



COMMUNITY FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CFAC) MINUTES

for the SPECIAL MEETING held Thursday, September 12, 2024, 1-3 pm
Los Angeles City Hall
SPECIAL MEETING – 10th FLOOR – Room 1040

Members of the public are invited to participate. Under the Brown Act, the Committee is prevented from acting on a matter that is brought to its attention during the General Public Comment period; however, issues raised by a member of the public may be added to the agenda for future meetings. Members of the public can also provide comments on an agenda item when it is being considered.

CFAC Members Attending in person: Chair Joanne D’Antonio (CD2 - JD), Vice-chair Miran Kalaydjian (CD3 - MK), Secretary Gwendolyn Henry (CD15 - GH) (arrived late 2pm), Lynnette Kampe (CD1- LK), Deanne Paul (CD4 - DP), Charles Miller (CD5 - CM), Isabelle Duvivier (CD11 - ID), Marianne King (CD12 - MK), Scott Fajack (CD13 - SF), Jack Smith (CD14 - JS), Mayor’s Representative Sejal Patel, **CFAC Members attending online:** Theresa Maysonet (Alternate CD10 - TM) Carolyn LoBuglio - (Alternate CD11 - CL)

Guests/City reps. (partial list): Rachel Malarich, David Miranda - UFD, Adele Slaughter (Alternate CD4 - AS), Andreas Kemkes, Ann Rubin, Cyndi Hubach, Darrelle Field, David Card, Diana Nicole – LAAS, Diana Zogran, Glenn Bailey, Hugh Kenny, Jonathan Weiss, Kathy Schreiner, Melanie Winter, Michael Bircumshaw, Monica Ramirez, Nayda Cantabrana, Nick Leathers, Tanzi Cole, Veronica Lopez, Yael Pardess.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

A. Call to Order by Joanne D’Antonio at 1:03 B. Roll Call and Determination of a quorum: 9 needed for quorum, 11 present.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. **Land Acknowledgement** - We acknowledge the original stewards of what is now Los Angeles County: the Kizh-Gabrieleño, Tongva, Chumash, Tataviam, Kitanemuk, Serrano, Luiseno and Cahuilla people. We commit to uplifting the names of these lands and the community members from more than 200 [California First Nations](#) who reside among us, and we honor their [Traditional Ecological Knowledge](#).

B. **Welcome Comments/Chair Report by Chair Joanne D’Antonio:**

Acknowledged parking difficulties encountered due to emergency closure of City Hall parking lot. Welcome to Marianne King, who is our new CD12 Representative.

Pruning letters are going out - soon we will be out of stamps. The LANCSA is doing a postcard campaign through to October, directed to Mayor Karen Bass, asking for a Tree Canopy Mandate. Committee Chair D’Antonio had a meeting with the Deputy Mayor for Homelessness. The DM indicated that the plans for the Interim Housing Project at Midvale in CD5, which removed ≈15 eucalyptus trees, predates the Mayor's elected term, and she referred the Chair to the Council Office, as well as the Deputy Mayor for Housing to discuss plans for future projects, with a goal to encourage retention of mature tree canopy on proposed sites.

3. MOTIONS

A. **APPROVAL OF JULY MINUTES - Motion to adopt the Minutes of the Community Forest Advisory Committee meeting held July 11, 2024.** Moved by LK, seconded by MK, approved unanimously.

4. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE’S SUBJECT MATTER JURISDICTION - None.

5. CFAC REPS' & OFFICIALS ORAL UPDATES -

A. Jack Smith: Black Walnut Day in Ascot Hills Park on Sunday, September 22, 2024 at 11am-6pm. A bike ride, free tree sapling adoption, family food distribution, lots of family fun activities.

B. Isabelle Duvivier – CFAC is partnering with CD11 and the Businesses Improvement District around Gold's Gym to create a pollinator corridor. Planting native trees in empty tree wells as well as understory native plants. It's a year-long project, we're launching it with the Council District and Urban Forestry, Bureau of Street Services and other city agencies to manage permitting for larger tree wells enlargement. Gerald Stevens has ordered 50 trees for the project.
Also received permission from RAP to plant 32 trees at Penmar golf course, as all the trees there died after the irrigation was turned off. We did a drawing of an oak woodland, with 3 varieties of oak species.

C. Chris Miller: We had another meeting with the native species pilot program, which was very productive. Proposed an additional list of species, taking their concerns in mind. We came to a verbal agreement on 12 species, some of them are almost impossible to procure, so we will have to be very proactive in locating a source. To that end, have developed a relationship with the Catalina Conservancy. As a courtesy, they have 3 species specific to the island: the Pacific Oak, the Catalina Manzanita, Catalina Ironwood. They will be growing all three in 5-15 gallons to use in our pilot project. Securing some of the other species on the list is still challenging. We're trying to identify plants that make sense to be incorporated into the city, for different sized applications and uses. Isabelle is moving forward on 2 sites in Venice.

Isabelle Duvivier – got permission for different types of trees i.e. Western Redbud, California Wax Myrtle, California Ash. Have paid to widen the parkway around those trees to support root health. The desert species need extra support during the summer due to their cycle of receiving water during a summer monsoon season.

D. Rachel Malarich – Thank you to all who attended the Urban Forest for Changing Times symposium last week.

CM: The Urban Forestry community is often cut off from the larger Biodiversity and Ecosystem focused scientific communities. Some of the opinions being offered would have benefitted from participation of the CNPS, Theodore Payne Foundation, or biology from USC or UCLA.

E. Isabelle Duvivier – I am on the Biodiversity Expert Council which is the same group that produced the [Biodiversity Report \(2022\)](#). At the last council meeting Mos Dojiri is looking for a City Council steward and champion. Without Koretz, it is missing. CM Tim McOsker, Raman, and Yaroslavsky were names brought forward.

Other concerns: [Reviving the Wildlife Ordinance](#).

An opportunity to get an Urban Ecologist in a more profound role at RAP.

6. SPECIAL GUEST

David Miranda, Urban Forestry Division Manager

Introduction – David Miranda has been with the UFD for over 20 years, not including 5 years with sidewalk construction services. 25 years collectively with the Bureau of Street Services.

Questions and Answers:

1. What changes have occurred at the UFD since the budget cut Spring 2023?

David: Fiscal year 2023-24, UF was funded for close to \$28 million. This year the budget is \$27 million. 27 staff positions were cut. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25, UFD is funded to trim ~40,000 trees, as compared to FY 2023-24 count of 45,000 trees. UFD was funded to plant 2,000 trees last

FY, this year 500 tree plantings will be conducted citywide. This FY, funded for 3 tree removal crews, which equates to 3,000 tree removals. But, due to budget cuts, UFD has shifted staff and will be removing, collectively, 1,000 trees. In FY 2024-25, in order to keep up with the Programmed grid trimming schedule, decisions were made to shift staff away from planting trees & removals, and redirect staff towards fulfilling programmed Grid tree trimming duties. 8 field crews are trimming ≈40,000 trees citywide, equitably, across 15 Council Districts. The Grid trimming maps are available on the BSS Site for viewing under the UFD page, with inventory & records from 2013-present.

<https://streetsla.lacity.org/ufd-grid-trimming-maps>
<https://streetsla.lacity.org/tree-inventory>

UFD will be planning FY 2025-26 grid trimming, soon. Will be meeting with each Council District, so bringing attention to the CFAC Representatives to review next FY's trimming plan, to provide valued suggestions, feedback.

Overview: Onsite staff for a tree trimming includes a supervisor, certified tree surgeons, arborists, tree climbing specialists, who evaluate proper care by tree species, wildlife needs (i.e. wait for spring nesting season to end). 8 crews are directed by Area Supervisors and Superintendents in 5 divisions: East Valley, West Valley, North, Central, Bay Harbor.

CFAC reps can reach out to division leads for any concerns and communications regarding tree trimming.

JD: In East Valley, positive dialogue/feedback regarding trimming after overtrimming the previous week. After meeting with CFAC Rep, supervisor instructed the crew to be conscious of retaining the canopy while trimming height requirements for truck clearance. I asked cherrypicker operator to avoid unnecessarily trimming tree upper limbs.

LK: Regarding trimming of evergreens like Canary Island Pines & Magnolias – they receive stress if trimmed in the heat of summer. Is there attention to trim these species at the proper season?

David: If there is a broken limb, other emergency situations, or homeowner insurance concerns, evergreen species might receive unseasonal trimming. But species like Eucalyptus, Pine Trees, any tree contraindicated for summer trimming are deferred for fall / winter. Example: 1200 Canary Island Pines in CD12 being deferred to winter, and trimmed to guidelines.

- 2. Regarding ongoing improvements in website for Tree Removal Notification (TRN): Can UFD send emails to the Council Offices, DONE and CFAC members when new tree removal entries are posted for a District? ie: an email with the URL link to the page & “new activity on the TR site”**

David: We have limited ability for notification. Will reach out to DONE, and the IT team for possible solutions to see if ticklers can be sent to a targeted group, whenever the website list is updated with additional entries.

AS: Clarification - for this FY are more trees being removed than planted?

David: Yes. Crews reduced to fulfill 1,000 tree removals of unsound / dead specimens and 500 tree plantings. Due to the budget cuts and the hiring freeze, the focus has been to pivot toward maintaining the existing tree canopy. The difficult decision is to allot resources to maintain a 17-Year trim cycle on the large mature trees, to minimize tree failures. Watering is 5 years on new trees. UFD tree watering crews are taxed at current staffing levels. 10,000 trees are on the citywide

watering schedule, so adding more tree plantings taxes the watering schedule. When trees graduate out of the watering schedule, once the hiring freeze is lifted & budget returns, we continue to advocate for more positions to get tree plantings up to 2, 3, 4,000.

3. IN LIEU TREE FEE (Tree Guarantee Fee - TFG)

JD: What is the status on the Sec 62.177 In Lieu Tree Fee / Tree Guarantee planting plan?

David: The fees are being collected. There are currently two years' worth of trees funded. UFD Supervisor Hector Banuelos and City Forest Director Rachel Malarich are working closely with others who are participating in identifying the areas of interest to plant these trees. Going to be purchasing trees once the locations are finalized with the council offices & the City Forest Officer.

AS: Regarding reducing pressure on tree watering team resources - can Silva Cells be looked at as part of the budget for planting? Cells will provide the ability to deep soak the roots, reducing the frequency of teams having to water.

JD: Weren't planting partners participating in the watering?

David: Gatorbags are used by UFD. Non-profits and community groups are funded & work on other planting projects. When In Lieu fees are collected, it's not enough to cover just planting. UFD provides the long term care.

Rachel: 3 types of fees are collected related to the TGF trees. Non-profits were approached to do the planting and care, but the procedures in the TGF ordinance regarding placement, maps, review, approvals is not currently conducive to making contracts with non-profits / outside organizations. City Forest Office is working with UFD and others to devise solutions to the implementation issues. Come up with a criteria, methodology & streamlined process for location selections and Council approvals.

JD: Does the in-lieu fee include enough money for the 5 years of water?

Rachel: Council wanted a subsidized lower-fee for 2 categories: single family homeowners & smaller 4-unit multi-unit properties. The fee only pays for the tree and the hole to plant it. The city is subsidizing the watering, and has budgeted for 3 years of UFD watering. The forestry department is working on asking a fee adjustment for 5 years of watering, and a proposal to remove the subsidy. The plan is to present the fee study, the tree planting map and contracting issue together, and Council would make the final decision.

4. TREE VANDALISM, ILLEGAL TREE CUTTING & PENALTIES IN NEW CODE

AS: How can we find out if illegal tree cutting is being followed up, and if consequences are being administered?

David: Whenever MyLA311 street tree violations are reported, UFD investigates to the best of our ability. Trying to improve the processes. UFD responds to 40,000 service requests annually. Currently don't have the capacity to follow up with communications for everything being reported. I am going to request a budget package for a whole team to enforce street tree violations.

The proposal will request funds for new positions for a violations investigation & enforcement team...and MyLA data compilation to track successful correction & performance.

As most violations occur surrounding weekends, the proposal will be to schedule the violations team in regular 4 day-10 hour, 40-hour schedules, through the weekend. MyLA311 reports, investigations, how many citations are issued, and how many times people comply will be some of the performance data compiled.

JD: Are higher fines going to be proposed? Currently, if caught, the fine is \$200.

David & Rachel: Yes. UFD is currently working on a new fine study. Ideally, large fines to recuperate the funds to place new trees in the ground, and discourage people from doing these egregious acts.

CM: Can the fine restructure be related to the cost of replacement, and not a set amount, so it doesn't have to be litigated every 10 years due to inflation?

JD: If the tree is worth \$30,000, the fine may have to go against the property.

David: Yes. The plan is to develop it to that effect. ***In the meantime: if anyone sees any type of illegal trimming or potential tree removal, don't hesitate. Open up a MyLA311 service request.*** It can even be sent directly to me, David Miranda. But the ticket system will ensure staff will issue a notice to comply with the property owner. We are trying to get more resources as some violators comply, but other violators are resistant.

SF: Please clarify what happens after a notice of compliance is issued to the homeowner?

David: Improper pruning of a street tree and now the tree needs to be removed; or they completely removed the tree. In the case of an irrevocably damaged or removed tree, if there is room, we ask for 2 to be planted on the site. We can ask for up to a 60" box, depending on the space. We issue a notice to comply. Some property owners comply, or 14-20 days later we ask to comply again. At a third time, they are pulled into BSS and a formal 3rd hearing will occur if they don't comply.

SF: How often do those hearings happen?

David: do not have data.

MK: There was a black walnut, suspected it was an illegal removal, City Planning contacted UFD to find out if a permit was issued for it. The planner was told they would have to file a CSR. Is that normal procedure? Does City Planning actually have to fill out a form?

David: If City Planning has that inquiry, the procedure is to open up a MyLA311 request, upload photos and any documents, build a case, and create a trackable ticket. For the CP who opened it, we might enter external notes, and they would get an email with our findings.

MK: Regarding tree preservation – For a parcel map or subdivision, in the initial review process, there is a UFD form letter provided to the advisory agency that outlines tree replacement policy for any tree that will be removed. At that early stage of review, there is no form letter language emphasis on preservation of trees on the site. Is UFD being given the opportunity to provide input at the beginning, so the public has a direction for their input? In reviewing a substantial sample of applications there seems to be more approvals to remove a tree, compared to plans which preserve a tree.

David: UFD Land Development section does scrutinize plans in the beginning of a project, with tree preservation in mind. We will ask those questions, give suggestions on how to adjust the plans to keep the tree. If a development comes to us pre-approved, there is some type of communication gap.

Rachel: You may be flagging something that needs more attention, 2 years of engaging with Planning it seems they are offering UFD opportunity to provide early input. It's been our understanding most cases are being sent to UFD early.

DP: Regarding illegal removal – perhaps develop a reward system when a developer or homeowner does the right thing, mechanisms which incentivize good behavior.

5. TREE TRIMMING PHOTO RECORDS

ID: Regarding the tree trimming schedule on the website – could there be some demarcation of the larger plan, the next 3-5 years of tree trimming, so people can get a vision of the larger goals? Even “draft” maps, just to see what UFD is thinking.

David: Yes. We are going to work on preparing the roadmap for 2025, 2026, 2027 and the 2028 Olympic year. If in your District, you drive by an area and have a specific area of concern, contact our office.

JD: Regarding the Public Facing Website - can the crew take a picture after the tree is trimmed and upload it in the system?

David: the crews are taking before & after pictures and emailing from site, many make it to the Public Facing Website but can also send it to you.

6. NURSERY ISSUES - NATIVE SPECIES PLANTING EFFORTS

JD: Regarding finding native species stock, are we improving in availability?

David: Have a contract, can request that native species, we will put in a request to our contractor, who may subcontract out to others in the search, but they can come back that they could not find the requested species.

JD: Crape Myrtles replacing ficus on Laurel Canyon were variegated, different colors.

David: A mix of Nachez and Muskogee, noticed that they didn't match, but they will grow to be the same size.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT FOR DAVID MIRANDA

7. Regarding tree removal permits and replacement trees: Do you know how many follow-up visits UFD makes to ensure that mitigation trees that have been planted after tree removals have survived to 3-5 years after planting? Especially for protected tree removals, where more were required?

David: Now that we have our tree inventory. The bond is in place, the team will check at the 3-year mark. There is no follow up for those trees after the bond release. The tree inventory tool is powerful, it is being used to plot trees in the paper record, and the mitigation trees are being plotted into the system. All mitigation trees are protected and cannot be removed.

Diana Nicole: Trying to measure if the protected tree ordinance is working in terms of mitigation tree plantings. What percentage of trees are being planted after the permit is given to the applicant vs. the bonds that were collected?

David: There have been instances where trees have failed, the bond not returned. But do not have data on how many trees were replanted. It is not on the public-facing website, will get back with the data. After the 3 year period, there is no re-check. We will if there is a complaint.

JD: Are the public and property trees on different layers?

David: Yes.

8. Considering most protected trees are located in high fire severity zones, does UFD ensure mitigation tree plantings are being done to LAFD defensible space standards?

David: When the party's tree expert provides their plan, we verify that it is a good suggestion plan. We verify the trees are planted, but we don't get involved in placement for fire clearances.

9. **At the BPW hearing September 2021, it was determined that LACMA's removal of 41 public trees would result in 62 replacement trees with species TBD in collaboration with CFAC and community representatives. LACMA was to pay \$120,590 for the trees, and 3-5 years of watering. Commissioner Viegas went on record that BSS would plant even more trees than the minimum. It has been 3 years – what is the status of these trees, who is the point person on getting the trees planted? Will the planting include new tree wells? Is there a target date?**

David: Hector is working with the council office. The bond did not fund new tree well cutouts. The trees will be planted where there are existing cutouts.

10. Regarding Oak Tree Fund, has the UFD been planting?

David: yes. UFD has planted several Coast Live Oaks through the city and they are currently being watered by the UF team.

7. Department Oral Updates/discussions

City Forest Office - Rachel Malarich appreciated meeting date change to allow attendance at Urban Forest symposium

8. NEW BUSINESS - MOTIONS

- A. Motion: To send a letter to RAP General Manager and the RAP Commission requesting new brush clearance procedures in public parks as a result of Children's Arboretum problem.**

Link to letter:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1olCLmNuJocO1wMwKFMuEfDhEIAZwvIynCRI-eDVlgNw/edit?usp=sharing>

Moved JD, seconded by MK

- 1) Typo "Urban Forestry" instead of "UR" Commissioners

Motion to Amend JD, seconded by MK

- 2) Discussion: Amended to state under "Breach of Contract" that, if found liable, the contractor should pay for all costs related to damage that has been done, including replanting the native trees and shrubs. **8 for, amendment passes**
- 3) Discussion: At end, to include wording that any procedures adopted should be in writing, along with any verbal agreements by all parties. **Vote unanimous, amendment passes**
- Vote for letter as amended, approved, unanimous.**

- B. Motion: To send a letter in support of the Second Draft of the Landscape Ordinance and Point System and include further recommendations for amendments.**

Link to letter:

All current and previously released drafts are available at:

<https://planning.lacity.gov/preservation-design/landscape-and-site-design#current-drafts>

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yNGeRycYC3MWAIX13zibw12BA1xSjcFr/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109186875501667391171&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Moved by GH, seconded by JS

Vote: letter approved, unanimous.

- C. Motion: ED 1 To approve a letter to the Mayor and City Council (RE: CF 23-0623) objecting to item 6 and other items in the Mayor's July 1, 2024**

Mayor's ED 1 Revision is at this link: [ED1_revised_memo_3](#)

Draft of proposed CFAC letter: [CFAC ED1 draft letter \(1\)](#)

Moved LK, seconded by MK

Vote: letter approved, unanimous.

D. Motion: to send letter to RAP, Mayor, City Council opposing Arroyo Seco San Pascual Water Reclamation project, its proposed tree and habitat removals, and relinquishing the area to South Pasadena.

Letter:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xwj_m_FvE78MJCcGztziyCSpWelPfa4vUyyMab2r4qhw/edit?usp=sharing

Moved JS, seconded by MK

Vote: letter approved, unanimous.

E. Motion: to send a letter to RAP, City Council and the Mayor to oppose, unless procedural changes are made, RAP 24-191 , which proposes a budget of up to \$7 million/year for 3 years of subcontracted work including brush clearance and tree pruning.

Letter:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cLGXUWEWz6XUiyn-kiL59Ud9oBEUTdna/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109186875501667391171&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Moved DP, seconded by JS

Vote: letter approved, unanimous.

F. Motion: The SoCal Stop Artificial Turf Task Force is a coalition of organizations and individuals who support the goal of eliminating installations of artificial turf, and we join their efforts by signing onto their position letter linked here:

Letter:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WdEiOsAjjEzZdcpUFTZwHAudOwz-6jseT-PlZ89b-QM/edit?usp=sharing>

Moved JD, seconded by JS

Vote: letter approved, unanimous.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report from ad hoc PTO Subcommittee - Lynnette Kampe

Met twice, August 8, 2024 and September 11, 2024

Members: Lynnette Kampe, Joanne D'Antonio, Charles Miller, Scott Fajack, Michael Bircumshaw, Carolyn LoBuglio, Andreas Kemkes, Silva Blackstone, Diana Nicole

- First meeting was building a list of things that we thought were failings and solutions.
- Second meeting to strip down the list to 3-4 action items we want to prioritize to ask for, all others listed as comments and thoughts.
- Third meeting have Rachel attend. Ask what is already planned in the Urban Forestry Management plan

11. ADJOURNMENT 2:58pm Next Meeting October 3, 2024

For questions regarding agendas, please contact Lynnette Kampe at CFAC.CD01@gmail.com .

CFAC regularly meets on the 1st Thursday of every month. You may subscribe to receive future meeting agenda notification at: <https://lacity.gov/government/subscribe-agendas/boards-commissions-committees> (Select the 4th box down.)