



CITY of CALABASAS

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

DATE: AUGUST 31, 2023
TO: ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEMBERS
FROM: TRA'A BEZDECNY, ASSISTANT ENGINEER
SUBJECT: SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS
MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

BACKGROUND:

The mission of the Environmental Commission of the City of Calabasas is to advise the City Council regarding the stewardship of our environment as it affects the character of the Community and quality of life of our residents. They strive to balance those elements that influence the degree to which our community sustains its social, economic and physical environment while maintaining and enhancing our natural and cultural resources. One of the many ways Commissioners engage in the community is through subcommittees on environmental issues and community events.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS:

This report highlights the work of Subcommittees since the last Environmental Commission meeting and provides information regarding upcoming work.

Native Plants (Commissioners Jagtiani and Schwartz)

No updates.

Climate Action Plan (Vice Chair Cohan and Commissioner Byrne)

The Subcommittee for developing the City's Climate Action Plan is waiting on the City for next steps on this initiative. City provided an update to this in Item 4, Updates on City Activities/Projects.

Water Conservation (Vice Chair Cohen and Commissioner Jagtiani)

The Subcommittee plans to meet with the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District to get more information on the state of our City water (i.e. where we are relative to drought, water conservation efforts, grey water, potential tours of the water district, joint efforts to promote water initiatives). They would like to ultimately present their findings to the City Council.

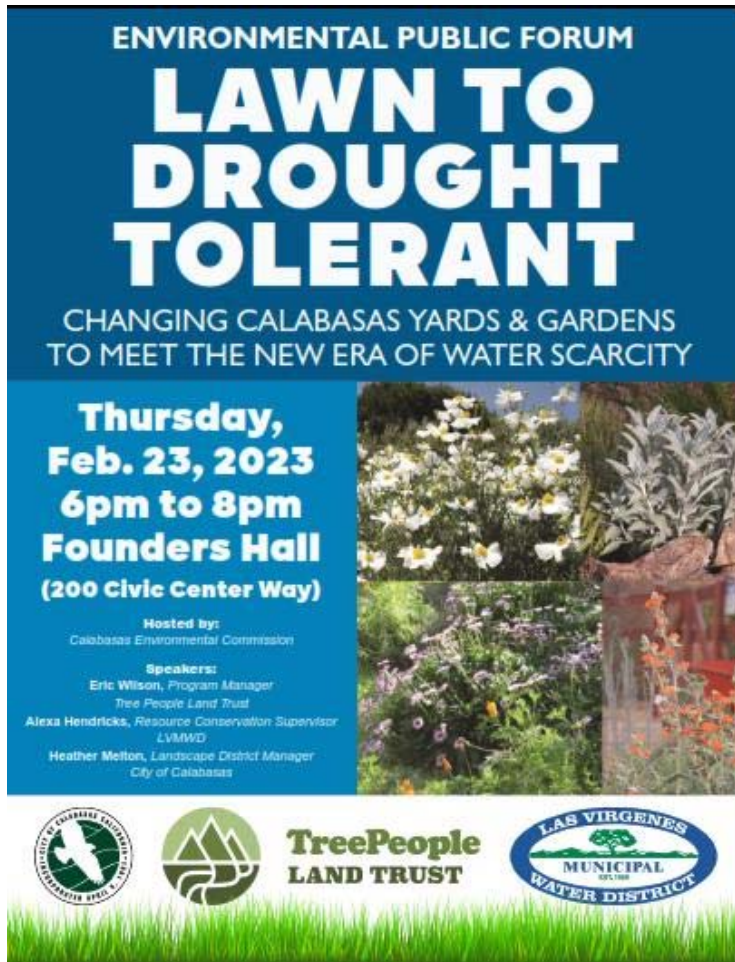
Public Forum (Chair Shillan and Commissioner Jagtiani)

The Environmental Commission hosts an annual informational event with a specific topic bringing together speakers from local organizations and the city to speak on an aspect of the topic. The event was held at Founders Hall on February 23rd, 2023. The theme was "Lawn to Drought Tolerant; Changing Calabasas Yards & Gardens to Meet the New Era of Water Scarcity". The presenters for the event were Eric Wilson from Tree People Land Trust, Alexa Hendricks from the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, and Heather Melton from the City of Calabasas.

Vice Chair Cohan and Commissioner Jagtiani started the planning process by creating the theme and inviting speakers. At the February Commission Meeting, Vice Chair Cohan was replaced by Chair Shillan. Chair Shillan's actions included a communications plan to inform the community about the Forum to grow participation. She contacted many community members that had good contacts to get the word out in the weeks leading up to the event.

For the evening of the event, Chair Shillan acted as the host for the event and assisted in coordinating presentation order, event process and supported exhibitors/vendors. Commissioner Jagtiani worked with our presenters to be sure they had all they needed and were able to spotlight their key topics.

The event was very well attended, it was standing room only, and the presentations were informative.



The Public Forum Subcommittee has a proposed topic for February 2024: “Environmental Initiatives In and Around Calabasas”. The Panel could discuss salient topics including:

- Connecting the Trails (LV Creek Phase III)
- Rindge Dam
- Wildlife Crossing
- Headwaters Corner
- Old Town Renovations
- Collaboration efforts in our community with MRT/Tree People, local schools, etc. as applicable
- Plans for Climate Action

Arbor Day (Vice Chair Cohan and Commissioner Jagtiani)

The proposed date for Arbor Day 2024 is March 16th and location is De Anza Park. Assuming this date and location work for the City, the Subcommittee can start to work on plans to support and promote the event.

Earth Day (Chair Shillan and Commissioner Schwartz)

Earth Day is an annual environmentally-focused free, community event. This year we returned to the Albertson's parking lot, and held the event on the creek side sidewalk. The City hosted close to 50 vendors to show their products and services to the community. The event was held on 4/23/23.

Chair Shillan and Commissioner Schwartz worked with Robert Yalda and Tra'a Bezdecny to coordinate securing vendors to show at the event. Additionally, they worked on setting in place a plan for placing vendors and we surveyed the site in advance.



For the day of the event, Commissioners Schwartz, Byrne, and Student Member Noah Shapiro represented the Commission at our booth. We provided city information to interested guests. Due to our location at the front entrance we were able to direct guests and answer questions. The event was very well attended.

Student Recycling Drawing Contest (Vice Chair Cohan and Commissioner Schwartz)

This year's theme for the Recycling Drawing Contest is "Know Your Bins". Staff has already begun getting the word out to the community through email communications with Las Virgenes Unified School District teachers and through the City's social media. Submissions are due October 20th. The Subcommittee will work with the City on next steps and plan of logistics for selecting this year's winners.

Pumpkin Festival (Chair Shillan and Commissioner Byrne)

This year's Pumpkin Festival will take place on October 22nd. The Environmental Commission will have a table to provide information to the community about what they do and what the City does to further our environmental goals. The Subcommittee is working on an activity for all ages to help generate interest. The subcommittee and staff team have put together ideas for table presence. This includes bringing the Environmental Commission's message in digital format; using posters with QR codes to notify visitors to download program and resource information. This avoids paper use and waste. The sub-committee will handle scheduling booth support and put together educational topics to discuss. Staff is looking into budget availability. With that they can determine what else to supply at the table.

The Commission Table will be joined by Melina Watts, the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Coordinator, who will be working with Commissioners and the Mayor's Youth Council to do short tours to the Las Virgenes Creek to interested parties.

Student Member Task Force (Vice Chair Cohan and Commissioner Jagtiani)

In April 2023, Chair Shillan requested the formation of a Student Member Task Force. Vice Chair Cohan and Commissioner Jagtiani requested to be the Commissioners on this Subcommittee. Together, they came up with roles for subcommittee members, logistics of electing student members, and student member rolls (Attachment B). In August, the document was sent to Commissioners and Staff requested approval of the roles for the Subcommittee.

Chair Shillan, Vice Chair Cohan, and Commissioner Jagtiani were in support; Commissioners Schwartz and Byrne did not respond.

Student Members (Lux Hanley and Noah Shapiro)

Over the past year, Lux and Noah were given the opportunity to serve on the Environmental Commission as student representatives. They served their role of being liaisons between the Environmental Commission and Calabasas High School, as well as attended events such as the Pumpkin Festival, Arbor Day tree planting event, and the Earth Day festival. Beyond attending the Commission's quarterly meetings, Lux and Noah attended meetings with school administration in order to discuss plans of funding a hydration station with Roots and Shoots funds and other possible school initiatives. In addition, they sorted through all submissions for the water drawing contest and voted on the winners as well as attended the announcing of the winners. At the City's Environmental Forum, they were given the opportunity to sell succulents which led them to raising hundreds of dollars for Calabasas Roots and Shoots. Through Roots and Shoots they had many opportunities to raise environmental awareness at the high school as well as organized multiple trail cleanups throughout the year.

FISCAL IMPACT/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Funding for projects and activities comes from multiple sources including General Fund, Measure M, Measure W, Prop 1, and more. Staff is continually researching new funding opportunities for upcoming projects.

REQUESTED ACTION:

This is an informational item only and requires no action.