



GAVIN NEWSOM, MAYOR  
JARED BLUMENFELD, DIRECTOR

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL  
DRAFT MINUTES

Tuesday, June 26, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.  
City Hall, Room 416  
One Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call.** The Urban Forestry Council meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. Present: Chair Milne, Vice-Chair Quirke, Members Blair, Boss, Cohen, Griswold, Marks (5:55 p.m.), Nervo, Rodgers, Sherk, Short, and Sustarich; Excused: Members Habert and Miller.
2. **Approval of minutes of the April 24, 2007 Urban Forestry Council Regular Meeting (Action)** Upon Motion by Member Rodgers and second by Member Sustarich, without objection, the April 24, 2007 Meeting Minutes were approved with a correction on page 4 to change the spelling of the name "Rufgard" to "Roughgarden" and to confirm that on page 3, paragraph 4, 72,000 is the correct number of trees remaining (72,000 should be revised to read 72%). (Absent: Member Habert, Marks and Miller) (Explanatory Document: Approved Minutes of the April 24, 2007 Regular Meeting [http://sfgov.org/site/sfenvironment\\_page.asp?id=59844](http://sfgov.org/site/sfenvironment_page.asp?id=59844)).
3. **Commendation of Dr. Larry Costello (Discussion and Possible Action).** Council members voted to approve a commendation Resolution for Dr. Larry Costello for his contributions to the Urban Forestry Council and San Francisco. The Resolution was read into the record. Upon Motion by Member Boss and second by Member Nervo, Resolution File No. 2007-07-UFC was approved (AYES: Chair Milne, Vice-Chair Quirke, Members Blair, Boss, Cohen, Griswold, Nervo, Rodgers, Sherk, Short, and Sustarich; Absent: Member Habert, Marks and Miller) (Explanatory Document: Commendation Resolution No. 007-07-UFC (PDF) <http://web1.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/Res007-07-UFCCommendLarryCostello.pdf>).

**Sponsor and Presenter: Terry Milne**

A new business item was discussed at this time. Chair Milne read a commendation letter that he would be sending to Ms. Grace Ma, commending her for her work on the Council and on her efforts and diligence in support of the Landmark Tree Ordinance.

**Sponsor and Presenter:** Terry Milne

5. **Landmark Tree Nomination Form.** (Discussion and Possible Action) The Council voted to approve revisions to the Landmark Tree Nomination Form as recommended by the Landmark Tree Committee. (Explanatory Document: Revised Nomination Form (Word)  
<http://web1.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/LandNomApril1107.doc.>)

**Sponsor and Presenter:** Mike Boss

Member Boss reported that at a previous meeting, the Urban Forestry Council approved changes to the Evaluation Form so that the language now complies with the landmark tree criteria. It was explained that the Nomination Form revisions that were made are for the purpose of consistency between the Evaluation Form and the Nomination Form. Changes that were made have to do with the actual criteria that a nominator would fill out starting on page 3 with "Rarity" to "Tree Condition" on page 5. It was advised that the language on the Nomination Form is now verbatim to what the Evaluation Form contains. Member Blair discussed the importance of adding the member of the public who initiated the nomination to the form and that she appreciates the addition of an address so they can receive notification.

Upon Motion by Member Rodgers and second by Member Cohen, the revised Landmark Tree Nomination Form was approved without objection. (Absent: Members Habert and Miller)

6. **Impact of City Infrastructure Projects on Trees.** The Council will discuss detrimental impacts of City infrastructure projects on trees (Discussion).

**Sponsor & Presenter:** Mike Boss

Member Boss reported on extensive damage to trees through the work of City agencies, contractors, private contractors, and on orders from the Public Health Department. Two City-funded managed infrastructure projects that are going on right now within six blocks of his home were discussed. Pictures were shown of trees that had been damaged or destroyed as a result of ineffective pruning methods, excavation within the root zones of trees, and lack of protection measures during construction. Projects discussed included:

Project 1 on Powhattan Street at the base of Bernal Heights Hill, a tunnel being dug through Bernal Heights Hill for water purposes. It was stated and shown through pictures that the trees are suffering damage on their trunks and branches due to the work of the contractors; and

Project 2 is the Bernal Heights East Slope Infrastructure Improvement Project, a project that has to do with improving lighting, sewer, fire hydrants and access to various parts of the hill. A discussion was held on the amount of excavation that is being done in order to install staircases on Mayflower Street causing extensive damage to trees. It was stated that a native buckeye was pruned almost in half in

been destroyed when a piece of equipment skid off the road; across the street from that tree, the branches of Pittosporum trees that were removed by “backhoe pruning.”

Chair Milne asked Member Sustarich whether the City Distribution Division of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) has a provision in their contracts for tree protection. Member Sustarich stated that there are provisions in the specifications for tree protection zones and for not using backhoe trimming, but it is not adhered to in most cases. It was stated that in most cases, contractors are under pressure to complete the work and do not consider trees as that important. Chair Milne stated that the trees that Member Boss is discussing are street trees that belong to the homeowner and the City, not PUC trees. Chair Milne asked if the SFPUC Commission is responsive to issues that effect trees, such as the issues discussed in today’s presentation. Member Sustarich stated that he has not attended Commission meetings, but usually the process is that people call the Communications Division for answers to questions and if they can’t answer the question, he or other appropriate staff members receive a referral.

Member Short stated that the subject trees are mostly in the public right of way and are protected by the Urban Forestry Ordinance, so the contractor is obligated to protect those trees during construction. The Department of Public Works (DPW) can issue fines to the contractor and hold them accountable to the damage. Member Short stated that the problem is that trees are not on people’s radar screens, and recommended that as a role for the Council to raise awareness at every City agency. It was stated that the Urban Forestry Division is routinely overturned at hearings when staff is recommending that trees be preserved for bigger projects. Member Short discussed the lack of community support for retaining trees on Bacon Street that were approved for removal as part of a Library project.

Member Cohen discussed San Francisco’s view of trees as being in conflict with development in comparison with other Bay Area communities that view trees as part of development, and suggested that San Francisco is in need of a paradigm shift. Member Cohen asked that the Department of the Environment print the pictures in color, put together a binder to send to each of the Departments, the Board of Supervisors, and the Mayor to show what is going on with our trees and talk to the City Attorney’s Office to file a class action suit against every entity that is breaking Code.

Member Marks stated that he understands the Urban Forest Ordinance has a provision for tree protection and it is a requirement by contractors to make sure trees are not harmed. It was stated that all that means in practice is that there is a zone around trees and people have to be careful not to go into that zone, but that there is no physical protection of the trees. Member Marks stated that other Bay Area communities put barricades around trees during development and recommended that San Francisco should do the same.

Member Rodgers reported that the Planning Department has recently set forth a requirement for a Tree Protection Plan so that when a private developer is doing work within the zone of a tree canopy that they put up some protection around the tree. Exentions are made for street trees where it can be just around

Member Rodgers discussed the Planning Department's involvement with an interagency effort called the Better Streets Program to work with DPW and other agencies on a streets plan for the City of San Francisco. One component of the Plan would require a payback for trees during public development projects, e.g. in kind replacement if trees were lost. It was recommended that the Board of Supervisors be asked for specific criteria for tree protection in order to ensure success.

Chair Milne asked if the Library Commission approved the plans for the Library on Bacon Street. Member Short stated that the Library was part of the bond measure for new libraries. It was stated that an application was made to remove the trees that was initially denied at the staff level but was overturned, as there was public support to remove the trees, not to retain them.

Member Blair stated that trees are continuously cut down during development, and there does not seem to be political will to support tree preservation in San Francisco. It was stated that other Bay Area communities, such as Berkeley, have lush tree canopies in comparison to San Francisco's. Member Blair advised that Los Gatos requires a hefty deposit from developers that are held onto for five years to make sure that trees are preserved and recommended a similar program for San Francisco. It was suggested that DPW raise awareness of this process so that construction workers understand what is required. Member Blair indicated that even fines might not mean much to a multi-million dollar development. It was suggested that more trees be landmarked, especially in parks, to ensure their preservation.

Member Boss stated there are many issues that play a role, e.g. planning, project implementation, supervision, enforcement, education and awareness. It was proposed that this topic be considered by the Planning Committee to develop an action plan.

Member Sherk recommended not only addressing the public sector, but also educating the private sector through schools in order to cultivate a different attitude on the importance of trees, especially among young people. It was recommended that a Committee work on writing an Op-Ed to be submitted to the newspaper that would discuss the importance of outreach and education on tree preservation targeting City officials and the private sector.

Vice-Chair Quirke recommended an Op-Ed and contacting Chron Watch with a discussion of the institutional lack of respect for trees during development projects and bringing the photographs to their attention. It was indicated that the City responds instantaneously to Chron Watch to make sure that their reputation is upheld. Member Quirke also suggested moving ahead with an action plan through the Committee process, but recommended a less methodical approach with a more rapid timeline.

Member Cohen requested a status report from the agencies that have given reports to the Council on their efforts on behalf of trees as she has not seen that much progress. It was stated that the Council has a lack of leadership without a Coordinator and asked when there would be a replacement on the previous

Member Blair stated that there is more need for tree protection at the Board of Supervisors and Mayor's level. Chair Milne asked how successful the fining system is. Member Short stated that an analysis was done recently and it has improved over time for the percentage of fines that have been upheld when they get to an administrative hearing. It was stated that fines tend to get reduced, but that is changing as more fines are being upheld by hearing officers. Member Short advised that there are currently two full time staff members that can process fines but are not working full time on fines as DPW does not have available staff. It was stated that when DPW finds about these violations they can issue fines, and requested that Member Boss send the information to her. Member Short advised Member Marks that DPW has hundreds of photographs of tree problems in the City that they would be happy to share. It was recommended that this item would be a good topic at the Planning and Policy Committee as to what would be practical next steps that the Council could take. Member Boss stated that we are talking about changing how government works and the mindset of the people of San Francisco. That is not a spontaneous thing that will happen and asked that the Council consider formally evaluating this issue.

Chair Milne stated that the Planning Committee will put this item on their agenda and in the meantime, color photos can be presented to various City Committees and the Board of Supervisors. Vice-Chair Quirke stated that actions at the Board level can be initiated right away as was the case with the Landmark Tree Ordinance, and recommended showing photos to an individual Board of Supervisors member in order to start the process. Member Boss stated that he is willing to participate in the action but would like support from fellow Council members. Member Cohen stated that she would be sending photos to the Board of Supervisors on a regular basis and would be contacting a freelance writer that writes articles on trees. It was recommended that the Council put together a concerted effort and then bring in other entities. Member Cohen discussed the San Francisco Tree Council who has been working on these issues for over a decade, but does not have sufficient staff.

7. **Staff Report.** (Information and Discussion) Staff will provide updates on UFC administrative and programmatic operations relating to planning, funding, outreach, and other related activities.

Chair Milne reported that the Council is short one member and that Member Costello provided a recommendation. The Council Secretary advised that the applicant from City College of San Francisco indicated in an email that he would forward his application to the Board of Supervisors Rules Committee. The seat is for "one representative of the University of California Cooperative Extension or a representative of another educational organization involved with tree management." Chair Milne asked Council Members to forward recommendations either to himself or to the Council Secretary. Member Blair recommended that Department staff send job announcements to local universities and to appropriate departments. The Council Secretary stated that the Department of the Environment sends job announcements to lists of people who have requested to receive job announcements and it includes educational institutions.

Chair Milne stated that the Funding Committee discussed acquiring funds for reprinting the Urban Forestry brochure and the Tree Pruning Standards brochure and that funding has not yet been identified. Member Cohen stated that at the last Council meeting, Ms. Wuerfel stated that she would be happy to work on behalf of obtaining the funds for the tree pruning brochure but that Ms. Ma indicated that help was not needed. Member Cohen expressed her concern that the Department is cutting funds from the Council on every level, and requested that the Department Director attend a Council meeting to discuss the Department's support of urban forestry. Chair Milne advised that the Council's budget is not being cut by the Department of the Environment, but by the departments that fund it, e.g. Redevelopment, PUC, and DPW. Member Cohen inquired about the lack of funding for the tree pruning brochure and the Council Secretary reported that a staff report indicates that there may be potential funding from the Department's Outreach budget. Member Short indicated that the tree-pruning brochure should be revised slightly and reprinted.

Chair Milne reported that the Assistant Director of the Department of the Environment suggested that the Urban Forestry Council could reduce the number of meetings (that is now approximately 48 per year) and requested that this topic be discussed at the July meeting. It was stated that in order to make meeting schedule revisions, a bylaws amendment would have to be noticed. Part of the suggestion was to retain the Landmark Tree Committee meetings in order to attend to the landmark tree application process, but that it may be possible to combine two Committees and have fewer Council meetings per year. The Council was asked to consider these suggestions for a discussion at the July meeting. Member Sherk stated that the Council has a large job before it, and that it does not make sense to cut the number of meetings.

Member Blair inquired about potential funding in order to do public outreach on landmark trees.

**8. Committee Reports: (Discussion).**

- **Funding Committee**

The next meeting will be on July 3, 2007 at 12:00 PM at 11 Grove Street. Chair Milne reported that the Funding Committee did not have anything to report, as they did not meet in June. Member Marks stated that he is waiting for communication from the Department as to who may approach certain funders and until that is clarified, it will be hard to pursue outside funding. Chair Milne stated that at the May Funding Committee meeting, Member Miller stated that she would talk to PG&E about a grant and she was turned down, and Member Marks was going to investigate the state legislation about taxing water bottles.

- **Planning & Policy Committee**  
Chair, Carla Short

tree status. Chair Boss indicated that he would be meeting with Supervisor Tom Ammiano to see about facilitating more landmark trees. It was reported that the Committee worked on revising the Nomination Form and are now working on revising and clarifying the criteria because there was confusion in applying the criteria when considering landmark tree status.

9. **Chair's Announcements:** (Discussion) Terry Milne, Chair, Urban Forestry Council. The next Urban Forestry Council meeting will be on Friday, July 27, 2007 at 10:00 AM in City Hall, Room 400. Chair Milne made no additional announcements. Member Sherk inquired about appointment of additional members to Committees. Chair Milne stated that the Council would be considering merging Committees so it would be premature to make appointments at this time.
10. **New Business/Future Agenda Items** (Information and Discussion). Chair Milne stated that a discussion about Committees and meetings, frequency and mergers, would be on next month's agenda. Member Sherk reported that Life Frames Inc. and Living Library are working on influencing the City to focus more on developing green jobs. A green training program is being developed for adults to train people particularly low income, immigrant populations and exiting foster care youth to learn to plant trees, the importance of trees, and how to maintain them. It was reported that this program has not been recommended for funding again this year and Member Sherk requested that the Council support this effort at the Board of Supervisors Budget Committee. Chair Milne stated that the budget process is going on now and would not be considered on time if it were placed on next month's agenda in order for the Council to issue a Resolution of support. Member Sherk stated that she has information on the program that she would like to send to the Secretary to send to the Council Members. A discussion was held on Sunshine Ordinance requirements as it pertains to a Council Member or the Council Secretary sending out information to a quorum of members that could potentially initiate an action or discussion. The Council Secretary indicated she would clarify the Sunshine Ordinance requirements with the Deputy City Attorney and report back.
11. **Public Comment:** Members of the public may address the Council on matters that are within the Council's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda. There was no public comment at this time.
12. **Adjournment.** The Urban Forestry Council Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Fish, Council Secretary  
Urban Forestry Council

Approved:

