

## **ACONA Meeting Notes**

January 28, 2020

After introductions, the following topics were presented.

### **Tree Trimming and Climate Change Impacts**

Speakers: David Ford, Government Relations Manager, SCE Public Affairs

Gerardo Avila, Senior Vegetation Specialist, Monrovia Area, SCE

Rebecca Latta, Local Landscaper/Arborist, Climate Relativity Presenter

Gerardo Avila:

SCE is growing their Vegetation Management Team, almost doubling in size. Adding customer coordinators and others working directly with the public. Altadena is the most tree-dense residential area in SCE's territory. Palm trees that are growing under SCE lines must be removed but SCE will plant another three away from the lines if requested.

Oaks and conifers aren't trimmed regularly because they are slow-growing, but there is a 12-foot clear zone. SCE has finished trimming these trees to standards. Will top fast-growing trees if the owner is not amenable to taking down the tree and replacing it.

Rebecca Latta:

Need to change the language used with contractors so they know exactly what they need to do. "Heavy pruning" is not a term in common use by contractors, for example. The high fire zone has been expanded, so more trees are being pruned. Homeowners need to be more active in fireproofing their own houses.

Regarding replacement trees: The County has defunded nurseries that could provide replacement trees. There will be about 20% of canopy loss in the near future.

Regarding climate change: trees are carbon storage units. They also reduce other forms of pollution.

Palm trees don't belong in high fire zones. They should be replaced with trees that are not as dangerous in the event of a fire.

### **Aging and Senior Assistance**

Speaker: Dana Barcelona-Bonner, Family Resource & Community Partnerships, Regency Park Astoria

See the slides. Presented various options and addressed concerned elders may have about assisted living.

### **School Closures**

Speaker: Kim Kenne, PUSD Board of Trustees Member

Declining enrollment is a state-wide phenomenon. Lower birth rates, school-age families moving out of state. Increased personnel costs impact schools that have low student enrollment but must still have all of the essential personnel (principal, school nurse...).

Schools being closed are not failing, just economically infeasible. School closure is part of the overall PUSD master plan and closures are not done arbitrarily.

### **Q&A**

Q: My trees were trimmed without notification to me or my landlord. Why weren't we notified?

A: We can look into it for you.

Q: Why is SCE mutilating the trees when your are shutting the power off anyway when it's windy? A: Because we have to prevent any hazard at all times, not just during planned power outages. Note that hardening the system and providing more oversight via video will session the need for planned power outages.

Q: How do we educate the populace that they are damaging trees when they top them? A: Cities need to step up and do enforcement. Tree pruning contractors need to be better educated. The state need to enforce contractor licensing laws.

Q: With all the schools being closed, where are the disaster supplies being located? A: The staff has been tasked with relocating supplies.

Q: Can we collaborate to begin afforestation in our community? Younger trees sequester more carbon. A: We are aware that this is not just a utility problem. We are open to good ideas about replanting.

Q: Insulated wires: will that change your pruning guidelines as the insulation progresses? Are you working with the county on replanting? A: We are progressing on our plans.

Q: Underground wires: why can't we do that more? A: It's very costly to do that in high fire districts. Have to work with joint utilities who also use the poles. There has been discussion to do underground in areas that are more likely to see planned power outages.

Q: What do you plan to do with the closed schools? A: There's a board committee being planned to talk about site use. A preferred method is a property swap; PUSD can use those funds for programs. If PUSD sells a site, the proceeds can only be used for capital acquisition.

Q: What about equity among schools? Some schools can raise funds more effectively than others. Affects special programs a school can offer. A: The decision wasn't really made with equity in mind, but more for addressing where the students are.

Q: How can La Canada decide six feet of clearance is enough but it's twelve feet here? A: SCE still trims to the same standards for fast-growing trees everywhere within its service area. SCE has a new system based off of GPS that maps every single tree. There are recommendations for each specific type of tree (a new program this year).

Q: Your facility is in Pasadena — how do we reach out to Altadenans? A: I receive inquiries from Altadena and I'm happy to reach out to anyone who needs services.

Q: What is the interface between pole maintenance and arborists? A: There should be some coordination; we will consider implementing it.

Q: How many profoundly disabled special education students remain at Roosevelt and how will they be served now that Roosevelt is being closed? A: Mainstreaming students with disabilities has been the norm for many years. The district will make sure that they will do what they need to, to serve profoundly disabled students.