

CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES – June 23, 2020

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. Present were: Commissioner Amy Jones, Commissioner Bill Kelly, Commissioner Stephen Leider, Vice Chair Rona Bortz, Chair Madeline Di Giorgi, and Councilmember Dr. Marina Khubesrian. Commissioner Cynthia Liu arrived to the meeting at 7:05pm. Commissioner Lauren Myles was absent. Commissioner Amy Jones left the meeting at 8:09pm. Staff present: Julian Lee, Deputy Public Works Director; Arpy Kasparian, Water Conservation & Sustainability Analyst; and Garrett Crawford, City Operations Manager.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Isabela Harrington – Resident – Asked how to make progress on the bike paths outlined in the 2011 City Bike Plan. Included a presentation for the commissioners titled, “Easement Bike Project.”

Tucker Nelson – Resident – Requested not to be read during the meeting. The resident submitted a comment concerning blocking off and promoting Meridian as a destination for dining.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1) First Review of City Tree Ordinance

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeremy Ding – Resident – Requested that the commission recommend removal of regulations surrounding “protected shrubs” and to consider the high cost and financial hardship that can be caused by having to remove, replace, and maintain trees.

The commissioners discussed the tree code with Public Works Operations Manager, Garrett Crawford. Updates to the code were suggested including: harsher penalties for illegal tree removals for developers, updating the definitions of “protected shrub” and “shrub,” including a definition of “hardship” for consideration of relaxed penalties for low-income residents, and including a classification of trees similar to the one in City of San Marino’s tree code. Other general concerns regarding tree procedures were brought up including scheduling tree removals, following up on tree replacements, and raising awareness on a resident’s responsibility regarding parkway trees.

2) Plastic Bag Ban during Covid-19 Pandemic

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tucker Nelson – Resident – Requested not to be read during the meeting. Stated that the plastic bag ban should be re-instated and provided examples of how to encourage restaurants and residents to reduce plastic use.

Kasparian gave background information on the suspension of the plastic bag ban to protect frontline workers from Covid-19. She stated that the suspension had expired and that the ban should be in effect in South Pasadena. The commissioners discussed ways to enforce customers and grocery stores to resume using reusable bags including encouraging paper bags, issuing a public statement from the City that the ban is in place, reaching out to the Chamber, and to educate customers on their options such as bagging their own groceries.

ACTION ITEMS:

3) Approval of Minutes – Meeting of May 26, 2020

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments

MOTION BY CHAIR DI GIORGI, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER KELLY, CARRIED 5-0 to approve minutes.

COMMUNICATIONS:

4) City Council Liaison Communications

Councilmember Khubesrian announced the Festival of Arts to replace the Festival of Balloons. Asked for a follow-up on the maintenance on the Nature Park and suggested the idea of adding a plaque for indigenous land acknowledgment.

5) Commissioner Communications

Commissioner Kelly announced that the Nature Park would like to be notified of what kind of maintenance has been done. Commissioner Leider asked for a follow up on progress on bike path signage and Councilmember Khubesrian provided an update on a grant for signage and the status of approving al fresco dining in the City. Commissioner Liu expressed support for installing an indigenous land acknowledgement plaque for the Nature Park and announced that she will have to resign from the commission since she is moving out of the City. Vice Chair Bortz also expressed support for installing an indigenous land acknowledgement plaque for the Nature Park and suggested a collaboration with Transition South Pasadena. Chair Di Giorgi announced the Compost Culture project and encouraged all to participate in National Pollinator Week.

6) Staff Liaison Communications

Kasparian provided several updates including the City Council approval of the Water Conservation program for FY20-21, receiving grant funds for additional water refill stations, and the Climate Action Plan survey. Kasparian also provided an update on Athens' fleet.

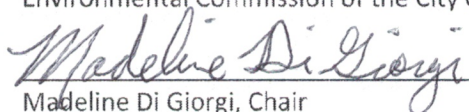
7) Upcoming Events

- National Pollinator Week – June 22 - June 28
- Climate Action Plan Survey – Deadline: 6/25/20
(<https://southpasadenacap.rinconconsultants.com>)
- SGVCOG Energy Efficiency Webinar – 6/29/20, 1:00pm
(<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/385864117622077968>)
- LA County Smart Gardening Webinars – Various dates
(<https://www.ladpw.org/epd/sg/webinars.cfm>)
- MWD Turf Removal + CA Native Landscape Webinars – Various summer dates
(<https://greengardensgroup.com/turf-transformation>)

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Di Giorgi adjourned the meeting at 8:38p.m.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were adopted by the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission of the City of South Pasadena at a meeting held on July 28, 2020.


Madeline Di Giorgi, Chair

