

**CLAREMONT TREE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 6:00 PM

City Hall Council Chamber, 225 W. Second Street, Claremont, California

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brower called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

COMMITTEE MEMBER: BINDER, BROWER, SIFUENTES

ABSENT:

COMMITTEE MEMBER: NONE

ALSO PRESENT:

Cari Dillman, Community Services Manager
Richard Hecker, Landscape Maintenance Supervisor
Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant
Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director

CEREMONIAL MATTERS, PRESENTATIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Brower invited public comment.

Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant, announced that no written public comment had been received.

There were no requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Brower invited public comment on the Consent Calendar.

Senior Administrative Assistant Ross announced that no written public comment had been received on the Consent Calendar.

There were no requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

Committee Member Sifuentes moved to approve the Consent Calendar, seconded by Committee Member Binder, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: ***Committee Member – Binder, Brower, Sifuentes***

NOES: ***Committee Member – None***

1. Tree Committee Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2026

Approved and filed the regular Tree Committee meeting minutes of February 18, 2026.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM

2. Request for Tree Removal – 347 Indiana Avenue

Cari Dillman, Community Services Manager, provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Manager Dillman; Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director; and Richard Hecker, Landscape Maintenance Supervisor and certified Arborist; responded to questions from the Committee regarding the history of Canary Island pine tree failure in the Indiana Avenue/Michigan Drive neighborhood as compared to in the Claraboya area, how this tree compares to or differs from the Claraboya trees, whether staff is able to confirm the wind patterns presented by the property owner and how wind patterns may differ in different areas, whether staff spoke with other residents on Michigan Drive regarding the proposed removal, when the tree is next scheduled for grid trimming, whether the arborists observed any birds or wildlife when inspecting the tree, how removal of the tree would be handled if signs of wildlife were present, and the property owner's options to appeal if the request is denied.

Chair Brower invited public comment.

Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant, announced that three written public comments had been received on this item.

Fred Roth noted no apparent recent disturbance to the curb or sidewalk near the tree. Dr. Roth suggests removing a previously replaced portion of sidewalk to assess the condition of the tree's roots.

Richard Suter, property owner, stated that in the last five years, eight trees have failed or been removed on Indiana Avenue following windstorms. Mr. Suter noted that the tree's proximity to the house causes him and his wife to lose sleep because of the possibility of the tree falling on their house, and lack of sleep puts his wife at risk of injury from a fall.

John, Claremont resident, feels the need to balance any concerns regarding the tree with the effect of its removal on the community. The resident understands the property owner's concerns and states that the tree is equally close to his home and that his wife also suffers from health issues keeping her homebound, but he and his wife enjoy the benefits the tree provides and do not wish for it to be removed.

David, Claremont resident, stated that he values living in "The City of Trees," and noted the environmental effects of the tree's removal, such as impact to wildlife and elimination of shade/heat mitigation. The trees in the area are healthy and strong despite recent windstorms, and because the tree leans slightly toward street, it would be more likely to fall in that direction if it falls. The resident asked the Committee to consider the huge personal, community, and environmental impact if the tree were removed.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

The Committee discussed ways to evaluate risk, how to minimize risk while preserving the tree, trying to find a direct link between the tree and loss of life, and the fact that the tree is healthy and does not meet criteria for removal.

Committee Member Sifuentes moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission deny the request for the removal of the Canary Island pine tree at 347 Indiana Avenue, seconded by Chair Brower, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: Committee Member – Brower, Sifuentes

NOES: Committee Member – Binder

3. Request for Tree Removal – 2243 N Indian Hill Boulevard

Cari Dillman, Community Services Manager, provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Manager Dillman; Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director; and Richard Hecker, Landscape Maintenance Supervisor and certified Arborist; responded to questions from the Committee regarding the history of claims for property damage, the point at which payments for damage claims outweigh the value of the tree, whether there would be an economic benefit to replacing the tree with two new ones, the fact that the tree is showing signs of drought stress but is not in a state of severe decline, whether increased watering will improve the longevity and health of the tree, whether increased watering and subsequent tree growth will cause additional property damage, and whether any documentation has been provided to substantiate claims of health impacts.

Chair Brower invited public comment.

Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant, announced that no written public comment had been received on this item.

Dan Berens, property owner, stated that he does not have adequate room to park vehicles in the driveway without at least one car being beneath the tree. Mr. Berens expressed concern regarding costs for possible future property damage and trip/fall incidents, and reported that he will continue to file claims for any private property damage.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

The Committee discussed adjusting the previous claim settlements for inflation; reasons cited in the *Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual* as not valid for tree removal, including “[h]ardscape damage if a feasible, economic solution exists to save the tree,” “[n]uisance debris,” “[r]oots getting into the sewer lines resulting from deteriorating infrastructure,” and “[s]urface root intrusion”; and how increased watering may mitigate future damage.

Director Swan, Manager Dillman, and Supervisor Hecker responded to questions from the Committee regarding when the most recent property claim was submitted, whether the root system of the tree is established, the substances dripping from the tree, whether installation of a root barrier would be possible or beneficial, and the City’s policy against treating trees for aesthetic or nuisance complaints.

Committee Member Binder moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission deny the request for the removal of the California sycamore tree at 2243 North Indian Hill Boulevard and asked staff to research the feasibility of installing a root barrier to mitigate further hardscape damage, seconded by Committee Member Sifuentes, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: ***Committee Member – Binder, Brower, Sifuentes***
NOES: ***Committee Member – None***

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Brower adjourned the meeting of the Tree Committee at 7:25 PM. The next regular meeting of the Tree Committee will be held on April 15, 2026.

Chair

ATTEST:

Recording Secretary