

Environmental Quality Commission



REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Date: 7/17/2024
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: [Zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join) – ID# 879 3070 9093 and
City Hall Downtown Conference Room, 1st Floor
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Members of the public can listen to the meeting and participate using the following methods.

- How to participate in the meeting
 - Access the meeting, in-person, at the Downtown Conference Room
 - Access the meeting real-time online at:
[Zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join) –Meeting ID 879 3070 9093
 - Access the meeting real-time via telephone at:
(669) 900-6833
Meeting ID 879 3070 9093
Press *9 to raise hand to speak

Subject to change: The format of this meeting may be altered or the meeting may be canceled. You may check on the status of the meeting by visiting the city website menlopark.gov. The instructions for logging on to the webinar and/or the access code is subject to change. If you have difficulty accessing the webinar, please check the latest online edition of the posted agenda for updated information (menlopark.gov/agendas).

Regular Session

A. Call To Order

B. Roll Call – Hill, Hedley, Kissel, Meyer, Vice Chair McKenna, Pelegri-Llopart, Chair Schmidt

C. Public Comment

Under “Public Comment,” the public may address the Commission on any subject not listed on the agenda. Each speaker may address the Commission once under public comment for a limit of three minutes. You are not required to provide your name or City of residence, but it is helpful. The Commission cannot act on items not listed on the agenda and, therefore, the Commission cannot respond to non-agenda issues brought up under public comment other than to provide general information.

D. Regular Business

- D1. Approve the June 19, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes ([Attachment](#))
- D2. Review and discuss the annual City Arborist report ([Presentation](#))

D3. Discuss opportunities for students to engage with the Environmental Quality Commission

D4. Approve the fiscal year 2024-25 agenda calendar and work plan ([Attachment](#))

E. Reports and Announcements

E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

F. Adjournment

At every Regular Meeting of the Commission, in addition to the Public Comment period where the public shall have the right to address the Commission on any matters of public interest not listed on the agenda, members of the public have the right to directly address the Commission on any item listed on the agenda at a time designated by the Chair, either before or during the Commission's consideration of the item.

At every Special Meeting of the Commission, members of the public have the right to directly address the Commission on any item listed on the agenda at a time designated by the Chair, either before or during consideration of the item.

For appeal hearings, appellant and applicant shall each have 10 minutes for presentations.

If you challenge any of the items listed on this agenda in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or before, the public hearing.

Any writing that is distributed to a majority of the Commission by any person in connection with an agenda item is a public record (subject to any exemption under the Public Records Act) and is available by request by emailing the city clerk at jaherren@menlopark.gov. Persons with disabilities, who require auxiliary aids or services in attending or participating in Commission meetings, may call the City Clerk's Office at 650-330-6620.

Agendas are posted in accordance with Cal. Gov. Code §54954.2(a) or §54956. Members of the public can view electronic agendas and staff reports by accessing the city website at menlopark.gov/agendas and can receive notification of agenda postings by subscribing at menlopark.gov/subscribe. Agendas and staff reports may also be obtained by contacting the City Clerk at 650-330-6620. (Posted: 7/11/2024)

Environmental Quality Commission



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – DRAFT

Date: 6/19/2024
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Teleconference and
City Hall Downtown Conference Room, 1st Floor
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park. CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Chair Schmidt called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Hill, Larocca Hedley (Remote – Brown Act), Meyer, Vice Chair McKenna, Chair Schmidt
Absent: Pelegri-Llopart, Kissel
Staff: Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer, Management Analyst II Ori Paz

C. Public Comment

None.

D. Regular Business

D1. Approve the May 15, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Hill/ Meyer), to approve the May 15, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes, passed 5-0 (Kissel and Pelegri-Llopart absent).

D2. Review and discuss annual report out presentation to City Council

Chair Schmidt introduced the item and made the presentation (Attachment).

The Commission received clarification on the annual report out presentation.

- Lynn Bramlett from Menlo Park Ready spoke in support of opportunities for outreach collaboration for resilience.
- Brian Schmidt from Menlo Spark spoke in support of expanding the work of the building decarbonization subcommittee and suggested the addition of habitat expansion to the work plan.
- Challa Ruacan spoke on concerns related to promoting Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals.

The Commission discussed the annual report out.

D3. Discuss Environmental Quality Commission 2024-2025 work plan to submit to City Council

Commissioner Meyer made the presentation (Attachment).

The Commission received clarification on the calendar and draft work plan.

- Lynne Bramlett from Menlo Park Ready spoke in support of climate resiliency and solar for houses of worship as an opportunity for engagement and coalition building.

The Commission discussed the draft annual work plan, suggested calendar updates and directed the subcommittee to return an updated draft to the Commission at a later date.

ACTION: Motion and second (Schmidt/ Larocca Hedley), to recommend that the Work Plan Ad Hoc Subcommittee make recommendations around CAP #1, #4, and #6, artificial grass, single use plastics and heritage tree ordinance admin guidelines to complete a draft of the work plan and to recommend associated ad hoc subcommittees to support these items, passed 5-0 (Kissel and Pelegri-Llopert absent).

D4. Create and select members for an Urban Forest and Canopy Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Commissioner Larocca Hedley introduced the item.

The Commission received clarification on the scope and duration of the subcommittee.

ACTION: Motion and second (Larocca Hedley/ McKenna), to create a Heritage Tree Ordinance Administrative Guidelines Ad Hoc Subcommittee with Commissioner Hill, Hedley and Chair Schmidt to disband at the August Environmental Quality Commission meeting, passed 5-0 (Kissel and Pelegri-Llopert absent).

E. Reports and Announcements

E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

Management Analyst II Ori Paz reported out on city electrification and progress on reroofing for the Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) GovPV program rooftop installations.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer reported out on the June 18 City Council meeting Environmental Justice study session, the City's Juneteenth celebration, and upcoming City Council meetings.

Commissioner Larocca Hedley reported out on the City's July 4 event and invited others to come visit the Silicon Valley Climate team table.

Commissioner McKenna reported out on a potential program from PCE for an incentive for self-generation, and Commissioner Hill's home electrification webinar.

Chair Schmidt reported out on the CAL Fire grant, school coordination opportunities and the Environmental Justice element, and encouraged engagement with potential new commissioners.

F. Adjournment

Chair Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Management Analyst II Ori Paz



ANNUAL ARBORIST REPORT

July 17, 2024 EQC meeting

TREE DIVISION OVERVIEW

- City staff
 - 4 Maintenance Workers, Public Works Tree Supervisor, City Arborist, Management Analyst
 - Permit review and tree maintenance contractors
- Tree City USA for 25 years
 - Maintain a tree board or department
 - Have a community tree ordinance
 - Spend at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry
 - Celebrate Arbor Day
- Growth Award for 9 years
 - High level of tree care and community engagement



2023-2024 Developments

- Added two new tree maintenance workers to the team
- Updated electric tree work equipment
- Obtained new licenses
- Council approved a new three-year contract with West Coast Arborist (WCA), our primary tree care provider
- Added new City approved consulting arborists to our list
- Submitted a Cal Fire grant application for funds for an Urban Forest Management Plan





URBAN FOREST CANOPY



- 18,955 street and park trees
 - WCA provides routine maintenance every 5 years
 - Residents may request an evaluation of work needs outside of 5-year cycle too
- Top 3 public tree species
 - Coast Live Oak: 2,350
 - American Sweetgum (pictured to the right): 1,317
 - London Plane: 1,047
- Fiscal year 2023-2024
 - Number of Trees planted: 214
 - Number of Trees pruned: 4,363
 - Number of Trees removed: 143



STORM DAMAGE 2023-2024

- Compared to last year, this past year's storm damage was minimal
- All storm-related tree emergencies were related to branch failures and stem failures
- Approximately 80 tree related calls
 - Last year: 340 calls

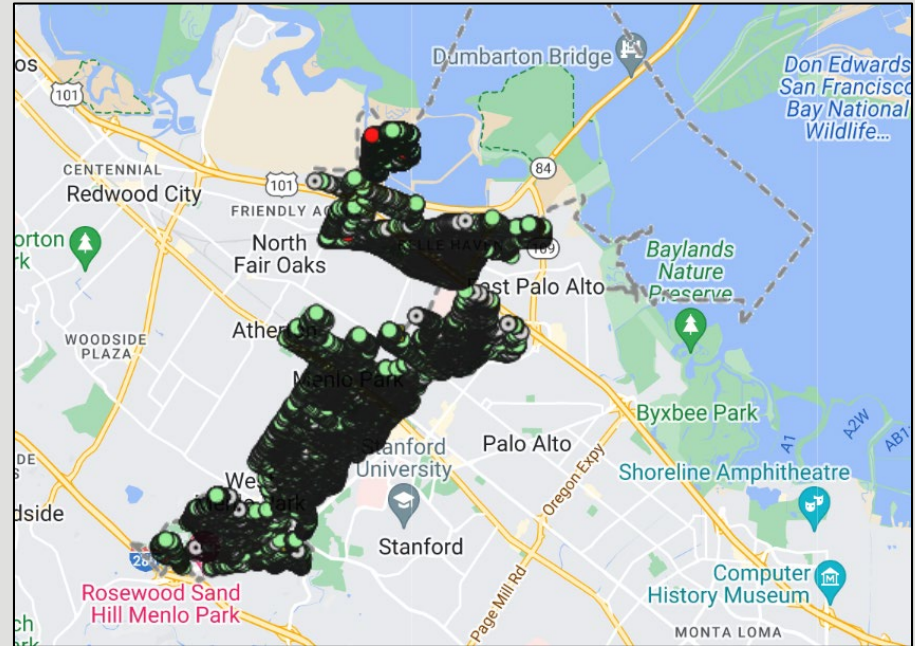




STREET TREE REQUESTS AND REPORTING



- Residents can request that street trees be planted in front of their property in the public right-of-way
 - City's street tree management plan
 - Partnership with Canopy
- Residents can also report tree-related issues to ACT Menlo Park
 - menlopark.gov/Services/ACT-Menlo-Park





OTHER TREE DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES



- Organize annual Arbor Day celebration with EQC
- Evaluate heritage tree permits for removals and heavy pruning
- Review building and demolition permits
- Help ensure protection of trees during construction
- Investigate potential heritage tree violations
- Review and update administrative guidelines
- Provide City tree root pruning consultation for hardscape work
- In-house bee hive relocations



HERITAGE TREE ORDINANCE

Purpose

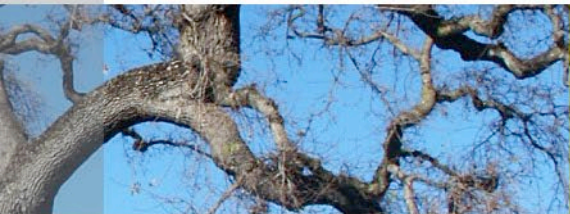
- To ensure that there will be a significant population of large, healthy trees over the long term; and
- To protect and preserve the scenic beauty and natural environment, prevent erosion of topsoil and sedimentation in waterways, encourage quality development, provide shade and wildlife habitat, counteract pollutants in the air and decrease wind velocities and noise.





HERITAGE TREE DEFINITION

- Any tree other than oaks that has a trunk with a circumference of 47.1 inches (diameter of 15 inches) or more, measured at 54 inches above natural grade
- Any oak tree native to California that has a trunk with a circumference of 31.4 inches (diameter of 10 inches) or more measured at 54 inches above natural grade
- A tree or group of trees specifically designated by the City Council for protection because of its historical significance, special character or community benefit



PERMIT PROCESS



Type of heritage tree permit	Application requirement	Replacement tree requirements	Appeal process
Non-development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dead • Tree risk • Tree health • Low desirable tree species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form • City-approved arborist report • Replacement tree plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correlates to trunk diameter size 	Only the permit applicant may appeal
Development-related	Additional requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed construction plans • Cost analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correlates to the tree's appraisal value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any community member may appeal • Notices are mailed out within 300 feet of the property • On-site postings are required
Emergency removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents contact city arborist directly • Tree must show signs of overall extreme risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correlates to trunk diameter size 	N/A

RESOURCES



- For more information about applying for a permit, visit: menlopark.gov/trees
- To submit and search for a heritage tree permit application, visit: Menlopark.org/permitcenter
- For statistics for permit application submittals, visit: menlopark.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/90ab3ab183ad4ece9a936c9446d3bd59

Home Building Planning **Public Works** Special Event Permits

Search Applications

Search for Records
Enter information below to search for records.
• Site Address
• Parcel Number
• Record Information
Select the search type from the drop-down list.

General Search General Search

Record Number: Record Type: Heritage Tree Permit

Project Name:

Start Date: End Date:

Street No.: - Street Name: Unit No.:

City: State: Zip:

Parcel No.:

► Search Additional Criteria

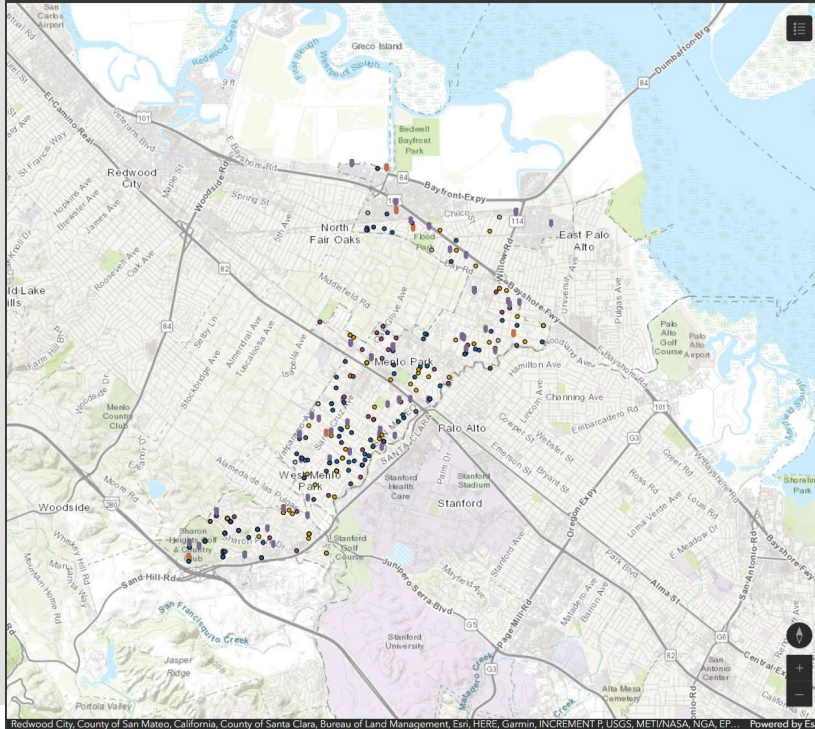
FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 DASHBOARD



Heritage tree removal permit applications

Fiscal year 2023-2024, Last update: July 2, 2024

District **All** 1 2 3 4 5

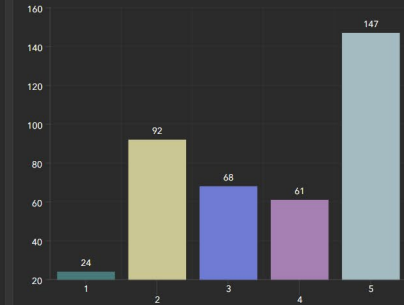


Approved heritage tree removals

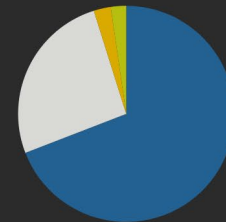
271

Number of removal requests: 392

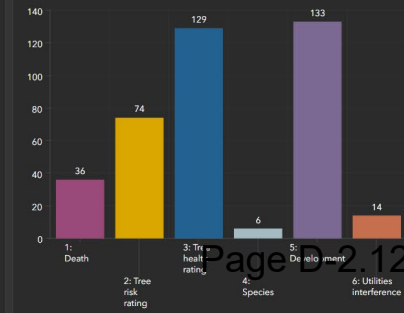
Tree requests by district



Application status



Primary removal reasons



IN PROGRESS

- Updating the heritage tree ordinance administrative guidelines. To be published publicly July 18 with a 30 day public comment window
- Adding more city-approved consulting arborists to list
- Fully transitioning to electric equipment (blowers, chainsaws)
- Working towards urban forest master plan. Waiting to hear back about Cal Fire grant application.





THANK YOU

Environmental Quality Commission work plan

City Manager's Office

701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park CA 94025

Approved September 24, 2024

D4-ATTACHMENT



Work plan goals

1. Provide feedback to staff and advise the City Council on 2025-2030 scope of work implementation for Climate Action Plan (CAP) strategies No.1 through No.6
2. Ensure that our most vulnerable communities have a voice in policies and programs to protect their communities from environmental impacts.
3. Leverage best practices to advise/recommend on the preservation of heritage trees, city trees and expansion of the urban canopy; and make determinations on appeals of heritage tree removal permits.
4. Support sustainability initiatives, as needs arise, which may include city-led events, habitat protection, healthy ecology, environmental health protection, healthy air, surface water runoff quality, water conservation and waste reduction.
5. Maintain an annual commission calendar to provide transparency and allow adequate time to prepare agenda items related to the commission's work plan; update and post for public review monthly.
6. Encourage and facilitate robust public comment and participation at Commission meetings.
7. Foster a public meeting environment that is inclusive of all members of the diverse Menlo Park community.
8. Support the filling of openings on the Commission and the effective onboarding of new Commissioners.

Work plan history

Action	Date	Notes
Work plan recommended to EQC	7/17/2024	
Work plan City Council approval	9/24/2024	

Environmental Quality Commission Agenda Topics Fiscal Year 2024-25

Agenda schedule may change based on City Council, Chair and Vice Chair, and staff requests/direction

Month	Topics	Author/Presenter	EQC role
2024			
July 2024	Discuss and approve fiscal year 2024-25 agenda calendar, work plan, and subcommittees	Sustainability staff/Ad hoc subcommittee	Action by commission
	Annual City Arborist report and review of Heritage Tree ordinance administrative guidelines	City Arborist and Public Works staff	Feedback to staff on ideas, policies and programs
	Discuss opportunities for student engagement in EQC	Chair	Action by commission
August 2024	Approve subcommittees' scope, timeline and deliverables	Sustainability staff	Feedback to staff on ideas, policies, and programs
	Recommend updates to Heritage Tree ordinance administrative guidelines	Heritage tree ordinance administrative guidelines ad hoc subcommittee	Action by commission
September 2024	Review and discuss communication and engagement strategies	Community education and engagement ad hoc subcommittee	Feedback to ad hoc subcommittee
	Presentation on SPUR's groundwater rise report	Guest speakers	Informational/no action
October 2024	Presentation from Sustainable San Mateo County	Guest speakers	Informational/no action
November 2024	No meeting due to holiday		
December 2024 (Special meeting earlier in the month)	Review and discuss recommendations to promote solar and battery storage	Distributed energy resources ad hoc subcommittee	Action by commission
2025			
January 2025	Report out on Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Voucher program	Sustainability staff	Informational, provide feedback to staff
	Review and discuss recommendations from single use plastics ad hoc subcommittee	Single use plastics ad hoc subcommittee	Action by commission
February 2025	Review and discuss recommendations for existing building and accessory dwelling unit electrification policies	Existing building and accessory dwelling unit electrification policies ad hoc subcommittee	Action by commission
March 2025	Receive Climate Action Plan progress report	Sustainability staff	Informational item/no action
	Review and discuss recommendations for developing a climate change resilience and adaptation plan	Climate change resilience and adaptation ad hoc subcommittee, sustainability staff	Action by commission

April 2025	Report out on Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Voucher program	Sustainability staff	Informational, provide feedback to staff
May 2025	Elect Chair and Vice Chair	Chair	Action by commission
	Update on building electrification outreach and education	Sustainability staff	Provide feedback to staff
	Annual City Arborist Report	City Arborist and Public Works staff	Informational Item
June 2025	Discuss annual agenda calendar/ work plan to submit to the City Council	Sustainability staff/Chair and Vice Chair	Action by commission
July 2025	Approve of the fiscal year 2025-2026 agenda calendar	Sustainability staff	Informational
	Review and discuss recommendations to improve stormwater management	Water pollution prevention, conservation and storage ad hoc subcommittee	Action by commission
	Review and discuss recommendations to reduce vehicle miles traveled	Transportation ad hoc subcommittee, sustainability and public works staff	Provide feedback to staff

Ad hoc subcommittees

- **Distributed energy resources ad hoc subcommittee**
 - **Scope:** Identify and implement programs that can increase the amount of solar and battery storage in Menlo Park.
 - **Duration:** Two months with an expected report to EQC by December 2024
 - **Commissioners:** Commissioner Pelegri-Llopart, Commissioner Hill, Commissioner Kissel
- **Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative guidelines ad hoc subcommittee**
 - **Scope:** Review and present recommendations to amend the heritage tree ordinance administrative guidelines to protect heritage trees and the city's tree canopy.
 - **Duration:** Two months with an expected report to EQC by August 2024
 - **Commissioners:** Chair Schmidt, Commissioner Hill, Commissioner Larocca Hedley
- **Community education and engagement ad hoc subcommittee**
 - **Scope:** Develop recommendations for communicating with and engaging residents on sustainability and resilience programs. Focus engagement plans on programs aligned with priority climate action plan activities (building electrification, transportation and climate adaptation and resilience). Opportunities include communicating broadly on the climate action plan and carbon neutrality goal, the communitywide home upgrade program, the Belle Haven Community Campus sustainability features, and the zero emission landscaping equipment ordinance. Recommended strategies may include developing strategic plans outlining key messages, communication channels, and materials, visioning community events, engaging the youth advisory committee and developing student outreach programs
 - **Duration:** Two months with an expected report to EQC by September 2024
 - **Commissioners:** Commissioner Kissel, Commissioner Meyer
- **Transportation ad hoc subcommittee**
 - **Scope:** Work with Complete Streets and Planning Commission to develop, implement, and communicate programs that support public transit, bicycling, walking, and rolling to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
 - **Duration:** Two months with an expected report to the EQC in July 2025
 - **Commissioners:** Commissioner Larocca Hedley, Vice Chair McKenna
- **Water pollution prevention and conservation ad hoc subcommittee**

- **Scope:** Evaluate opportunities to enhance stormwater protection including exploring the impacts of artificial grass and programs that promote green infrastructure, permeability and native, water efficient landscaping. Consider concepts such as a sponge city.
 - **Duration:** Three months with an expected report to the EQC in July 2025
 - **Commissioners:** TBD
- **Climate change resilience and adaptation ad hoc subcommittee**
 - **Scope:** Provide feedback to inform the development of a Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Plan
 - **Duration:** Two months with an expected report to the EQC in March 2025
 - **Commissioners:** Chair Schmidt
- **Single use plastics ad hoc subcommittee**
 - **Scope:** Research and present recommendations on programs and policies to reduce single use plastic use in the city.
 - **Duration:** Two months with an expected report to the EQC in January 2025
 - **Commissioners:** Vice Chair McKenna
- **Existing building and accessory dwelling unit electrification policies ad hoc subcommittee**
 - **Scope:** Research California state building standards code plans for existing buildings and ADUs to make recommendations for local amendments or reach codes or other actions to take in support of the statewide electrification plans.
 - **Duration:** Three months with an expected report to the EQC in February 2025
 - **Commissioners:** Vice Chair McKenna, Commissioner Pelegri-Llopart

Other topics to be determined

- Identify grant funding opportunities
- Track Menlo Park School District electrification efforts and climate action plan development
- Promote the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Provide recommendations for workforce training related to building electrification

Regular items

- Annual Election of Chair and Vice Chair (May)
- Chair report to the City Council (at minimum once per year)
- Set fiscal year commission agenda calendar (June/July)
- Annual informational presentation on existing building electrification outreach and education (annual)
- Annual City Arborist Report (Spring)
- Zero Emissions Landscaping Equipment (ZELE) Policy progress (requires two years of reporting to the commission directed by the city council starting in 2025)