

**CITY OF LOS BANOS
TREE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 13, 2019**

**ACTION MINUTES – These minutes are prepared to depict
action taken for agenda items presented to the
Tree Commission.**

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Spevak called the Tree Commission Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner Creighton led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL – MEMBERS OF THE TREE COMMISSION PRESENT: Creighton, Kaljian, Menefee, Spevak; Latham absent.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Public Works Director/City Engineer Fachin, Public Works Parks and Recreation Operations Manager Heim, Public Works Administrative Clerk II Nelson.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Menefee, seconded by Creighton to approve the agenda as submitted. The motion carried by the affirmative vote of all Tree Commission Members present; Latham absent.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE ACTION MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF AUGUST 14, 2019: Motion by Menefee, seconded by Creighton to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion carried by the affirmative vote of all Tree Commission Members present; Latham absent.

PUBLIC FORUM: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON ANY ITEM OF PUBLIC INTEREST THAT IS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE CITY; INCLUDES AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS. NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS. DETAILED GUIDELINES ARE POSTED ON THE COUNCIL CHAMBER INFORMATIONAL TABLE. Resident Tom Balatti spoke on his concern regarding the trees in the downtown area on Sixth Street and some side streets, especially M Street. Balatti is embarrassed and upset to drive down Sixth Street and see the trees dying and not taken care of properly. When Balatti worked downtown years ago on Sixth Street the trees were maintained by the City and looked really nice. Balatti noticed the City slowly started replacing the trees which was probably due to age and it seems the trees aren't watered anymore or taken care of as they should be. Balatti commented, "You turn off of Hwy. 152 onto Sixth Street and the first thing you see are dead trees downtown." Balatti continued that the City could do a better job taking care of the trees and hoped the Tree Commission could have some input to help with the situation. Balatti had nothing else and thanked the Commissioners for listening. No one else came forward to speak, and the Public Forum was closed.

DISCUSS THE PLANT A TREE FUND, TREE IDENTIFYING MARKERS, AND FUNDS AVAILABLE TO REPLACE TREES:

First Item: Public Works Director/City Engineer Fachin stated the Plant a Tree Fund has been previously talked about and it is still available. Commissioner Spevak questioned, "If anyone makes a donation to the fund, will trees be planted?" Fachin responded, "Yes."

Second item: Fachin explained, "If the Tree Commission wants to pursue getting Tree Identifying Markers it wouldn't happen until the next budget session." There was discussion on how many markers, which parks they would have them, increase of graffiti and vandalism, and how that would be an impact on maintenance staff. Commissioner Menefee commented, "I like the idea of having framed pictures or markers in front of some trees so residents can see and relate to what trees work well in Los Banos."

Third item: Commissioner Spevak questioned, "How can we get more funds in the future to replace trees? I realize that it's up to the City Council, but what are your thoughts?" Parks and Recreation Operations Manager Heim was going to talk about in his manager's report, a new grant just released. Heim is hoping that through this grant create an Urban Forest Management Plan which will develop a system to manage trees throughout town. There was discussion among Commissioners and staff regarding removing, planting and maintenance to the downtown trees.

PARKS & RECREATION OPERATION MANAGERS REPORT: Parks and Recreation Operations Manager Heim reported there were 18 new trees planted along Stonewood Drive medians and the City is putting in a new dog park by the Ag Complex which will include new trees planted. Heim verified the City is in the processing of applying for the grant that was just released which was previously talked about earlier. Heim will make a formal presentation about the forestry grant program at the next meeting in February. Commissioner Spevak asked for an update regarding the Pacheco Park grant the City applied for. Heim is hoping to hear the results in January or February if we are approved to receive it.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/CITY ENGINEER REPORT: Public Works Director/City Engineer Fachin complimented Joe Heim on what a fantastic job he has done for the department and what he has accomplished in the short amount of time he has been with the City. Fachin misinformed Mr. Lieb at the last meeting regarding the empty planters along Place Road. Fachin explained the correct answer to the Commissioners and that he spoke to Mr. Lieb giving him the correct information. Commissioner Menefee asked, "Does the school district have a copy of the City Tree List for the new school being built?" Fachin response, "Yes, I believe they would. As you know, the City is not allowed to do on-site review at any schools."

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS:

CREIGHTON: Creighton has two topics to talk about. First: He acknowledges that this topic has been discussed at previous meetings, but what can be done about shopping centers not watering the trees. Is there anything the City can tell them? Fachin explained about the City's program that is still in place and businesses are being monitored. There was continued discussion among the Commissioners and staff. Second: The City's hired landscape company isn't pruning properly and they are butchering the trees I have seen. Has anyone trained them on how to prune a tree? Fachin explained the landscape company knows how to prune trees. It depends who the landscape company is working for, a City property or a homeowner. There was further discussion among the Commissioners and staff.

KALJIAN: Kaljian said most of his questions were answered that he was concerned to get back and reinforce the landscape plan on watering. He would like to see it continue because there are businesses that need some help.

LATHAM: Latham absent.

MENEFEE: Menefee no comments for tonight.

SPEVAK: Spevak stated all his concerns were addressed and discussed on the agenda. My last comments as a Tree Commissioner is that, I've been serving on the Tree Commission for the last eight consecutive years. I'm encouraging other people to apply. In his opinion this Commission is very important because it's the reason why we became a Tree City USA. We have Arbor Day but more importantly we are the tree conscientious of the community. Anybody who has ever planted a tree, watch it grow over a period years, it's exciting, and it really makes Los Banos a better place to live. And that is my final comment.

Spevak announced that due to Lincoln's Holiday the next meeting will be on Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Creighton wanted to thank Commission Spevak for his many years of service on the Tree Commission and he is a true Los Banos person. Fachin commented, "Los Banos staff 100% agrees."

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at the hour of 5:50 p.m.

APPROVED:

Chairperson

ATTEST:

Patricia Nelson, Secretary