

MINUTES of the regular meeting of the City of Redlands Citrus Preservation Commission held on Tuesday, January 15, 2008, at 10:00 AM in the Municipal Utilities Conference Room, 35 Cajon Street, Redlands, are as follows:

PRESENT: Michael Huffstutler, Chairperson
John Gardner
J. Richard Leonard
Joe Buoye, Vice Chairperson
Gary Branstetter

EXCUSED: Andrew Irvin
Robert Marsel

CITY COUNCIL: Jon Harrison, Mayor

STAFF: Todd Housley, Project Manager

**FARMING COMPANIES/
PACKING HOUSE:** Chuck Hills, Larry Jacinto Farming
Pete Marcum, Redlands Farming
Bill Hardy, Redlands Foothill Groves

GUESTS: Barry Lee
Emily Bueermann
Patrick Kingsley
Stan Brassfield

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by Chairperson Huffstutler. Approval of the minutes of the November 13, 2007 Regular Meeting was continued to the next meeting.

1. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Staff Liaison and City department restructuring update (Todd Housley)

Todd Housley reported that the Citrus Groves operation and Citrus Preservation Commission are now completely moved and under the Quality of Life department. The change took effect as of December 15, 2007. Mr. Housley stated that he is still the staff liaison for the Citrus Preservation Commission, and he reports to Gary Van Dorst, who is currently the interim director.

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B. Citrus market report (Bill Hardy, Redlands Foothill Groves)

Mr. Hardy reported that the Valencia pool included 31,472 field boxes. The Best (Nevada Palmetto #1) lot was exported to the Southeast Asian market, as was California I10, Mullin, and Texas Groves. Returns on Best (Nevada Palmetto #1) were \$11.12 per box, California I10 returns were \$5.96 per box, Mullin returns were \$7.82 per box, and Texas was at \$4.81 per box. The Daniels (Nevada Palmetto #3) lot was small and had frost, returning \$3.39 per box. Granite and Judson were both at \$5.02 per box, University Grove at \$3.88 per box, and Ramirez was at \$5.50 per box. The City will be receiving a check for \$169,439.88 for this Valencia pool.

Mullin Star Ruby grapefruit yielded 1,536 boxes averaging \$3.17 per box. White grapefruit provided 2008 boxes, returning \$0.73 per box. Mr. Hardy stated that they quit picking white grapefruit when they knew they were close to a positive return. All growers agreed to pool their white grapefruit and evenly divide the returns so that everyone would get some money for the fruit.

The navel season and market has been poor this year with prices as low as \$5.85 per carton. Choice was averaging \$6.00 to \$6.50 on some sizes. Approximately 17,000 boxes were picked in December from UCR before the wind could damage the fruit with the expectation of breaking even. Other lots were picked with the expectation of a low of \$7.50 per box, however, the actual return dropped to \$5.85. Further December "picks" will be questionable. Mr. Hardy stated that San Timeteo Navels had larger sizes and looked promising, however, other lots will be determined. Some of the fruit picked in December was for export, but there was only a market for specific sizes so that limited the amount sold. Because of this, they stopped picking for export in December. Picking for export resumed again in January and most of what was picked was shipped. Domestic prices are beginning to come up so they will take a fresh look tomorrow and see how domestic prices factor into the export market. Much more fruit needs to be picked, but the market should support the efforts, understanding that the margins have been very tight. They intend to pick Jacinto Memorial as fast as possible because of the potential of theft. They will then determine where to go after they complete Jacinto Memorial. Mr. Hardy reports that there has been a lot of puff and crease this year, some to the extent that the fruit will not be picked on some blocks. They started looking to pick fruit as early as November but they had a problem with the fruit size. They also had a problem with color for the export market. The average F.O.B. in Central California right now is \$9.00. This is a poor start, but they will continue to assess both the export and domestic markets and pick as much fruit as possible.

Pete Marcum inquired about the market for white grapefruit and the possibility of it coming back. Bill Hardy stated that the sellers are talking to buyers every day about white grapefruit and there is just no market for it. He stated that there is a

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small export interest, but sizes have to be specific. Domestically, most shelf space is dedicated to the colored varieties.

C. Review of current expenditures and cultural farming practice reports from Larry Jacinto Farming and Redlands Farming Company representatives

Chuck Hills stated that there has been no frost this year and due to the rain, there has not been the need to irrigate in a while. Manure has been applied at Fifth Avenue, Riverview, Judson, and University Groves. Prospect Park is showing good size fruit and not a great deal of share cropping like past years. The grove is hitting full color right now. The trees at University Grove, replanted a few years ago are doing very well. The roses on the street frontage at Olive Grove will be pruned soon. Due to recent winds, there have been a large amount of palm fronds at the top of Prospect Park near the reservoir and Mr. Hills requested that the City remove the piles he has made.

Chairperson Huffstutler requested that Jacinto Farming prune the olive trees on the East side of the property.

Todd Housley stated that he had received many complements on the condition of University Grove.

Pete Marcum reported that he also had not seen any frost. He asked for clarification on the use of wind machines. Chairperson Huffstutler stated that the consensus of the Commission was that the helicopter alternative was preferred as maintaining wind machines is no longer feasible due to cost and vandalism. Mr. Marcum requested that the Commission take action at the next meeting. Todd Housley stated that he would include this on the next agenda in addition to other future farming practices at the three Nevada Palmetto groves.

Mr. Marcum stated that he had applied pre-emergent herbicide at groves that did not receive it last year to assist with fleabane control. Pruning was completed on Daniels and I10, and his crews are working on Texas now. They have started cleaning out wild trees and palms with one of the worst problems at Texas. Trash on the North side of Texas Grove is becoming a problem—it appears as if people are tossing refuse over the fences. If the problem gets too bad, he may request a roll-off container from the City. He will notify Todd Housley if this becomes necessary. Chairman Huffstutler stated that this may be a code enforcement issue and asked Todd Housley to speak to Code Enforcement about the problem.

Last year, Redlands Farming planted Best (Nevada Palmetto #1) an they anticipated planting Daniels (Nevada Palmetto #3) and Ramirez (Nevada Palmetto #2) this year. He is hesitant to do any planting if the property is going to be traded with Prologis. Mr. Marcum requested direction from the Commission on how to proceed with the Nevada Palmetto Groves. Todd Housley stated that

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the situation with Prologis is currently being heard in closed session at the Council level and that the Commission's direction at the last meeting was to look at anything at a case by case basis. As soon as more information is available, it would be provided to the Commission and farming company. Since Daniels is not within the influence of the Prologis negotiations, Mr. Marcum would proceed on approved re-planting and pruning at that grove. Mayor Harrison stated that the decision whether to proceed or not on further negotiations with Prologis would probably be made by the Council at the first meeting in February. Because of the due diligence process involved with any trade or sale, the property would still remain in the City's possession for several months.

Mr. Marcum stated that he was prepared to begin replacing Navels at Texas Grove. At the previous meeting, it was determined that the White Grapefruit would be replaced with a late Naval species because the market had essentially disappeared. He stated that he would find wood cutters to take the existing grapefruit trees down for the exchange of the wood. This would eliminate a cost to the City for the removal. Mr. Marcum would order trees to be delivered in the spring for planting. Todd Housley requested a count on the trees removed so records could be updated for insurance purposes.

Pete Marcum distributed leaf analysis reports on City groves for Commissioners to review. The reports showed favorable results on City trees—every nutrient evaluated was on the “green” scale.

Chairperson Huffstutler asked for any questions prior to proceeding to the next item.

D. Discussion of “Citrus Policy”

The Citrus Preservation Commission is in the process of revisiting and possibly renewing the Citrus Policy, which serves as a guide to the Citrus Preservation Commission. Commissioners have heard it cited in past City Council meetings, but were unsure if it had ever been adopted by the City Council. The purpose of review is to modernize the language and if necessary, have it adopted by the City Council. Mayor Harrison stated that it had never been approved as a resolution and encouraged the Commissioners to pursue it as such.

Chairperson Huffstutler expressed his concern that recent decisions by Council may not be consistent with the mission of the Citrus Preservation Commission. We have lost several rows of trees to street widening, storm drains and easements. An updated Citrus Policy may help everyone understand the goals of the Citrus Preservation Commission. He reiterated that the Citrus Preservation Commission is mandated by the public and there needs to be a way to ensure the long term viability of the organization. Mayor Harrison stated his support for the Citrus Preservation Commission. Chairperson Huffstutler identified various areas of groves that have been lost to other projects with the promise of replacement.

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Mayor Harrison expressed his interest in having an inventory of any lost acreage for discussion at the Council level. Chairman Huffstutler concluded by stating that he would encourage some stronger language as guidance to how future events would be handled based upon recent experiences. Mayor Harrison stated that it may be necessary to identify acreage replacement up front in stead of only a promise to do so. Chairman Huffstutler agreed that this would indeed help to maintain consistency in the policy regardless of changes on the Council. Mayor Harrison again expressed support for the long term viability and expansion of the grove operation, and excused himself for another scheduled meeting.

Todd Housley requested that the Commissioners review the written Citrus Policy distributed today and to provide any comments proposing changes. Chairman Huffstutler encouraged others to solicit comments from those outside of the Commission with citrus experience. This matter will continue to be discussed at future meetings.

E. Report on progress and costs associated with Mt. View Grove / Bixby Land Company (Todd Housley)

Todd Housley reported that funds to be received by Bixby Land Company will be distributed in the following manner:

- \$139,650.00 to install irrigation and plant the grove
- \$126,600.00 for five (5) years of cultural care
- \$62,000.00 to remain in escrow for approved replacement of failed trees within the first five (5) years
- Total donation by Bixby Land Company in addition to land - \$328,250.00

This matter will be in front of the Council for approval on February 5, 2008. Upon Council approval and receipt of funds by Bixby Land Company, the funds will be deposited as described above. Todd Housley stated that any expenses involved with the escrow account would be tracked like the Riverview Grove escrow account. The Commission will receive a sheet in their agenda packages as documentation.

Chairman Huffstutler and Commissioner Leonard inquired about the water situation for this new grove. Todd Housley stated that he would research the matter and report back to the Commission at the next meeting.

Commissioner Gardner inquired about the Edison easement and any fencing requirements. Todd Housley stated that he would also report back to the Commission on this matter at the next meeting.

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2. PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

Mr. Stan Brassfield indicated that he had come to the meeting with some questions, but through the course of the meeting, they had been answered.

Ms. Emily Bueermann introduced herself as the School Garden Youth Volunteer Coordinator for the Women for Agriculture and Volunteer School Garden Coordinator for the California Garden Club. She notified the Commission that local Redlands schools will be planting “mini” groves with the goal of linking local children to their citrus and agricultural history. She recognized the current school effort and the work done by the Citrus Preservation Commission to keep agricultural heritage alive in Redlands. She informed the Commission that as a one day service project, her organization will be planting a grove on Saturday, March 15, 2008 from 9:00 AM and noon and encouraged all to attend. She also encouraged the Commissioners to consider a public and youth education component when updating the Citrus Policy. She offered to pass along the current Citrus Policy document to members of her organization for comment. Ms. Bueermann asked the Commission if they had a label or logo for the organization. She suggested that a certificate with a logo be available in the future for any educational or certification programs offered to recognize youth in the future by the Commission.

3. SCHEDULE POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Commissioners requested the following items be placed on the next agenda for discussion and possible action:

- Future use of wind machines
- Continue to discuss Citrus Policy
- Edison easements at Mt. View Grove
- Water source for Mt. View Grove
- Progress on grove monuments at Mullin Memorial and Jacinto Memorial

Todd Housley notified the Commission that the City of Grand Terrace had approached him regarding advice for the possible planting of a heritage grove in that City. Mr. Housley offered to place an item on a future agenda giving City of Grand Terrace representatives time to give a presentation on the project. He has not heard back as of yet, but will keep the Commission informed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 11:12 AM. The next regular meeting of the Citrus Preservation Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11, 2008 at 10:00 AM in the Municipal Utilities Conference Room.

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Respectfully submitted,

Todd Housley
Project Manager