year, on the 50th anniversary of the UC Davis/Davis community bus service which started February 28, 1968, and operates with city transit fund support; and in 2017, to Davis bike lanes on the 50th anniversary of the first bike lane installations in the nation.

The ERA applications received for this year's program were electronically conveyed by staff to the NRC ERA subcommittee members, who then met to discuss and select the proposed awardees. Subcommittee recommendations were presented to the NRC at the March 25, 2019 regular meeting, and were unanimously approved by the full Commission.

The following are the NRC recommendations to City Council for the 2019 Environmental Recognition Award recipients, along with a list of other nominations received. The commission agreed that all nominations, whether awarded or not, represented deserving organizations and individuals.

Individual/Groups:

Two individuals were selected, from a total of five nominations from sixteen community members, recognizing the decades of their dedication to improving the lives of Davis residents and those in the greater community, and to preserving and improving our natural environment.

Larry Fisher was selected for his lifetime of efforts to reduce and reuse waste, inspiring and encouraging others to follow. Larry’s community engagement projects include extensive N Street Cohousing efforts (even though he is not a resident) and Delta of Venus. On the UC Davis campus he has completed ‘environmental footprint reduction’ projects at the Craft Center, Student Farm and Solar Boat Competition. Larry has also supported underserved populations through bicycle donations and other actions benefitting low-income farm workers.

Nominated by Kevin Wolf and Linda Cloud; letters of support from Brett Trela, Cynthia Kellogg, Don Lotter, Ellen Werthheimer, Ethan Casaday, Fred Buder, Heidi Pfeifer, Jim Hill, Josh Nectar, Michael Kluk, Michael Shearer

Yvonne Hunter is recognized for her career focused on environmental legislation with the California League of Cities, Institute for Local Government. In retirement, Yvonne has dedicated her time and expertise in Davis through Cool Davis energy efficiency leadership; compiling the award-winning City of Davis Beacon and Spotlight submittals, which continue to serve as an informational resource for staff and community; and serving on the Ad Hoc Community Choice Energy Advisory Committee and the Valley Clean Energy Advisory Board.

Nominated by Chris Granger

Additional nominees, recognized by the NRC for the community value they have offered, include Davis Manor Neighborhood, Jack Norris, and Muir Commons Community.

Businesses:

Two businesses were selected as co-awardees in the business category.

Aaron Nitzkin and his firm, Solar Roof Dynamics, was selected for efforts to further the adoption of solar roof photovoltaics (PV) in Davis and innovative partnerships with roofers to increase PV installations. Additionally, Aaron has been a significant contributor to the sustainability, outreach and education in the Davis community through his creation and leadership of ‘Green Drinks’ public speaker series and as Chair of the Cool Davis Solar Task Force, which helped the City establish a goal of 5,000 solar roofs by 2020.

Nominated by Richard McCann

Kevin Perry, landscape architect and owner of Urban Rain Design in Davis, was recognized for his pro-bono work in the community to support sustainable environmental design and water conservation. Kevin created the conceptual design for City Hall rain capture and stormwater/planting improvements, which was the basis for \$300,000 grant funding for project

implementation. His work with the Davis Manor residents helped to develop a community-driven greenstreets master plan, which they hope to implement in the coming years. Kevin has inspired and mentored sustainable design students and the UC Davis Green Infrastructure Club.
Nominated by Emily Griswold

Non Profits:

One non-profit organization was selected.

Circle of Bees, a dedicated volunteer network of bee enthusiasts, was selected for their actions to protect and sustain pollinator habitat within the City. The group has tirelessly given time to capture bee swarms and assist Davis businesses and residents to relocate swarms to appropriate spaces. The NRC also noted special recognition for the extensive efforts of Circle of Bees to connect people with the environment through arts and engage people with the bees. The art installation at Resurrection Tree demonstrates this unique approach to educating the public about the role of bees in our environment while providing visual beautification of our urban environment.

Nominated by Paul Bugni

Environmental Legacy Award

The NRC is recommending the 2019 Environmental Legacy Award recognition to the community engagement that helped establish the expanded Central Park in 1988, including the Central Park Gardens. Many Davis residents have been involved throughout the urban open space creation and continuing evolution of Central Park during the last thirty years. This award recognizes that the park and garden connect people with the environment within Davis' urban downtown and celebrates the "Save our Space" community activism.

Especially notable are the current Central Park Gardens, which act as a valuable downtown resource: as a demonstration garden for sustainable gardening practices, a hub for volunteerism, and a vital habitat for pollinators and wildlife. We would like to especially recognize Emily Griswold, the master gardeners and the volunteers that have revitalized these gardens, and continue to provide educational programs to City residents.

Central Park Gardens was nominated for a non-profit award by Randii MacNear, Lois Wolk and Peggy Smith, with letters of support from Ann Evans and Nancy Campos

More information on the Environmental Recognition Awards can be found at <http://cityofdavis.org>