

**CITY OF LOS BANOS
TREE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 14, 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 5:02 p.m.

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

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

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 Latham, seconded by Creighton to approve the agenda as submitted. The motion carried by the affirmative vote of all Tree Commission Members present.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE ACTION MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF MAY 8, 2019: Motion by Menefee, seconded by Latham to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion carried by the affirmative vote of all Tree Commission Members present.

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 Gene Lieb is concerned about the median located at the intersection of Place Road and East B Street. His understanding is that the developer constructed the median with holes for 28 trees in 2004, and a school would be built on the opposite corner in the future. When Lieb moved to Dante Court in 2009, a block away from that intersection, there were still no trees in the median. Lieb questioned then City Manager Steve Carrigan, who responded that irrigation lines hadn't yet been installed for landscaping at the site and that the trees needed to be planted. Public Works arranged for irrigation lines to be installed and then the City planted 25 Chinese Pistachio trees. With the current construction of the new school, turn lanes were needed and half of the center median has been removed along with 24 trees. There are currently 4 existing trees and 10 empty holes. Lieb has two reasons for addressing the Tree

Commissioners. First: He knows the Tree Commissioners don't have authorization but suggests going forward, the commission can be involved during planning of subdivisions and new schools so that these situations don't happen again. Second: "What is going to happen with these holes now?" "Are trees going to be planted or stay empty now that the road is finished?" Fachin explained that the project isn't finished yet and the left lane is going in as planned when the signal light is installed. They are separate projects that are funded differently. His recollection is the holes will be gone and to design it in the past to accommodate the school is almost impossible to realize how the traffic flow would be like today. It's unfortunate this was planned a long time ago. There was further discussion on the issues pertaining to the intersection of Place Road and East 'B' Street.

DISCUSS AND REVIEW TREE INFORMATION FOR THE WEBSITE: Parks and Recreation Operations Manager Heim reported he made a few changes to the tree information on the City's website and asked the Commissioners if they had any additional comments to change or add to the information. Latham suggested not following the current format on the botanical names and suggested capitalizing the first word; otherwise, the information is well made out and homeowners will easily access it to learn about watering, planting, trimming, etc. Spevak applauds Heim on the more information we provide the better it is for our residents. Kaljian suggested looking over the list of powers and duties of the commissioners to possibly set goals and review them one at a time at our meetings. Spevak questioned, "Is there a particular item on the list that the commissioners haven't pursued enough that Kaljian would like to review?" Kaljian isn't familiar with the item pertaining to a City forestry program. "Is there something in writing that is developed on this program?" Heim explained that it's in the capital budget for the City to pursue a forestry grant program, which he researched when he started last year, prior to you becoming a tree commissioner. After further discussion, the Commissioners requested a presentation on the Forestry Program as an agenda item at the November Tree Commission meeting.

PARKS & RECREATION OPERATION MANAGERS REPORT: Parks and Recreation Operations Manager Heim reported about the completed project on the right-of-way along Hwy. 165 by East B Street where seven trees were planted on a small strip. The department continues to renovate different areas throughout town with as many trees as possible. The City also submitted a grant for about 200 new trees at the Pacheco Park.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/CITY ENGINEER REPORT: Public Works Director/City Engineer Fachin reported in the next month in the area of Madison Avenue and Jefferson Avenue, a few dead trees will be completely removed. Within 2-3 months some trees that have dead branches will be removed for safety. In September, a few downtown trees have been scheduled to be removed per discussions in previous meetings. There was also discussion of why the Sycamore trees were removed from the list to be planted in town. Fachin will ask the Parks Foreman O'Brien and will respond at the next meeting.

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS:

CREIGHTON: Creighton complimented how nice Oliveira Park is maintained. Creighton questioned, "How are funds acquired after the subdivisions are completed and the City starts maintaining the parks and medians?" Fachin explained, and there was discussion about the City's Landscape and Lighting District fees that residents pay yearly which provides maintenance on streetlights, streets, parks, etc.

KALJIAN: Kaljian noticed his Sycamore trees have almost 100% coverage in the afternoon so he drove around town and noticed he couldn't find one parking lot that had 50% coverage. He knows the City has a program to oversee business landscaping. Kaljian asked, "So where is the program?" He would like to see it continue. Fachin explained the program is still in place and will continue but at this time, the City is short staffed and it will be happening in the near future. There was further discussion regarding using more water, 50% coverage and putting the Sycamore trees back on the City Tree List, as previously discussed.

LATHAM: Latham announced that the next meeting will be her last meeting. It has been a pleasure to be on the Tree Commission.

MENEFEE: Menefee mainly wanted to talk about putting the Sycamore trees back on the City Tree List, which has been discussed. The information that was presented on the website is put together well and will be helpful for the residents, especially the people who are just moving to Los Banos. Menefee asked, "Is there a rule or law that when a new home is built that two new trees have to be planted?" Fachin answered, "No, there is not."

SPEVAK: Spevak has items to talk about. "If there was a fund to plant a tree, would the fund be used? At one time in the past there was a Plant a Tree fund." Spevak also wants to develop funds available to replace trees. Fachin answered, "The Plant a Tree fund still exists." After some discussion, it was requested to put on the agenda for next meeting. Spevak requests another discussion agenda item regarding tree identifying markers in different areas of town like the canal trail and different parks.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at the hour of 5:56 p.m.

APPROVED:

John Spevak, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Patricia Nelson, Secretary