



COMMUNITY FOREST ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, August 12, 2026

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

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

Chair: Morgan Justice Black

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

Staff Liaison: Brian Widener, Amy Nonaka

Item 1: Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 10:32 a.m.

Item 2: Roll Call

Board Member	Seat	Attendance
Leon Cassel	Horticulturist	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
VACANT	District 7	X
EXPIRED	District 8	X
Terrell Rackley	District 9	Absent
Branden Wolner	Nonprofit	Present

Item 3: Announcements and Updates

- Chair
 - Announcement of prospective board member, waiting on approval from City Council.
- City Forester

- Urban Forestry merged with Parks and Recreation Forestry on July 1, 2026.
- Preemptive El Niño preparation has begun as heavy rain and wind are anticipated.
- Planning has begun for upcoming Kate Sessions Day.

Item 4: Action Items

Approval of Minutes

- a. June 10, 2026 meeting minutes were approved.

Item 5: City Staff Reports

- a. City Watering Schedule Follow-Up (Brian Widener)
 - Response to board request to analyze current tree watering schedule against proposed schedule for the first 3 years after planting.
 - The City recommends maintaining the current schedule as it continues to collect survivability rates/data of current planting programs.
 - Branden Wolner suggests a compromise on the watering schedule by adjusting when tapering begins.
- b. Tree Consolidation - Parks and Transportation (Widener)
 - As of July 1, 2026, Urban Forestry has gained 8 tree maintenance staff members and 12 vehicles, in addition to the responsibility of open space trees in emergency cases.
- c. Conserve A Tree application update (Ynez Nevarez)
 - One application to be presented at the next CFAB meeting for a Crepe Myrtle in Mission Hills.
- d. Future grants (Karen Valdivino-Amps)
 - Urban Greening Grant - \$4.17 Million Requested
 - Proposal was submitted but was not selected to advance to full application.
 - Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program - \$4.5 Million Requested
 - Pre-application submitted for a tree planting project focused on heat-vulnerable communities.
 - Public Comment
 - Anne Fege: Encourages proactive approach to grant applications.
 - Upcoming CAL FIRE Urban Community Forestry Grant
 - Future funding opportunities are expected to support tree planting, establishment care, inventories, and urban forest planning.
- e. RSG and T4C (Amy Nonaka)
 - RSG is beginning new phase involving sidewalk redesigns. Site evaluations have commenced.
 - Reports current tree survivability rates as >90% for previous plantings.
 - Public Comment

- Emma Smith: Introduced the Kate Sessions Commitment report on RSG, which found that post-planting care, water access, and resident engagement remain poorly defined and directly tied to tree survival. The report recommends the City leverage its remaining 30 months of grant funding to partner with CFAB, nonprofits, and CBOs on watering, mulching, and community engagement to sustain the newly planted trees.
- Tyana Ortiz: Encouraged more public engagement in Linda Vista for RSG efforts.
- Elizabeth Castelo Gil: Encourages community engagement efforts in the Valencia Park community. Notes lack of engagement for plantings in John F. Kennedy Neighborhood Park (JFK Park).
- Anne Fege: Encourages RSG related community engagements efforts.
- Chris Tiffany asks if outreach door hangers encourage residents to water trees after planting. Widener and Nonaka explain that door hangers do not because they don't align with the messaging of most City-led planting initiatives.
- Morgan Justice Black suggests distributing door hangers after the scheduled 3-year tree-watering period ends to inform residents and encourage additional watering.

Item 6: Discussion

- a. Hybrid meetings for the future for CFAB for the public and City staff (Morgan Justice Black)
 - Board expresses support for hybrid meeting models. Formal vote to follow at the next CFAB meeting.

Item 7: Action Items - N/A

Item 8: Proposed Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Item 9: Non-Agenda Public Comment

- Troy Murphee: Calls attention to anticipated tree removals at Harriet Tubman Village Charter School and asks if there are actionable steps to prevent removals.
 - Chris Tiffany notes the City doesn't hold power over this decision.

Item 10: Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 11:36