



COMMUNITY FOREST ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, December 10, 2025

In-Person Meeting, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Location: Valencia Park/Malcolm X Branch Library

5148 Market St

San Diego, CA 92114

Members in Attendance: Leon Cassel (Horticulturist), Chris Tiffany (Landscape Architect), Jim Smith (D1), Morgan Justice-Black (D2), Wes Janssen (D4), Alyssa Way (D6), Michael Ackerman (D7), Terrell Rackley (D9), Branden Wolner (Tree San Diego)

Staff Liaison: Brian Widener, Olivia Mabee

Item 1: Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m.

Item 2: Roll Call

- **Members Not in Attendance:** Frank Buncom IV (D8, Chair)

Item 3: Announcements and Updates

- Alyssa Way's term expires at end of December 2025 and she will no longer attend meetings.
- Brian Widener announced key partners — Tree San Diego and the San Diego Parks Foundation and provided updates on improving inclusivity in participation for large events.

Item 4: Action: Approval of Minutes

- November 12, 2025 meeting minutes passed unanimously.

Item 5: City Staff Reports

- Ynez Nevarez, a Transportation Department Arborist, presented a follow-up on tree condition evaluation criteria; the City warned that damaging trees is not allowable when others want to review newly planted trees.
- Brian Widener provided a Conserve-A-Tree update, noting his team plans to give applicants a week's notice before their item goes to the Board.
- John Ide, Urban Forestry Program Coordinator, reported on Trees for Communities — final trees are being planted next week in San Ysidro,

2,869 trees planted to date with a 96% survival rate and more stewardship workshops are upcoming.

- Amy Nonaka, Urban Forestry Project Officer 2, shared Ready, Set, Grow San Diego progress — 2,248 trees planted in FY25; 1,069 planted so far in FY26; several upcoming community events are in the works.
- Erich Kast, Parks Arborist, updated on Parks operations — two Groundsman positions have been filled, pruning completed for December Nights, and tree work is returning to community parks. The tree maintenance budget is expected to be cut in half for FY27.
- Public Comment:
 - Anne Fege emphasized that monitoring of tree conditions would help public support.
 - Craig Jones promoted urban greening efforts and supports additional community input for locations.
 - Anisah Enciso described outreach efforts with Bayside Community Center to collect door-to-door requests for trees in Linda Vista.
 - Zoe Woodhouse re-emphasized outreach efforts with Bayside Community Center and shared doorhanger examples.

Item 6: Discussion

- Morgan Justice Black noted vacancies or upcoming vacancies in Districts 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8.
- Chris Tiffany presented new Zone Zero rules prohibiting combustible materials and tree canopy within 5 feet of structures, affecting tree-planting locations. The Board discussed flammability and insurance impacts. CFAB supports drafting a letter expressing concern and recommendations regarding this new policy; CalFire or the San Diego Fire Department may be invited to a future meeting.
- Michael Ackerman presented on how watering schedules affect tree survival, noting that the City uses fewer gallons compared to peer cities. Morgan encouraged members to review the materials before the next meeting to support a more in-depth discussion.

Item 7: Proposed Agenda Items for Future Meetings

- None.

Item 8: Non-Agenda Public Comment

- None.

Item 9: Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.