



# COMMUNITY FOREST ADVISORY BOARD

## MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, March 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 10:02 a.m.

**Item 2: Roll Call**

Board Member	Seat	Attendance
Leon Cassel	Horticulturalist	Present
Chris Tiffany	Landscape Architect	Absent
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**

- Brian reported updated tree survivability rates (94% CalFire, 92% Allied Gardens, 72% City Heights, ~83% Bay Terraces), reminded members and guests not to distribute materials before providing them to the Chair, noted his upcoming presentation at the Parks Board meeting and the Arbor Day event

on April 24 at Gompers Park, and emphasized the Board's effective letter-writing amid a challenging budget season and the need to prioritize the workplan.

- Morgan Justice-Black, acting chair adjusted the agenda to hear the San Diego Fire-Rescue presentation on the new Zone Zero policy before the action items, due to significant board interest.

**Item 4: City Staff Reports**

- a. Alex Kane, Assistant Fire Marshal, and Sierra Brown, Deputy Fire Marshal, from San Diego Fire-Rescue presented an overview of the new Zone Zero policy and its implications for new and existing trees. They noted support for a gradual, three-year transition before full enforcement. Board members and the public asked questions regarding risk zones, canyon-area homes, tree-related ambiguities, and funding to assist residents with compliance.
  - Public Comment
    - Anne Fege: Encouraged by the bigger picture and shared concerns.
- b. Brian Widener's presentation was postponed to the next meeting due to time constraints.

**Item 5: Action Items**

- a. February 11, 2026 meeting minutes passed unanimously.
- b. The Board voted to nominate a new Chair and Vice Chair; the Secretary seat remains vacant and will be revisited at the next meeting. Morgan Justice Black abstained from the vote for Chair.
  - Chair: Morgan Justice Black
  - Vice Chair: Chris Tiffany
- c. Two motions were made regarding the tree-watering schedule.
  - Motion 1 (Did not pass, 6-2): Motion to approve the submission of this letter requesting additional \$1.4M budget allocation from general fund to shift to a weekly watering schedule to the Mayor's office. Board members expressed concerns about soil conditions, risks of over-watering, and suggested conducting an analysis of water needs by species.
  - Morgan Justice Black reminded the group that CFAB must follow policy: letters require a board vote, and the Chair is responsible for sending them.
  - Public Comment
    - Anne Fege: Questioned whether current watering is sufficient and asked what instructions are provided to the contractor and water-truck operator.
    - Erich Kast: Spoke about park budgets and the potential impact of tree-watering costs on maintenance budgets.
  - Motion 2 (Passed unanimously): Motion to work with Urban Forestry staff to address concerns over tree watering by:

- Request City of SD to do an analysis of the cost difference between their existing watering schedule and the recommended schedule in Michael Ackerman's research (10 gallons 1x/week for 3 years)
- Analyze the cost and resources needed for pilot program to do a statistically significant sampling of a new watering schedule.
- Consider adopting a new standard for future grant applications that include the watering schedule of 10 gallons 1x/week for 3 years
- Require Urban Forestry staff to report back within 6 months on items 1 and 2, and adopt item 3 immediately.
- Public Comment
  - Anne Fege: Encouraged City staff to consider soil conditions, soil maps, and species most likely to thrive.

**Item 6: Items**

- a. Morgan Justice Black gave an overview of board vacancies, current number of applications per council district. She noted the vetting process that all candidates must go through and noted that applicants who are chosen to fill seats are at the discretion of the council and Mayor's office.
- b. Morgan Justice-Black revisited the 2026 CFAB Workplan. At the last meeting, she used large posters and invited board members and the public to mark their priority areas, which ranked as budget advocacy, community outreach, and codes and policies. She outlined next steps to install officers, after which the Chair will work with them to refine priorities and develop a workplan with tangible goals and action items.

**Item 7: Proposed Agenda Items for Future Meetings**

- None.

**Item 8: Non-Agenda Public Comment**

- Zoe Woodhouse: Update on analysis of tree maintenance requests on Get It Done and would like to work with people in Urban Forestry.
- Anne Fege: Discusses budget advocacy and urges board to write to their council members.

**Item 9: Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.