

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

**Parks, Beaches & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting
December 2, 2025 – 5:00 p.m.**

I. CONVENE MEETING OF THE PARKS BEACHES & RECREATION COMMISSION TO ORDER – 5:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Anne Yelsey, Chair
Amy Waunch, Vice Chair
Hassan Archer, Commissioner
Diane Daruty, Commissioner
Keira Kirby, Commissioner
Kate Malouf, Commissioner
Travis Pirdy, Commissioner

Absent: None

Staff: Sean Levin, Recreation & Senior Services Director
Justin Schmillen, Recreation & Senior Services Deputy Director
John Salazar, Acting Deputy Public Works Director
Kevin Pekar, Parks and Trees Superintendent
John Nelson, City Arborist
Mariah Stinson, Administrative Support Specialist

III. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON CONSENT CALENDAR

None

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Minutes of the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission Meeting of October 7, 2025

Recommendation: Waive reading of subject minutes, approve and order filed.

B. PW Activity Report

Recommendation: Receive/file Activity Report of past and upcoming projects and events.

C. RSS Activity Report

Recommendation: Receive/file Activity Report of past and upcoming projects and events.

Chair Yelsey opened public comment, and there was none.

Motion by Chair Yelsey, seconded by Commissioner Malouf, to approve Item V. CONSENT CALENDAR.

The motion carried by unanimous vote.

VI. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Reforestation Request – 11 and 12 Cambria Drive

*Recommendation: Consider the reforestation request of two City evergreen pear (*Pyrus kawakamii*) trees located at 11 Cambria Drive and one Brisbane box tree (*Lophostemon confertus*) located on the Cambria Drive slope frontage (fictitious address of 12 Cambria Dr.) due to a view encroachment.*

*The applicants, Sirus & Afsaneh Fariivar (residing at 7 Goleta Point Dr.) have provided the required homeowner association (HOA) board meeting minutes along with the HOA board signature of approval to remove and replace the trees. If approved by the PB&R Commission, there will be one-for-one replacements with two dwarf purple-leaf plum (*Prunus cerasifera* ‘Purple Pony’) and one water gum (*Tristania laurina*) 36-inch box trees at the applicant’s cost.*

City Arborist John Nelson reported that applicants Sirus and Afsaneh Fariivar live at 7 Goleta Point Dr. and are requesting the reforestation of two evergreen pear trees at 11 Cambria Dr. and one Brisbane box tree across the street at a fictitious address of 12 Cambria Dr. He photographically confirmed that the three trees are in a direct line of sight between the applicants’ home and the ocean and that the applicant has paid for supplemental trimmings in the past. He reported that the applicants propose to replace the evergreen pear trees with a pair of dwarf purple-leaf plums “purple pony” and the Brisbane box with a water gum tree, none of which will grow to where views are impeded.

City Arborist Nelson confirmed that all property owners within 500 feet of the trees were notified of the hearing and that the applicants have met all procedural requirements set forth in Policy G-1.

In response to Commissioner Kirby’s inquiries, City Arborist Nelson reported that the current trees are between 20-25 feet in height and are expected to continue to grow, particularly the Brisbane box. He estimated that the evergreen pear trees are about 30-35 years old and the Brisbane box tree is about 10-15 years old. He reported that the trees are in good to fair condition, prompting this reforestation hearing because the trees do not meet the criteria for removal.

In response to Commissioner Malouf’s inquiry, City Arborist Nelson stated that the new trees would complement the architecture of the street and existing trees in terms of style and aesthetics. Parks and Trees Superintendent Kevin Pekar added that the water gum tree is the same genus as the existing slope trees.

In response to Commissioner Malouf's inquiry, City Arborist Nelson reported receiving no public comments objecting to the request.

In response to Commissioner Daruty's inquiries, City Arborist Nelson stated that he is unaware of any plum trees on Cambria Dr. He reported that there are other trees of a different species in the area that are similar in height to the proposed replacement trees. He stated that his understanding is that the vast majority of the neighborhood's trees are evergreen pears and were planted when the community was first developed. He agreed that the neighborhood could possibly be as old as the 1960s or 1970s, but could not confirm its year of origin.

In response to Chair Yelsey's inquiries, City Arborist Nelson stated that the Brisbane Box tree could grow to a height of over 60 feet without crown reduction. He reported that evergreen pear trees can grow to a height of 40 feet, but these two are unlikely to reach this height as they are older and more mature. He stated that some trees have been removed from Cambria Dr. in the past due to attrition. Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar confirmed that trees have been removed from Cambria Dr. in the past.

In response to Chair Yelsey's inquiry, City Arborist Nelson noted that he was not on staff when the neighborhood was developed but stated that often the eventual impact of a tree is not considered at the time of its planting. He theorized that the trees have outgrown the planter's original vision of preserving views.

Chair Yelsey opened public comment.

Mr. Farivar noted that there is also a fourth tree blocking their ocean view. He stated that he has worked with Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar for a long time, commending his work. He reported that City Arborist Nelson came to his home and agreed that continued trimming of the trees will not solve the problem in the long term as they continue to grow, recommending this reforestation application. He reported that the application has the support of his community's Homeowners' Association (HOA). He confirmed that he is willing to pay the reforestation costs.

Spyglass Hill HOA President Bruce Horn clarified that the community was developed in the mid-1970s, making the trees in question about 50 years old. He reported that trees blocking views are a community-wide problem and are not limited to the applicants' house. He criticized the City's biennial tree-trimming for not removing enough tree growth, leaving obstructed view planes for many residents. He encouraged the Commission to approve the request, noting that the applicants will pay for the reforestation.

Cambria Dr. resident Laurie Horn stated Spyglass Hill is a view community with trees that have been unkept for years. She decried the mess left by berry-producing trees. She stated that the trees should be trimmed annually. She noted that their view is obstructed by a tree, which they have not complained about. She encouraged

the City to trim the trees annually, adding she has had one at her home removed but not replaced because it was lifting their sidewalk and a wall.

Chair Yelsey closed public comment.

Commissioner Kirby noted that they are volunteers with a duty to represent the public while balancing City policies. She stated that biennial trimming is intentional because some trees, if trimmed annually, will respond by growing faster, which is part of why these requests are heard on a case-by-case basis.

Chair Yelsey stated from the experience of hearing many similar applications that the City handles tree trimmings differently than outside vendors, with the latter set of trees dying much quicker and looking unhealthy. She commended the work of City Arborist Nelson, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar, and their team.

Commissioner Daruty noted that the health of the tree is one of the items to be considered per City policies. She added that the value of the replacement tree for the City's inventory can be less than the value of the existing tree. She expressed concerns about setting precedents, noting the prevalence of view issues in Spyglass Hill as espoused by Mr. Horn, along with other view communities in Newport Beach.

Motion by Chair Yelsey, seconded by Vice Chair Waunch, to approve the reforestation request as presented.

The motion carried 6-1 with Commissioner Daruty voting against.

B. Reforestation Request – 2 Westcliff Park

*Recommendation: Consider the reforestation request of one Stone Pine (*Pinus pinea*) and one Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) located at Westcliff Park (Park 36 and 41) due to view encroachment.*

*The applicant, Claire Squire (project manager for 1034 West Wind Way) has attained the required number of approved petitions to bring the reforestation forward to the PB&R Commission. If approved, the applicant has agreed to fund the two tree removals and replanting with nine Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) 24-inch box trees along the park's slope.*

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that this is a reforestation application at Westcliff Park by Claire Squire, project manager at a house at 1034 West Wind Way, for one stone pine and one Aleppo Pine. He presented images of the trees blocking the bay view from the site. He confirmed that the trees are trimmed every other year for crown reduction. He reported that the applicant's proposal includes payment for the removal of the two trees and shrubbery to be replaced by nine California native toyons in 24-inch boxes. He confirmed that there are other toyons on the slope at Westcliff Park, with this being the third reforestation request to come before the Commission for West Wind Way.

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that the applicant has received permission from their HOA and has undergone a petition process because the trees are in a City park, receiving a sufficient percentage of approvals.

In response to Commissioner Malouf's inquiries, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported receiving no petitions, calls, or emails objecting to the reforestation. He confirmed that the trees are healthy, which is why this is a reforestation application and not a removal request. He expressed doubts that such large pine trees could be successfully relocated to another section of the park due to their vast root system.

In response to Commissioner Pirdy's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar stated that the two trees have not reached their peak height, adding that they could grow to 75 feet from their current height of 20-25 feet.

In response to Commissioner Kirby's inquiries, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar stated that the applicant is attempting to match the lost tree canopy with the new trees. He clarified that if the trunk of a City tree is in the park, but the canopy covers private property, then the property owner can prune the overhanging portion if it does not destroy the tree.

In response to Vice Chair Waunch's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar stated that the nine toyons will not impact the species diversity in the area, adding that the toyons were recommended by staff. He noted that it is a native tree.

Commissioner Daruty reported visiting the site and forming the opinion that the reforestation makes sense.

In response to Commissioner Pirdy's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that the area is not located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. He added that the current goal is to avoid having trees within five feet of a structure, and these trees are likely out of this radius. He agreed that the toyons would be less of a fire hazard than the existing pines but could not provide a percentage estimate for the safety increase.

In response to Commissioner Archer's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that the toyons are a smaller tree and can be more readily trimmed by standard landscaping crews. He stated that toyons can be more easily managed to prevent view obstruction than the current pines.

Chair Yelsey opened public comment.

Ty Price, a licensed landscape architect who did design work for the house, noted that the house has a lot of glass with al fresco dining spaces and is built for the views. He stated that the pines block the views despite high-quality trimming, adding that the trees are nowhere near their full growth capacity. He added that the toyons

would be planted 10 feet farther down the slope to help eliminate future view concerns, while the applicant's plan also includes slope stabilization measures to help mitigate the loss of the two pines. He added that the applicant is not requesting the removal of the palm trees in the area.

Ms. Squire stated that the trees are problematic, adding that she has the full support of neighbors who also have view obstructions from the two trees. She reported that Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar told her that trimming alone is not a good option to achieve the goal of a better view. She added that the nine toyons will look beautiful on the slope.

Chair Yelsey closed public comment.

Commissioner Kirby confirmed that the Commission saw the applicant's schematic drawing even though it was not shown on the screen during the presentation.

Motion by Commissioner Malouf, seconded by Commissioner Daruty, to approve the reforestation request as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

C. Community Service Award – Dr. Sean Boulton

Recommendation: Approve the Community Service Award recognition of Dr. Sean Boulton to be awarded at a future Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission (PB&R) meeting.

Recreation & Senior Services Deputy Director Justin Schmillen reported that the Community Service Award is presented by the Commission to individuals who contribute to improving the quality of life in Newport Beach. He reported receiving an application to recognize Dr. Sean Boulton for his 11 years of leadership as principal at Newport Harbor High School (NHHS). He noted that the application received majority support from the Community Service Award Ad Hoc Committee. He stated that, if approved, Dr. Boulton would be invited to an upcoming meeting to be presented with the award.

Chair Yelsey stated that she was happy to approve the application while serving on the Ad Hoc Committee. She lauded the positive personal effect that Dr. Boulton has on all of those around him.

Commissioner Kirby stated that Dr. Boulton is a great candidate for the award.

Commissioner Pirdy commended Dr. Boulton's positive message to the community in the face of a tragedy several years ago. He expressed his support for the item.

Vice Chair Waunch reported that the principal when she attended NHHS was not as engaging as Dr. Boulton. She expressed her appreciation that both of her children attended NHHS while he served as principal. She expressed her support for the item.

Chair Yelsey opened public comment, and there was none.

Motion by Chair Yelsey, seconded by Commissioner Kirby, to approve the Community Service Award recognition for Dr. Sean Boulton.

The motion carried by unanimous vote.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Recreation & Senior Services Deputy Director Schmillen reported that the commissioners should have received the winter Newport Navigator in the mail, adding that registration is currently open with a few spots still available for the Youth Camp. He stated that the City has three upcoming holiday events – Jingles and Mingles at the Older Adult Social and Information Services (OASIS) Senior Citizen Center on December 3rd, the 10th anniversary of the opening of Marina Park on December 4th, and Breakfast with Santa on December 5th. He reported that the City's Family Fun Night will be held in Marina Park on December 19th, including the annual boat parade.

In response to Chair Yelsey's inquiry, Recreation & Senior Services Deputy Director Schmillen confirmed that the events are on the City's website and calendar.

Commissioner Kirby reported that the Lower Castaways and Aquatic Center Ad Hoc Committee met just before Thanksgiving. She reported that many residents are confused by the Committee's name and stated that a new aquatic center was not discussed for any location at the meeting. She reported that City staff was directed at the meeting to review previous plans for the use of Lower Castaways Park.

In response to Chair Yelsey's inquiry, Recreation & Senior Services Director Sean Levin clarified that the proposed Snug Harbor Surf Park would be located on private property. He clarified that the recent City Council item on the project was not approval of the project, but rather approval of a variance allowing for additional square footage for the proposed development.

Commissioner Malouf reported hearing regularly from residents hoping to save the Newport Beach Golf Course, even though it would continue to operate around the surf park. She encouraged the top City officials to better educate an under-informed public about the surf park project and its impacts through a public relations or marketing campaign.

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin agreed and stated that he can pass along this request.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 6:01 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
 Mariah Stinson, Administrative Support Specialist

Approved by: _____
Anne Yelsey, Chair