

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: December 5, 2005

Reviewed by: _____

Subject: Clarification and follow-up on Council inquiry regarding proposed tree removals at Ocean View Park, sustainable landscaping and the issue of pesticide/herbicide use as part of the upcoming the park rehabilitation projects

From: Melinda Chinn, Recreation & Community Services Director
Rich Cunningham, Public Works Manager

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding these issues will be presented to the City Council on December 19, 2005.

BACKGROUND

On October 17, 2005, the Parks and Recreation Commission presented the council with a list of park elements that were identified for rehabilitation or construction in Ocean View, Memorial, and Terrace Parks. The Council approved various options for each park element and asked that staff return with a revised cost estimate for the selected options. At the November 7, 2005 meeting staff presented the Council with the revised cost estimates for the parks projects and requested appropriation of additional funds from Measures F and R.

At the November 21, 2005 council meeting, during the review of the minutes of the November 7, 2005 meeting, Councilperson Lieber stated that he thought he had made a motion pertaining to the parks rehabilitation project that included only thinning of the trees at Ocean View Park, non-use of pesticides and herbicides and a review of the planting materials by another consultant for sustainability. The City Administrator stated that the tapes from the November 7, 2005 meeting would be reviewed and if there had been a motion, the minutes would be amended. If after reviewing the minutes it was determined that there had not been a motion made, then the subject would be placed on the December 5, 2005 agenda for clarification and follow-up. After reviewing the tapes it has been determined that Councilperson Lieber did discuss these issues, but had not included them in a motion.

DISCUSSION

Various opinions regarding removal of park trees, use of pesticides and herbicides, and sustainable landscaping have come forward throughout the planning process for the parks

rehabilitation project. To address these issues, the Commission held a special meeting on November 21, 2005 at Ocean View Park to specifically discuss the various trees that had been identified for removal as part of this project. City Arborist, Steve Batchelder, explained the merits of thinning the redwoods, which would allow the remaining trees to become healthier, and identified various Monterey Pine trees that are infested with bark beetles and/or nearing the end of their useful life cycle. Questions and comments from members of the public regarding the removal and trimming were made to the Commission.

At its December 8, 2005 meeting, the Parks and Recreation Commission will revisit the outstanding issues in regards to the rehabilitation project in order to formulate a final recommendation to the Council. A determination as to the trees selected for removal will be made. In addition, as previously scheduled for discussion on December 8, 2005, the Commission will begin work on the development of an Integrated Pest Management Policy recommendation that will be going to the Council in mid 2006. Mike Blankinship from Blankinship Associates will be providing the Commission with technical and scientific analysis and general assistance with the development of the draft IPM policy. The Commission will also be revisiting the issue of a community building at Terrace Park. Their final recommendation will be included in the report scheduled for December 19, 2005.

Regarding sustainable plantings, as staff indicated at the November 21, 2005 Council meeting, a consultant will be retained to provide expertise as to the selection of plant materials that are best suited to the Albany environment, drought tolerant, and are sustainable. In addition, the consultant will help advise the City on the use or non-use of herbicides and pesticides in the project construction specifications. The information will be analyzed and evaluated by the Parks & Recreation Commission, for a recommendation to the City Council. This recommendation will occur as part of the review of the preliminary plans, and will come to Council after the December 19, 2005 meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None at this time.