



**City of Davis**  
**Tree Commission Minutes**  
**Remote Meeting**  
**Thursday, June 16, 2022**  
**5:30 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Colin Walsh-Chair, Jim Cramer, Tracy DeWit,  
Larry Guenther, W. Allen Lowry, John Reuter

Commissioners Absent: Tony Gill

Council Liaison(s) None  
Present:

Staff Present: Stan Gryczko, Director, Public Works Utilities and Operations  
Adrienne Heinig, Assistant to the Director  
Charlie Murphy, Urban Forestry Manager  
Chelsea Becker, Administrative Aide

Also in Attendance: Tim Moran, Davey Resource Group  
(names voluntarily provided) Alan Hirsch, "Rick," Charles Watson

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**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairperson Walsh called meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

L Guenther moved to approve the agenda, seconded by J Cramer. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Gill

**3. Brief Announcements from Staff, Commission Members, and City Council Members**

- L Guenther had two announcements:
  - He apologized for his behavior at the last meeting, stating that it was unprofessional and disrespectful to the staff, commissioners and the public.
  - He received an email about the status of pruning and tree care in the City (with an indication that the City was behind in these efforts) and

asked staff to confirm that the pruning budget for Urban Forestry had been requested to be increased. S Gryczko confirmed that staff had asked through the budget process to increase the budget for contract maintenance, which includes pruning.

- A Lowry spoke to the recently released report by the Yolo County Grand Jury about parks maintenance in Davis. He stated that the City would address the issues with weed control.
- J Reuter asked staff to clarify the budget request increase. S Gryczko indicated that the request is for \$400,000.
- T DeWit asked if Mayor Partida would be taking over as the liaison for the Tree Commission, or if it was still Councilmember Arnold. Staff indicated that Council had made no formal action so the liaison remains Councilmember Arnold.

#### **4. Public Comment**

One member of the public provided public comment:

- Alan Hirsch: Indicated his appreciation for the increase in outside contracting budget on pruning. He spoke to issues relating the Chiles Ranch development project, including 12 acres rezoned, trees that are privatized, and terms were set 13 years ago. He stated that the City should be able to renegotiate, legally and morally. He emphasized the need to reconsider the 2009 standards. He stated that privatized trees don't work, providing the example of Grande and parking lots. He said the City needs to maintain the trees, redo the privatized maintenance standards, and review mitigation fees set 13 years ago. He said the project would go before City Council on June 28 or July 5, and would include previous city tree policy for city trees and standardized care. He emphasized the importance of ensuring the appropriate selection of trees, and expressed that in 2009 it was determined to take trees "off the books". He encouraged the commission to speak up to the City Council about trees and increasing the tree fee.

#### **5. Consent Calendar**

##### **A. Tree Removals List (*Informational*)**

##### **B. Information on Tree Activity from May 20, 2022 Wind Event**

Prior to the approval of the Consent Calendar, a brief discussion was held on Item 5B (Information on Tree Activity from May 20, 2022 Wind Event).

##### **Item 5B- Information on Tree Activity from May 20, 2022 Wind Event:**

C Walsh requested more information on the tree that fell in Slide Hill Park during the wind event. Staff clarified that the tree that fell did not fall onto the playground, rather the tree fell across the bike path adjacent to the playground. When urban

forestry staff prepared the tree for removal by the City's contract arborist, West Coast Arborist (and to ensure the bike path was clear) the tree debris was relocated to both sides of the bike path. In response to a question of what may have caused the tree to fall, C Murphy indicated that it appeared to be root rot, which would be difficult to detect, however he was only able to see the tree after it fell. It was reiterated by staff that both the City and Tree Davis utilize current best management practices for tree planting. It was suggested that the Commission consider the topic of bike path and playground safety for the long-range calendar discussion.

L Guenther moved to approve the consent calendar, seconded by J Cramer.

Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Gill

## 6. Regular Items

### A. Street Tree Removal Requests.

The item was introduced by Tim Moran, from Davey Resources Group, who provided brief presentations on the requests for a street tree removal.

#### Location

#### Tree Species

1. 1120 Juniper Place

Shademaster Honey Locust

**Motion:** Follow staff recommendation and retain the tree.

Moved by T DeWit, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Gill

No public comments were received on this item.

#### Location

#### Tree Species

2. 1130 L Street

River She Oak

**Motion:** Follow staff recommendation to retain this tree and as soon as reasonably possible provide pruning to reduce excess end weight, which is present over the driveway and front yard; as well as reduction pruning, crown cleaning and require an aerial inspection.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter  
Noes:  
Absent: Gill

**Motion:** That the City be proactive and schedule a follow-up with the resident in 1-2 years to ensure the safety of the tree.

Moved by T DeWit, seconded by L Guenther. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter  
Noes:  
Absent: Gill

The item was opened for public comment and one comment was received:

- “Rick”: Expressed his appreciation for the work of the Commission on behalf of the community. Indicated that he has owned his home for 9 years, and while he recognizes the value of the large trees, and appreciate the balance with retaining trees and managing risk, he disagrees with recommendations. He stated that given the size, age and known issue with the tree, the risks are unlikely to be adequately mitigated, and if tree is not removed, it could be greater damage than just vehicle damage. He indicated that the tree limb is risk to the safety of his family, home, the community, and causes lots of stress. He said the tree is not a good urban forest tree, and it is likely the drought will increase issues with trees, given the documented and forecasted hazards. He stated the City should remove now and replace it with a safer tree more suited for the location and the canopy overall. He added that even with timely maintenance, trees have to be replaced, and he understands it’s hard for the City to have enough time and enough budget to maintain the tree.

**Location**

**3. 1314 Camphor Lane**

**Tree Species**

**Canary Island Pine**

**Motion:** Follow staff recommendation to remove and replace the tree.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter  
Noes:  
Absent: Gill

The item was opened for public comment and two comments were received:

- Charles Watson: Thanked City staff for their diligence, indicated his appreciation for the recommendation to remove the pine tree, and reiterated the safety issues and risks associated with the tree that necessitated its removal.
- Alan Hirsch: He indicated that it was important to always go with professional opinion of the tree, indicated the need to look at the cost benefit in the Urban Forest Management Plan, outlining that the goal is managing an entire forest, not individual trees, something in the Urban Forest Management Plan for the Tree Commission to consider in the cost in reducing the risk of the tree. He stated that the co-dominate steams of the tree could have been avoided with proper pruning, and that the City shouldn't be cheap when approaching pruning and focus on the big picture.

**Location**

**4. 3720 Alegre Way**

**Tree Species**

**Callery Pear**

**Motion:** Follow staff recommendation remove and replace the tree.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Gill

No public comments were received on this item.

*The Commission recessed from 7:10 p.m. to 7:19 p.m.*

**B. Framework of Tree Planning Efforts.**

The item was introduced by S Gryczko, who provided a presentation on the background and plan for the updates to the Urban Forest Management Plan, the Ordinance Updates and policy guidance.

Commission discussion included the following:

- Appreciation for the timeline as provided by staff, and verification that the intent is for the items to be covered during regular Commission meetings.
- In response to a question about the timing in updating the ordinance, staff indicated that re-engaging with the ordinance as the Commission looks to go through the plan would be good, and a reminder that the ordinance does not need to be updated each time policy and technical specifications are revised.

- The concern that the timeline doesn't include the CAAP process and how it fits into the framework.
- The importance of including the value of trees and the financial benefits of trees overall.
- A request for more detail under the major headings to help clarify what the Commission will be looking at through the Urban Forest Management Plan process.
- Reiteration that although the Urban Forest Management Plan does need to be complete by March of 2023, it is not staff intention to "cram" everything together, and the time for each item would be taken as needed.
- The importance of considering changing climate in discussions of trees, and ensuring that the Urban Forest Management Plan would have built in flexibility to adapt to changing science.
- Concern that the commissioners are being asked to comment on things without fully understanding them.
- Adaptive management approaches to ecological management, and how adaptive management can provide a roadmap to be able to say "let's evaluate the environment", depending on concern, and build in the plan to say "what do we do if we're not meeting the goal" with options as to what can be done about it.
- The need to establish a common agenda, and a common understanding of the issues that the City faces to develop solutions together. The need for more effort in having mutually enforcing activities - plans that coordinate and implement and engage with stakeholders to work together to make a functioning process. Important to have language about regular and continuous communication with the people they are trying to serve.
- Appreciation for the Commission and the comments received on the framework and the planning.
- Consideration of shifting the effort of the enabling resolution to the start of the ordinance discussion.
- Ultimately, the need to have some way to ensure the City's urban forestry division is maximizing performance and management, supporting staff, showing improvement with data, while remembering Davis values and the engagement with the urban forest.
- Determining the best way show how the City can achieve its goals, and the development of a list of what should be monitored. It was suggested that the consultant would have creative ideas for metrics.

The item was opened for public comment, and one comment was received:

- Alan Hirsch: Expressed his appreciation for the amazing and wonderful discussion, and added it should have happened years ago. He cautioned that everything shown in the discussion included deadlines by April. He indicated that if the City sets unreachable deadlines, or tries too much too fast, staff could burn out. The effort needs three or four years for planning. He expressed concern around the management plan developed by Woodland. He added concerns that trees have been silos, and that they haven't been integrated. He said each tree is a commitment to water, and there needs to be a strategy, to plant the right tree in the right place. He added don't over promise and under deliver.

*No formal action was taken on this item.*

*The Commission recessed from 8:15 p.m. to 8:24 p.m.*

### **C. Review of Draft Letter for Tree Commission to send to Natural Resources Commission and City Council.**

The item was introduced by the Chair, who introduced the liaison to the Natural Resources Commission (NRC), J Cramer, to outline the background on the action that was requested of him at the Commission meeting in May. J Cramer outlined the letter as drafted, and indicated where he wanted to receive feedback from the Commission.

Commission discussion included:

- Appreciation for the draft letter as prepared by J Cramer.
- Encouragement to move away from treating cars as the default mode of transportation by changing the language in the letter to read "incentivize non-motorized modes of transportation".
- In the third paragraph, second sentence, to indicate "cooling" shade.
- That in recent years, the City has removed more trees than planted outside of the efforts associated with planting 1000 trees with the Community Canopy program. Staff indicated that the goal moving forward would be to have a robust planting program.
- The importance of submitting the letter, even if the Commission missed the window for submission.
- The suggestion to call transportation "active" rather than reference "non-motorized."

The item was opened for public comment, and one comment was received:

- Alan Hirsch: Stated that it is funny to get money in the mitigation fund from developers cutting down trees, and we don't count trees in private property or in parking lots, implying that not all trees are created equal. He stated that losing trees in the downtown is different from trees planted in parks. He said trees have water needs and need to be strategically planted to not overburden the water resources of the city. He said that when these items are put on the agenda, they need to be an action item, as the Commission missed window to submit to the comments on the CAAP to Council when the discussion was before them. He asked the Commission to make all items action items to ensure a timely response.

**Motion:** Approve the Tree Commission sending the letter as revised during the discussion in a way that the liaison to the NRC (J Cramer) feels is appropriate to improve the letter to the City Council and the Natural Resource Commission. *(A friendly amendment, approved by the mover and the second, added the Natural Resources Commission as a recipient).*

Moved by J Reuter, seconded by L Guenther. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Gill

#### **D. Review of Subcommittee on DiSC.**

The item was introduced by A Heinig, who outlined the requirements for Commission subcommittees to be re-evaluated each year or to be reviewed when their charge was completed (whichever earlier). C Walsh added that the discussion would include a review of the work completed by the subcommittee on the DiSC development project. A Heinig indicated the Commission could choose to disband the subcommittee, or change the charge.

Commission discussion included:

- That the work of the subcommittee went very well, with the recommendations adopted by the developer on the project, and that the recommendations and actions were good lessons on how to move forward.
- Verification that the Measure J/R/B vote on the DiSC project was likely to reject the project, however all votes have yet to be counted.
- Requirements such as the developer hiring an independent arborist to visit the site every year for five years, and every five years thereafter was a positive outcome of the work.
- Appreciation for the work of the subcommittee from the Commission.



- The suggestion that the subcommittee charge could be adjusted to focus on all developments. Staff indicated that to stay within the City's requirements, the focus should be on specific, current projects.

The item was opened for public comment, and one comment was received:

- Alan Hirsch: Stated that the conditions of approval for the DiSC project has aspects that the City Council should be asking for with every project moving forward. He suggested that the Commission ask the City Council to make the DiSC standards the same for every project. He indicated the Commission should write a letter as soon as possible and close the loophole where the trees in parking lots are ignored.

**Motion:** to change the charge and name of the DiSC subcommittee to Review of Shriners Project and Palomino Place.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by J Reuter. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Gill

Abstain: Lowry

In subsequent discussion, C Walsh and J Reuter elected to remain on the subcommittee, and were joined by J Cramer.

*No public comment was received on the item.*

## **7. Commission and Staff Communication**

### **A. Subcommittee Updates.**

- a. Regarding the 2x2 parking lot recommendations – staff indicated that Community Development staff is working on the recommendations, recent developments and other resource challenges have created a backlog.
- b. The lessons learned subcommittee has not yet met but will meet imminently.

### **B. Workplan and Long Range Calendar**

The item was introduced by A Heinig.

Brief discussion included:

- The suggestion that the item on the workload and budget for urban forestry could be shifted if staff needed more time.

- The need to hold a meeting in July, rather than have the usual Commission recess, especially in light of needing to keep the tree removal requests moving forward.
- A request to consider a future item on tree safety around playgrounds and bike paths in the future.
- A request for additional background on the Urban Forest Management Plan that would include the scope of work for the consultant, to see what is included in the scope and what is not.

The item was opened for public comment, and one comment was received:

- Alan Hirsch: he stated that the long-range plan should articulate closely the plan presented earlier in the meeting. He suggested that the Commission update the workplan now, as the Commission can only have so many things on the table at the time. He suggested that if the Commission would like to talk about playground safety, they should look to remove other items to allow for the right amount of time. He indicated Commissioners should take time offline to think more about this, and requested that the Commission plan to meet in July.

*No formal action was taken.*

## **8. Adjourn**

**Motion:** to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Moved by L Guenther, seconded by A Lowry. Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Walsh, Cramer, DeWit, Guenther, Lowry, Reuter

Noes:

Absent: Gill