

# **Public Comments**

## **Agenda Item 9 – FY 2023-24 Budget**

Written Comments Received By 12pm on 04/10/2023



*April 10, 2023*  
*City Council Meeting*

---

**From:** Paul Totah [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 6, 2023 7:49 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Cc:** Bigstych, Tygarjas; Vaterlaus, Sue; Beckmeyer, Sue; Bier, Mary; Boles, Christine  
**Subject:** City Council Meeting April 10, 2023 Agenda Item #9

**[CAUTION: External Email]**

Dear Members of the City Council,

We recently learned that the new budget does not include plans to hire a staff arborist for the city, even on a part-time basis, to replace the person who retired from this role. As you recall, at past goal-setting meetings, Tree City Pacifica and others asked that the city make this a priority. The recent storms make it clear just why we need an expert to weigh in on the health of our trees.

We also know how cash-strapped Pacifica is. That is one reason we lobbied hard for Measure Y and wrote a piece published in the *Tribune* encouraging voters to help in this regard to ensure the city had funds to hire an arborist.

Because the need for an arborist is clear and pressing, we are saddened and dismayed regarding this budgetary omission. Here are just a few of the reasons why we feel an arborist is essential:

1. A staff arborist is vital for making ongoing decisions to support a thriving urban forest.
2. A staff arborist can quickly make knowledgeable and accurate assessments of trees in emergency situations.
3. A staff arborist can determine the health and situation of a tree when citizens apply for permits, saving them the expense of a separate arborist report.
4. A staff arborist can make appropriate exceptions to tree replacement requirements based on the viability of planting additional trees.
5. A staff arborist can provide essential advice about planting the right tree in the right location.

We respectfully request that the city include a staff arborist in the budget for next year.

Yours truly,  
Paul Totah, on behalf of all of us at Tree City Pacifica

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the City of Pacifica. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

**Public Comments**  
**Agenda Item 10 – Ad Hoc Subcommittee for**  
**Commissions/Committees**

Written Comments Received By 12pm on 04/10/2023



*April 10, 2023*  
*City Council Meeting*

---

**From:** Margo Meiman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 9, 2023 5:19 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** City Council Meeting 4/10/23, Item #10

**[CAUTION: External Email]**

Dear City Council Members and City Staff,

I believe that the City of Pacifica will soon be considering the idea of forming a committee or commission (C/C) that will focus on environmental sustainability. I'm writing in support of this idea.

While I am not familiar with the process of how such a C/C is formed, I believe that members of the public who are interested in finding meaningful ways to mitigate climate change should be invited to participate in an environmental C/C.

Thank you for making climate a priority in the City's decision making process this year and every year forward.

Sincerely,

Margo Meiman  
Pedro Point, Pacifica

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of Pacifica. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.**

---

**From:** Cindy Abbott [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 10, 2023 12:06 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Fwd: Public Comment, Item 10, April 10, 2023 City Council Agenda

**[CAUTION: External Email]**

Dear Mayor Bigstyk and Councilmembers,  
I am resharing thoughts (below) from the March 27 City Council meeting on the topic of Commission/Committee reviews to take place this year.

With the significant priorities on the list of projects for staff this year, I'd like to continue to suggest that only a limited number of reviews should be prioritized for this year. Specifically, please listen to your appointed members of the Open Space and Parkland Advisory Committee and undertake a review and consider expansion of their charter. I also support discussion into shaping a Sustainability Committee to support city staff in working on the needed updates to the Climate Action Plan. They could also advise departments and the community on best practices (i.e., stop serving bottled water at any city meeting or event; work with Commute.org to initiate a carpooling program for city residents and workforce, etc.)

Additionally, I'd like to note that the City of Pacifica already has a Youth Advisory Committee. It's driven by the youth it represents, and are from local high schools, and supported by one of our wonderful recreation specialists, Sophia Mahoney-Rhule. The group is currently in the process of rebuilding following the pandemic.

Years back -- about ten -- the PBR Commission was to have a designated youth member. ***That position NEVER filled after months to years of working to do so.***

A city council/commission driven group isn't as effective as having a youth led group -- they get to set their own schedule, own programming and do a great job of it developing the members leadership skills. Over the years, they have put on youth spelling bees, high school fairs, art contests, and more. They present annually to the PBR Commission with the work they are planning and have completed.

Regards,  
Cindy Abbott  
West Sharp Park  
(Member of the PBR Commission)

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Cindy Abbott [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Sun, Mar 26, 2023 at 12:06 PM  
**Subject:** Public Comment, Item 8, March 27, 2023 City Council Agenda  
**To:** Bigstyk, Tygarjas <[tbigstyk@pacificagov](mailto:tbigstyk@pacificagov)>, Vaterlaus, Sue <[svaterlaus@pacificagov](mailto:svaterlaus@pacificagov)>, Bier, Mary <[mbier@pacificagov](mailto:mbier@pacificagov)>, Beckmeyer, Sue <[sbeckmeyer@pacificagov](mailto:sbeckmeyer@pacificagov)>, Boles, Christine <[cboles@pacificagov](mailto:cboles@pacificagov)>, <[publiccomment@pacificagov](mailto:publiccomment@pacificagov)>

Dear Mayor Bigstyk and Councilmembers,

I'm writing to you with regard to **Item #8 for the March 27, 2023 City Council Agenda**:

As stated in the staff report:

"The primary role of City commission and committees is generally to provide advice, recommendations and assistance to the City Council and to promote increased public input and citizen participation in the determination of City policies and program implementation. It would be impractical and too burdensome for the City Council to review and consider all specific issues related to all program areas of the City, so the Council often relies on commission or committees to guide its decision making."

Commissions and Committees do just this, provide additional time and opportunity for public input and consideration by community members appointed to Commissions and Committees to distill discussion and provide input to City Council. The City of Pacifica, comparatively, has a limited number of Commissions and Committees to assist in this important work to SUPPORT City Council and staff in key decisions facing the City. Other cities have taken on important issues through Commissions and Committees, such as sustainability, age-friendly programs, and arts and culture to name a few that are fairly common in San Mateo County and other cities.

Over the years, members of these important bodies, when they feel they need additional guidance and input, have reached out to City Council to review their Charters. This has been done by the Beautification Advisory Committee, Economic Development Committee and most recently, a review has been requested by the Open Space and Parkland Advisory Committee. (The Library Advisory Committee hasn't met since prior to the pandemic.)

Over the past many months, staff leadership has noted that current City of Pacifica staffing levels make it difficult to move ahead on important projects and are concerned about their workload. Therefore, **I strongly recommend that City Council take the approach outlined in Alternative Action #2:**

- *Undertake only one or two priority reviews at this time.*

The Open Space and Parkland Advisory Committee has been requesting a review. Please move forward with doing so. Now is not the time, based on staff's own concern, to add additional reviews to staff's reported already full plates.

And, please also consider short-term initiatives by Commissions and Committee members, when brought forward to you, that can alleviate the work of staff by taking on projects. Engage with and accept support from members of the community who want to work with city staff on the important issue of updating the Short Term Rental Ordinance. Who will be working on the critical Climate Action Plan, that hasn't been addressed in a number of years? Who will be communicating with the public and tree services about the new Heritage Tree Ordinance and to review the feasibility of creating an adopt-a-tree program, similar to the already existing Beautification Advisory Committee. The work on trees could be jointly reviewed by the PBR Commission and Beautification Advisory Committee in collaboration with community groups such as Tree City Pacifica.

The City of Pacifica, since it's inception has been underfunded. ***Commissions and Committees (and collaboration with local volunteer community groups), when used effectively, can extend the capability of our limited staff. There needs to be an openness to this though.*** While recognizing that Commissions and Committees do take staff time, the statement that :

"C/Cs are staff-intensive: While intended to provide advice, recommendations, and assistance to the City Council, administering each C/C in accordance with the Brown Act, researching and preparing agenda reports, and conducting periodic recruitments requires dedicated staff resources."

is disappointing at best. Community members are volunteering their valued time in service to the City of Pacifica. Please be open to the value that is provided and re-image the roles not as being "staff-intensive" but "staff-enhancing".

Thank you for your consideration and hopefully willingness to think outside the box to take advantage of a key resource that has been critical to the city's functioning for decades – volunteers.

Kind regards,

Cindy Abbott

West Sharp Park

Member of: Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Commission and Beautification Advisory Committee Public Art and Murals Subcommittee

Past Member of: Surf Camp/School Task Force; Library Advisory Committee; Beautification Advisory Committee Beautification Award Subcommittee; Fireworks Task Force

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the City of Pacifica. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.