



COMMUNITY FOREST ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, February 11, 2026

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

Location: Valencia Park/Malcolm X Branch Library
5148 Market St
San Diego, CA 92114

Acting Chair: Morgan Justice Black

Board Members: Leon Cassel, Chris Tiffany, Ami Young, Jim Smith, Wes Janssen, Michael Ackerman, Terrell Rackley, Branden Wolner

Staff Liaison: Brian Widener, Olivia Mabee

Item 1: Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Item 2: Roll Call

Board Member	Seat	Attendance
Leon Cassel	Horticulturalist	Present
Chris Tiffany	Landscape Architect	Present
Ami Young	Artist	Present
Jim Smith	District 1	Present
Morgan Justice Black	District 2	Present
VACANT	District 3	X
Wes Janssen	District 4	Present
VACANT	District 5	X
EXPIRED	District 6	X
Michael Ackerman	District 7	Present
EXPIRED	District 8	X
Terrell Rackley	District 9	Present
Branden Wolner	Non-Profit	Present

Item 3: Announcements and Updates

- Morgan Justice Black announced that agenda items will be displayed instead of distributed, public comment will use speaker slips, and the next meeting will focus on the 2026 CFAB Workplan with opportunities for member and public input.

- Brian Widener, city forester, reiterated that handouts must be submitted to the Chair. He addressed resident concerns to street tree planting in Linda Vista following a miscommunication, highlighting concerns about messaging, trust, and safety. He clarified that residents cannot opt out of planting strip trees but may request a different species. He also noted past board support for the US Forest Service grant application for the Ready, Set, Grow San Diego project and its full implementation with partner Tree San Diego.

Item 4: Action: Approval of Minutes

- December 10, 2025 meeting minutes passed unanimously.

Item 5: City Staff Reports

- City Arborist Ynez Nevarez presented on the tree at 4864 Elsa Rd. Board members asked whether similar trees in the area would qualify for conservation status and whether the tree would survive a potential sidewalk repair. It was noted that engineering solutions are limited in this location and that the tree has existing root damage from previous repairs. The Board does not recommend placing the tree under conservation status.
 - Public comment: Anne Fege spoke about the importance of conserving trees and recognizing valuable resources.
- John Ide, urban forestry program Coordinator reported the final tree planting in San Ysidro which currently sits with a 93% survivability rate, ongoing six-month evaluations, and a successful inventory training partnership for the Trees for Communities Project.
- Amy Nonaka, project officer II, shared updates on the Ready, Set, Grow San Diego project's recent forums and planting events, including over 4,000 trees planted and completion of the first one-year inspection. Arbor Day 2026 will be held at Gompers Park, with Tree Stewards supporting.
- Olivia Mabee, community engagement specialist, presented interpretive signage project in Sherman Heights Community Center - Board members commended the interpretive signage effort.
- Public comment:
 - Anne Fege: Recommended conducting an analysis to identify what strategies have been most successful.
 - Zoe Woodhouse: Shared updates on outreach efforts in Linda Vista.
 - Alix Aceituno: Requested a broader update on the Ready, Set, Grow San Diego planting in Valencia Park.

Item 6: Items

- Michael Ackerman presented an in-depth tree watering analysis and recommended adjusting watering frequency to reduce costs and increase survivability rates. Board discussed creating primary/secondary recommendations and requesting a City cost analysis for a pilot sample area. City is open but concerned about limited data. Vote planned for next meeting.
- Chris Tiffany provided Zone Zero update — the state's decision is delayed to March. San Diego plans to adopt policy as written; Los Angeles is pushing for

modifications to protect canopy. CFAB will draft and send a letter next meeting; Chris to prepare draft.

- Morgan Justice Black presented on CFAB vacancies by district, highlighted current and upcoming vacancies, and encouraged outreach with suggested messaging to fill seats.
- Public comment:
 - Emma Smith hopes that watering issue will be recognized publicly and in support of Michael Ackerman's presentation and encourages community participation.
 - Anne Fege states question around watering around rain and perception and requests for two CFAB members to work with her on the Zone Zero letter.

Item 7: Proposed Agenda Items for Future Meetings

- None.

Item 8: Non-Agenda Public Comment

- Alix Aceituno suggested partner with community organizations to assist with tree watering.
- Zoe Woodhouse is starting new analysis project focused on Get It Done tree maintenance reports.
- Elizabeth Castelo Gil mentioned barriers facing the way the grant is written and asks prioritize input from community organizations for future grants.

Item 9: Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 a.m.