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**CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL**

**DRAFT Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, October 27, 2015, 6 p.m.**

**City Hall, Room 416  
One Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Jr. Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102**

**Council Members: Dan Flanagan (Chair), Carla Short (Vice Chair) (Department of Public Works), Malcolm Hillan, Rose Hillson, Dan Kida, Igor Lacan, John Leffingwell, Sandy Sherwin, Andrew Sullivan, Michael Sullivan, Zachary Taylor (San Francisco Recreation and Park Department), Tom Carter (San Francisco Port), Yolanda Manzone, (San Francisco Public Utilities Commission), Jon Swae (San Francisco Planning Department), and Golden Gate National Recreation Area (Vacant)**

**Public comment will be taken before the Council takes action on any item.**

**Order of Business**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call.**

Members present: Flanagan, Short, Hillson, Lacan, Sherwin, Andrew Sullivan, Michael Sullivan, Taylor, Carter, and Swae

Members excused: Hillan, Kida, Leffingwell, and Manzone.

**2. Adoption of Minutes of the June 23, 2015 and August 25, 2015 Urban Forestry Council Regular Meetings.** (Explanatory Document: June 23, 2015 Draft Minutes and August 25, 2015 Draft Minutes) (Discussion and Action)

Chair Flanagan made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes with suggested edits from Member Hillson and public comments from David Pilpel; member Mike Sullivan seconded. Correct meeting minutes were approved without objection.

**3. Public Comment:** Members of the public may address the Council on matters that are within the Council's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda.  
There was no public comment.

**4. Hearing on Nomination for Landmark Tree Status of the Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla* (synonym *A. excelsa*)), located at 46A Cook Street, Assessor's Block 1067, Lot 032, San Francisco, CA..** The Council will hold a hearing to determine whether the tree nominated at the following location meets the criteria for designation as a landmark tree to forward findings to the Board of Supervisors. (Explanatory Documents: 46A Cook Official Tree Nomination, 46a Cook St Landmark Additional Exhibits, 46A Cook Street Staff Evaluation, Cook Report, CV 150708, Hillan Evaluation, Hillson Evaluation, McNair and Associates Report and CV, Rogers Landmark Tree

Letter, Short Evaluation, Swae Evaluation, Evidential historic timeline of 46a Cook St Cook Pine, Summarized key attribute confirming 46a Cook St Cook Pine Species, Araucaria Landmark Nomination 1.1, Rogers Landmark Tree Letter Addendum 9-30-15, October 1, 2015 Landmark Tree Committee DRAFT meeting minutes) (Discussion and Action)

Landmark Tree Committee Chair provided the report on the committee findings, reading the "Written Summary – 8/6 and 10/1 LTC Meetings for 46A Cook St. 'Pine' Tree."

Council members discussed the nomination, including considering the rarity and historic associations. Member Swae reported that a clear connection between the tree and the original property owner of the adjacent building could not be clearly established. Member Mike Sullivan requested information regarding the tree's species and Dr. Ritter's report finding that the tree is a hybrid Norfolk Island and Cook Island Pine was discussed. Council members Flanagan and Hillson discussed the rarity of the tree. Member Short stated that Norfolk Island Pines aren't rare and that the relative rarity of a hybrid is unknown, and identified that while there are large Norfolk Island Pine tree specimens in the city, that this tree is notable large. Members Short and Swae expressed that they appreciated the significant level of community support for this tree during the Landmark Tree Committee hearing. Member Short explained that she struggled with her vote, ultimately voting against recommendation for landmark status at the committee, noting that she does think the tree is a very nice tree and should not be removed. Member Hillson identified that the tree is large, significantly advanced in age, that she believes the historic associations and community support is strong, and that she believes the tree meets the criteria to merit landmark status. Chair Flanagan noted that many landmark tree nominations that come before the UFC are worth preserving even if they do not meet the landmark threshold and that the UFC lacks the tools to adequately protect trees of this stature and nature in the City; he expressed interest in exploring alternative methods for protecting large trees on private property. Member Sherwin stated that she reviewed the documentation on the tree reads that the tree is shown to meet size, age, and location characteristics criteria, that there are indeterminate findings for cultural and historic criteria, and that ecological characteristics were not discussed. Member Sherwin stated that the tree therefore meets three criteria, is indeterminate on two, and does not meet one category of criteria. Member Hillson replied that the tree does meet ecological criteria and that environmental and wildlife benefits were discussed by a San Francisco State professor who provided a report at one of the landmark tree hearings. Member Sullivan asked how criteria related and Member Hillson replied that trees do not need to meet all criteria, citing her own landmark tree as an example.

#### Public Comment:

Barri Bonaparte identified herself as the property owner's attorney. She directed the UFC to read a report from Dr. Ritter in there packet, including the three summary points. She reported that the tree is not rare and resource used to describe rarity are neither authorities nor reputable and that there is no historical connection as evidenced by a photo that she provided in which the tree is not present. She directed the UFC to reports from Dr. Larry Costello and Mr. James McNair, who the UFC members all know and who are present today, which found the tree to be lacking. She wants to ensure that the UFC understands that the property owner is not in favor of this nomination and that it was nominated against the property owner's wishes.

James McNair reported that he believes the tree was planted in the 1940s and provides comparison photos in his report to illustrate this finding. He said he asked Peter Ehrlich at the Presidio Trust if these trees are rare and Mr. Ehrlich told him that there are at least 40 in the Presidio.

Katheryn Jones stated that she was asked to look into the trees, the house, and the original property owner, George Smith, for their historic significance. She searched the San Francisco Public Library historic image archives and some books, but was unable to find anything of

significance regarding George Smith except that he worked at the Oddfellows Cemetery. She stated that though there have been implications that Smith rescued trees from the closing cemetery, that the city determined that cemeteries should be removed from the city in 1920 which was long after he died. While he may have planted extra trees that were available, he did not rescue any trees.

Larry Costello directed the UFC to his report in their packet and identified that he was present to encourage the members to not support this nomination. He identifies the lack of clarity of the species and the lack of information on the characteristics of a hybrid and whether the characteristics inherited by a hybrid are better or worse than the parent tree species. He noted the inappropriate size of this tree in this type of location and possibility of severe damage if the tree fails; he identified an additional concern regarding the size of the tree's cones and a recent serious injury in San Francisco that was caused by a falling cone of this species. He is concerned about unintended consequences of supporting this tree, because property developers may preemptively remove trees to prevent the landmark tree process from negatively affecting them, given that the property owner is against the nomination of this tree.

Roy Leggitt identified that he is a consulting arborist and lives nearby. He said he knows that the neighbors are a close knit community that cares about the trees. He said Member Mike Sullivan is someone who he believes should recognize the majesty of this tree and notes that a large trees provide significantly more benefits than a small tree. He doesn't believe that the same criteria to determine historic significant of a building should be applied in determining the significance of a tree because buildings are stagnate and trees are living and change. He notes that the tree is large and that he believes the tree is well suited to the triple-wide lot, additionally stating that the falling cone that caused injury which was mentioned was from a different species that produced much larger, 40 lbs, cones, and that this is not a valid reason. He says that he believes the tree should be landmarked.

Nancy Wuerfel identified that she is a 9-year member of PROSAC. She said the tree is highly visible and loved, which the nine pages of petition signatures and video comments provided at the landmark tree hearing attest to. She identified that the UFC has previously supported a nomination of specimen that had the same qualities and that it would be inconsistent to not support this tree. She quoted the landmark tree code where it says a landmark tree can be on private property.

Council members responded to the comments. Member Hillson stated that the recently landmarked Redwood tree was nominated against the homeowners wishes, that Dr. Ritter's findings that the tree is not rare in California is irrelevant given that the program seeks to preserve trees that are rare in San Francisco, and that she found many docs support historic status that are from resources used by the Planning Department.

Chair Flanagan made a motion to support the nomination, seconded by Member Carter. Members Taylor, Carter, Flanagan, Sherwin, and Hillson vote yes; Members Andrew Sullivan, Swae, Short, Michael Sullivan, and Lacan vote no. The motion fails.

The nomination will move forward to the Board of Supervisors without recommendation from the Urban Forestry Council.

- 5. Geary Bus Rapid Transit.** The Council will hear a presentation on the Geary BRT. Speakers: Kate Elliott, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority; Wahid Amiri, San Francisco Transportation Authority (Informational presentation and discussion.)

Chester Fung begin the presentation, stating that they released their DEIR on October 2 and that the public comment period ends on November 16<sup>th</sup>. He presented background, alternatives, effects analysis with a focus on tree, project plans for trees, implementation, and next steps.

Background: The Geary coordinator is 6.5 corridor miles long and is a very important transportation corridor, but is crowded and has slow buses. The project goal is to improve bus travel time and reliability as well as pedestrian safety. This process is a years long community process - with more than 5 community meetings along with a standing CAC to provide input. From this process 4 build alternatives were identified: no build, side-running busses, center-running busses, and a "hybrid" alternative with busses sometimes center and sometimes side running. The hybrid has been identified as the preferred alternatives and will result in a 20-25% reduction in travel time. They have worked with HortScience to create a tree inventory, collecting information on 1500 trees, including size, health, species and location. They found about 50 species along the corridor, which were mostly of the trees were London plane and New Zealand Christmas trees. 159 of 1,500 trees will be removed in hybrid alternative. Highest impact to trees will be from Palm to Divisadero due to center running platform and removal need for the median.

There are two notable trees: Charlie Starbuck's tree on Geary between 31 and 32, which will not be affected. Mayor Christopher's tree, which was identified by member Hillson will be affected by this project. It doesn't seem feasible to save the tree in place and though it will be difficult to move, and survival isn't guaranteed, they are going to try to move it.

New sidewalk bulbs that can accommodate additional tree plantings will be included. In side-running bus locations, additional sidewalk trees will be planted. Trees will also be planted in double center medians that are 8-9" wide, except at "station median" areas where pedestrian safety clearance restrict planting.

The Hybrid Alternative includes planting approximately 270 trees, which is above a 1:1 replacement planting ratio, though this is conceptual and the planting number can change.

The project has two phases. Phase 1 includes near-term improvements that are easier to implement, including side running dedicated bus lanes, signal priority for busses, and sidewalk bulbs in selected locations. Phase 2 will start in a couple years.

The final EIR should be released in Spring 2016. Comments can be emailed to [gearybrt@sfcta.org](mailto:gearybrt@sfcta.org). There will be a public meeting on 11/5 at 6:30pm at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Member Sherwin asked with Van Ness BRT implementation will begin. Wahid Amiri said he will find out and get that info to us.

Member Michael Sullivan stated that he thinks the New Zealand Christmas Trees are doing very well along this corridor and requested info on a group of Canary Island Pines. Chester Fung replied that those trees will be preserved, though there may be a conflict with some tree retention in a new pedestrian crossing planned at Buchanan to the Japantown Peace Plaza. Member Sullivan encouraged the Geary BRT team to consider Canary Island Pine trees for the rest of the corridor.

Member Short requested more information on time savings and cost to implement the side-running verses hybrid alternatives. She noted that she appreciates that they are considering infrastructure to increase soil volume for trees (Silva cells) and notes that such infrastructure is costly to include and that these cost considerations need to be taken into account early in the design process if they are going to be seriously considered. She asked about overhead lines, which can restrict tree canopy growth, and Mr. Fung confirmed that the busses will be diesel

hybrid busses that do not use OCS lines. Mr. Fung also said he has noted her comment regarding the cost of soil cells and will that as quickly as possible. Though he didn't have travel time savings or info with, he did know that time savings were significant, especially when considered in aggregate for all riders. Current estimates are that riders will save 6000 hours per day with the hybrid alternative, though he notes that there is a significant cost differential in the alternatives.

Member Andrew Sullivan asked for the approximate width of center running medians with stations and if they can make the surface permeable and walkable to allow planting, or include planting by adding tree well grates for clearance. Mr. Fung responded that doesn't recall the critical factor that limits tree planting at median stations, but will bring that comment back to the team.

Member Rose Hillson said she's looking at some back up plans for the Mayor Christopher tree. She notes that though they will be planting more tree than removing, that TCC % should be considered since mature trees will be removed. She asks Chester what the current tree canopy coverage percentage is and how long it will take the trees to grow back to that percentage canopy coverage after the project implementation has completed. Mr. Fung did not have that information available but will work on it. Member Hillson additional stated that during the Van Ness BRT the tree selection, the UFC was asked to comment after species had been determined. She wants to know when tree selection will be decided and wants to ensure that the UFC has an opportunity to provide meaningful comment. Mr. Fung replied that Public Works has an approved list of trees, which includes New Zealand Christmas trees, and that Canary Island Pines may also be on that list.

Chair Flanagan said that 270 newly planted trees will not adequately replace the 195 mature trees that are planned for removal. When firmer planting numbers are determined, he requests that Mr. Fund return to the UFC to discuss. He also asked for irrigations to be installed with the tree to improve the health of newly planted trees. Chair Flanagan asked why the hybrid alternative has been recommended by staff, given that it results in far more trees lost. Mr. Fung responded that the travel time savings are significant.

UFC directs the P&F committee to create a letter that Chair Flanagan will send to Chester with their feedback.

Public Comment:

Nancy Wuerfel said she is delighted to hear the word "canopy" is being discussed. She's unhappy with the MTA cutting down mature trees and planting new ones in a drought. She wants to recommend that the MTA be encouraged to consider trees equal with everything else. She rides Muni frequently and notes that this is why she was late to the UFC meeting today. She says MTA reported unmet equipment needs and staffing shortages in the 2015 Annual Urban Forest Report and she is concerned about how they will maintain newly planted trees. She said that there are ways of getting people around San Francisco that doesn't require tree removal and that she wants to know if there's a planned budget to address replanting trees that are damaged through vandalism.

- 6. Living Roof Manual.** The Urban Forestry Council will hear a presentation on the Living Roof Manual, a product of the Living Roofs Program in the Planning Department, related to the third phase of the Urban Forest Plan. Presenters: Jon Swae, Urban Forest Plan Manager, Planning Department; Anne Brask, Planner, Planning Department; Kerby Olsen, Intern, Planning Department. (Explanatory Documents: Living Roof Manual Executive Summary) (Informational presentation and Discussion.)

Anne Brask introduced the project, describing a “Living Roof,” as a vegetative roof where planted and landscaping are integrated. The Planning Department has a green roof website that identified programs that can support green roof installations, for example the SF Plant Finder. The Planning Department has hosted living roof roundtables to better understand what other uses were possible for rooftops and has created a manual on Living Roofs.

Kirby Olsen is an intern with the Planning Department working on the manual. He explained that they first toured ten living roofs, then collected data from designers, installers, and maintenance professionals as basis for the manual. The draft was first reviewed by industry and government stakeholders and is now almost ready to release. Mr. Olsen walked the UFC through the manual, including: describing the difference between intensive and extensive green roofs, the benefits of living roofs, current living roofs resource in the city, and living roof benefits. He then provided graphics to visually depict code requirements, a permit process flow chart, design guidelines that cover design, installation, and maintenance concerns to consider, and a recommended plant list.

Chair Flanagan asked if they have worked with CalAcademy's BioBlitz work. Mr. Olsen confirmed that the project did coordinate with CalAcademy.

Member Swae asked whether trees were appropriate on living roofs. Mr. Olsen said that they can be occasionally, though there are increased structural support requirements that limit trees to structures that are more massive, such as parking structures.

Member Andrew Sullivan described Portland, Oregon requirements for green roofs or roof top solar and asked if there were similar local requirements. Mr. Olsen explained that while there is not a specific policy requiring or incentivizing living roofs, there are stormwater guidelines that provide incentives and that there are ongoing discussions about developing and adopting an ordinance that would require rooftops to be productive in some capacity. SFE is working with Planning on this policy. Member Sullivan noted that homeowner and business incentives that have been adopted in Portland may be useful models to consider implementing here.

Member Short requested information on maintenance costs. Mr. Olsen replied that the maintenance costs are similar to general landscape maintenance costs.

There was no public comment.

- 7. Annual Urban Forest Report.** The Council will review the 2015 Annual Urban Forest Report draft for adoption. (Explanatory Document: 2015 Annual Urban Forest Report DRAFT) (Discussion and Action.)

Council Coordinator Hui provided an overview on the report data collection and drafting process. Member Sherwin requested clarification on the tree planting and removal numbers that were reported in the overview and the associated charts; Coordinator Hui responded that there are several data described and that the charts described different planting and removal numbers for the different sets. Member Sherwin provided edits to the chart titles to clarify this information. Council members discussed Public Works data and provided clarification edits related to data gaps for young street tree mortality.

Member Sherwin moved to adopt the 2015 Annual Urban Forest Report; Member Michael Sullivan seconded. The report was approved with objection.

**8. Resolution Commending Dr. Ana Alvarez.** (Explanatory Document: Draft Resolution Commending Dr. Ana Alvarez) (Action)

Coordinator Hui identified a typo in the resolution draft to fix. Chair Flanagan moved to adopt the resolution with this edit; Member Lacan seconded. Amended resolution was adopted without objection.

**9. Committee Reports:** (Informational Reports and Discussion)

**Planning & Funding Committee.** Chair's Report.

Chair Flanagan expressed appreciation for TIDA staff and contract time for the site tour and provided a brief overview of the information presented on the tour, including: Due to seismic work on Treasure Island, all areas of the island will be subject to construction. TIDA plans to save many of the trees for replanting once construction is complete. Yerba Buena Island will be subject to significant tree removal. The UFC has requested further information on the tree census that the TIDA reported is in process and project timeline.

**Landmark Tree Ad Hoc Committee.** Chair's Report.

Member Hillson reported that she has started work on a landmark tree evaluation process flowchart and will be researching landmark tree markers to discuss at the next committee meeting.

**10. Staff Report.** (Informational Report and Discussion)

Staff had no additional items to report.

**11. Chair's Announcements:** Chair, Urban Forestry Council (Information and Discussion)

The Chair had no additional items to report.

**12. Urban Forestry Council Member Announcements.** (Information and Discussion)

Members had no announcements.

**13. New Business/Future Agenda Items.** (Information and Discussion)

Member Michael Sullivan would like to learn more about sidewalk repair methods he's seen in other Bay Area cities, where sidewalk is ground down with subject to root lifting.

Member Swae would like to revive the conversation about backyard tree protection policies.

**14. Public Comment:** Members of the public may address the Council on matters that are within the Council's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda.

There was no public comment at this time.

**15. Adjournment at 8:20 pm**

The next meeting of the Urban Forestry Council is scheduled for Friday, December 11, 2015 at 8:30 a.m., City Hall, Room 400, San Francisco, CA 94102.