

**CLAREMONT TREE COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, April 30, 2025 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

ABSENT:

COMMITTEE MEMBER: 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

Emma Grace Howlett and Kei Bromley, Pomona College Sagehen Civic Scholars Interns, provided a PowerPoint presentation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Brower invited public comment.

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

Fred Roth stated that the use of soil amendment when planting trees is not valuable when incorporated into backfill, particularly since most soil in Claremont has no issues that require it.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of the Tree Committee Meeting Minutes of March 19, 2025

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 Chair Brower, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

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

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

2. Request for Tree Removal – 616 Charleston Drive

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

Manager Dillman clarified for the Committee the proposed staff recommendation and possible alternatives.

Chair Brower invited public comment.

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

David Brownlee, property owner, cited other similar trees on his street that fell during previous windstorms, and stated there is a significant probability that his will fall. Mr. Brownlee also noted that pinecones fall from the tree year-round, causing damage to vehicles.

Barnabas Path spoke in support of staff's recommendation and urged using reasoned evaluation to make decisions regarding removals. Mr. Path stated that City trees are an asset to the community as a whole, and that residents may have differing opinions.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

Manager Dillman responded to questions from the Committee regarding the property owner's consent to replanting, should the tree be removed.

Chair Brower moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission approve the request for removal of the tree at 616 Charleston Drive and the replanting of two trees, as required by the Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual, at the property owner's expense, for an estimated total cost of \$2,065, seconded by Committee Member Binder, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

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

3. Request for Tree Removal – 1034 Maryhurst Drive

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

Manager Dillman responded to questions from the Committee regarding whether there are other Brazilian pepper trees on the street, whether the removal of the specific tree would be sufficient to mitigate the allergenic effects on the resident, whether additional trimming would be possible and beneficial, how many pepper trees are planted at the property, and the health of the tree.

Chair Brower invited public comment.

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

Fred Roth stated that not all trees produce airborne pollen, and he is unsure whether the resident's allergy is to this particular tree.

Marc Wirtz, property owner, acknowledged that removing the tree may not mitigate his daughter's health issues, because there are other Brazilian pepper trees on the street. Due to the severity of her allergies he is advocating for its removal in the chance that it will help, but he is comfortable with the recommendations and appreciates staff's willingness to work with him.

Barnabas Path spoke in support of the recommendation to deny the request for removal.

Unidentified speaker noted that the tree in front of the property is female and produces peppercorns year-round. Because not all of the trees produce berries, her daughter wouldn't be allergic to all of the trees in the neighborhood. The resident also cited previous property damage to the water line, due to the placement of the tree.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

The Committee discussed the traits of male versus female trees of the species, airborne versus contact exposure, the health of the trees on the street, and the criteria for removal.

Committee Member Binder moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission approve the request for the removal of the tree at 1034 Maryhurst Drive and the replanting of two trees, as required by the Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual, at the property owner's expense, for a total cost of \$1,820.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Committee Member Binder moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission review the request for removal of the Brazilian pepper tree at 1034 Maryhurst Drive, seconded by Chair Brower, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

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

4. Request for Tree Removal – 2475 Michigan Drive

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

Manager Dillman and Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director, responded to questions from the Committee regarding previous claims for damages that the City has settled, the possibility of future claims, and how the City considers mitigating future payouts.

Chair Brower invited public comment.

Senior Administrative Assistant Ross announced that one written public comment had been received on this item.

Barnabas Path stated that the *Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual* was created to provide a logical approach to how decisions are made. Because trees are public assets, the policies give consideration to the community, not the individual. Mr. Path also noted that replacement costs don't cover the value of the tree being removed.

Fred Roth spoke regarding risk factors for tree failure and tree behavior in winds.

Marc Wirtz asked if non-residents are allowed to make public comment.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

Director Swan responded that, as a Brown Act committee, Tree Committee Meetings are open to the public and that anyone may speak under public comment.

Chair Brower moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission deny the request for the removal of two Canary Island pine trees at 2475 Michigan Drive, seconded by Committee Member Binder, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

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

5. Urban Forest Update

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

Manager Dillman and Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director, responded to questions from the Committee regarding appropriate use of water bags, qualification criteria for Tree City USA designation, possible reasons for the reduction in numbers of trees affected by Invasive Shot Hole Borer and Pine Bark Beetle, instances of tree vandalism, and possible topics for future outreach.

Chair Brower complimented staff on the two tree removals at Tenango Road and Smith Drive.

Chair Brower invited public comment.

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

Barnabas Path spoke in support of the shift in focus toward the quality of the urban forest over the quantity of trees. Mr. Path stated that significant changes were made during the 2011 update to the *Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual*.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Chair Brower closed public comment.

Manager Dillman and Director Swan responded to questions from the Committee regarding attributes and metrics considered when evaluating the quality of the urban forest, and the availability of tree health data.

Chair Brower complimented staff on the improved health of the urban forest and thanked them for taking good care of the trees, valuable to all citizens.

Committee Member Binder enjoyed participating in the Arbor Day event and learning about how to assess the quality of nursery stock when planting.

Chair Brower moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission receive and file the report, seconded by Committee Member Binder, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

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

6. Semi-Annual Reporting of Urban Forest Maintenance Activities

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

Manager Dillman highlighted Richard Hecker and Kyle Jennings, staff arborists, for their work to maintain the urban forest and for their education and outreach efforts with the community.

Chair Brower invited public comment.

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

Barnabas Path spoke about the need to educate the public on the importance of tree watering. Mr. Path suggested putting an outreach plan together before the next drought.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director, responded to questions from the Committee regarding electronic water sensors and the status of proposed removals on Base Line Road at Towne Avenue and in the Village Plaza.

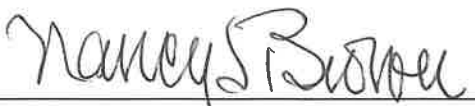
Chair Brower closed public comment.

Chair Brower moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission receive and file the report, seconded by Committee Member Binder, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

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

ADJOURNMENT

Committee Member Brower adjourned the meeting of the Tree Committee at 8:08 PM.



Nancy Brower
Committee Chair



Dawn Bonnell Ross
Recording Secretary