

**CLAREMONT TREE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 at 6:00 PM
City Hall Council Chamber, 225 W. Second Street, Claremont, California

CALL TO ORDER

Director Swan called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

COMMITTEE MEMBER: BINDER, BROWER, SIFUENTES

ALSO PRESENT:

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

CEREMONIAL MATTERS, PRESENTATIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR THE TREE COMMITTEE

Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director, opened nominations for the office of Tree Committee Chair.

Committee Member Sifuentes nominated Nancy Brower for the position of Chair.

Director Swan invited public comment.

Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant, announced that no written public comment had been received regarding the selection of Tree Committee Chair.

There were no requests to speak.

Director Swan closed public comment.

Committee Member Binder moved to appoint Nancy Brower to the office of Tree Committee Chair, seconded by Committee Member Sifuentes, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: Committee Member – Binder, Brower, Sifuentes

NOES: Committee Member – None

Chair Brower opened nominations for the office of Tree Committee Vice Chair.

Chair Brower nominated Russ Binder for the position of Vice Chair.

Chair Brower invited public comment.

Senior Administrative Assistant Ross announced that no written public comment had been received regarding the selection of Tree Committee Vice Chair.

There were no requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

Committee Member Sifuentes moved to appoint Russ Binder to the office of Tree Committee Vice Chair, seconded by Chair Brower, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

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

NOES: ***Committee Member – 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

2. Tree Committee Meeting Minutes of April 30, 2025 (Special)

Chair Brower invited public comment.

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

There were no requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

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

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

NOES: ***Committee Member – None***

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM

3. Request for Removal and Revision of Designated Street Tree List – Forbes Avenue

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

Manager Dillman, Community Services Director Jeremy Swan, and Southern California Edison (SCE) Vegetation Management Operations Manager Gerry Avila responded to questions from the Committee regarding the possibility of burying overhead utility lines, replant locations of the replacement trees in relation to overhead lines, previous instances where trees have had to be removed because of conflict with overhead utility lines, fire risk due to the location of existing trees, whether tree species or proximity to lines creates greater fire risk, power safety shutoff procedures, whether updated fire severity zones prompted the proposed removals, topping history for these trees, the possibility of SCE including stump grinding in the removal process, the timeline for replanting, whether sidewalk repairs will be coordinated with the tree removals, the planting easement on Forbes Avenue, the proposed revisions to the Designated Street Tree List, and the infrastructure of SCE equipment and its vulnerability to rodents/animals.

Chair Brower invited public comment.

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

Unidentified speaker, Claremont resident, expressed concern regarding private property damage during SCE tree trimmings and removals and feels that these trees are vulnerable to winds. The resident also noted that trees have died due to residents failing to water them.

Deborah Robinson, Claremont resident, feels that previous tree topping has made Forbes Avenue unattractive. Ms. Robinson states that residents on the street are subject to losing power due to safety shutoffs or line failure and suggested that power lines be buried.

Erick Quintanilla, Claremont resident, spoke in favor of removing the trees and asked if private landscaping will be restored after the removals are complete.

Joe Napoli, Claremont resident, stated that repeated topping has made the trees unsightly, so he supports their removal. Mr. Napoli and his neighbors have also reported sewer issues related to the placement of the City trees directly above their laterals.

Erik Johnson, Claremont resident, feels that neither the City nor SCE appear to find Forbes Avenue to be at high risk for fire, given the approval of a high-density residential development and the choice not to bury the power lines. Mr. Johnson spoke in favor of removing the trees, but hopes that the process moves quickly and that the residents are allowed input as to the trees to be replanted.

Lilia Hawkins, Sustainable Claremont member, asked that native trees be considered and prioritized for the replant list.

Don Edberg, Claremont resident, asked how realistic the idea of burying the power lines is, given the expense and the upcoming housing development construction in the area. Mr. Edberg advised that planting be planned for the appropriate time of year and with consideration of underground plumbing.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

Manager Dillman confirmed that the City makes every effort to preserve existing landscaping and mitigate damage as much as possible. Staff will work with property owners during the removal process to advise them of the timelines for removal and their species choices for reforestation. Following review in October by the Community and Human Services Commission of the proposed removals, staff will work with SCE and West Coast Arborists to develop a timeline for the project.

Staff and SCE responded to questions from the Committee regarding responsibility for consideration of burying overhead utility lines, the scope of the item versus the La Puerta property development project, previous removals of City trees by SCE, SCE's standard removal process, resident input on tree placement, and the inclusion of native trees in replant lists.

Chair Brower moved to:

A. Recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission approve the removal and replacement of eighteen Red Ironbark eucalyptus trees by Southern California Edison;

B. Approve the revised Designated Street List for Forbes Avenue; and

C. Direct staff to work with Southern California Edison on the cost to the City for stump grinding;

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 7:16 PM.



Nancy Brower
Committee Chair



Dawn Bonnell Ross
Recording Secretary