

CLAREMONT COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION TREE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

*"We are a vibrant, livable, and inclusive community dedicated to quality services,
safety, financial strength, sustainability, preservation, and progress
with equal representation for our community."*

City Council Chamber
225 Second Street
Claremont, CA 91711



Wednesday
February 18, 2026
6:00 PM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NANCY BROWER

RUSS BINDER

BRISA SIFUENTES

Meetings are open to the public for in-person attendance. The Brown Act provides for an opportunity for members of the public to address the Tree Committee concerning the items described below.

Members of the public who wish to address the Tree Committee on any matter listed on the agenda or on a subject matter within the jurisdiction of the Tree Committee may utilize the following methods. The Tree Committee requests but does not require that public speakers identify themselves.

OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public comment may be provided by one of the following methods. Each speaker will be given up to three (3) minutes to provide their comment.

IN-PERSON LIVE COMMENTS

When the item you wish to speak to is announced, please proceed to the speaker's podium one by one.

E-MAIL/MAIL

Written comments sent to the Community Services Department will be distributed to the Tree Committee and imaged into the record of the meeting. Email: dross@claremontca.gov and jswan@claremontca.gov. Mail: PO Box 880, Claremont CA 91711. Written comments submitted after publication of the agenda will be made available in the document archive system on the City website as soon as possible - www.claremontca.gov.

**For assistance, comments, or more information please contact Dawn Ross, Committee
Secretary, by email: dross@claremontca.gov or phone: (909) 399-5431.**

CALL TO ORDER THE MEETING OF THE TREE COMMITTEE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

CEREMONIAL MATTERS, PRESENTATIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Tree Committee has set aside this time for persons in the audience to comment on items that are not listed on the agenda, but are within the jurisdiction of the Committee. Members of the audience will have the opportunity to address the Committee regarding all items on the agenda at the time the Committee considers those items.

General public comment will be taken for 30 minutes and will resume later in the meeting if there are speakers who did not get an opportunity to speak because of the 30-minute time limit.

The Brown Act prohibits the Committee from taking action on oral requests relating to items that are not on the agenda. The Committee may engage in a brief discussion, refer the matter to staff, and/or schedule requests for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters listed on the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine. The Tree Committee may act on these items by one motion following public comment. Only Committee Members may pull an item from the Consent Calendar for discussion.

1. TREE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2025

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Tree Committee approve and file the regular Tree Committee Meeting minutes of November 19, 2025.

Attachment(s): 11-19-25 Draft Tree Committee Meeting Minutes

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

2. REQUEST FOR TREE REMOVAL - 347 INDIANA AVENUE

Recommendation: Staff recommends the Tree Committee recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission deny the request for the removal of the Canary Island pine tree at 347 Indiana Avenue.

Attachment(s): Request from Property Owner - 347 Indiana Avenue
Photos of Canary Island Pine Tree - 347 Indiana Avenue

CONTINUED PUBLIC COMMENT

This time is reserved for those persons who were unable to speak earlier in the agenda because of the 30-minute time restriction.

ADJOURNMENT

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE TREE COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026, AT 6:00 PM IN THE CLAREMONT COUNCIL CHAMBER, 225 WEST SECOND STREET, CLAREMONT, CA 91711.

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990, THIS AGENDA WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN APPROPRIATE ALTERNATIVE FORMATS TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. ANY PERSON WITH A DISABILITY WHO REQUIRES A MODIFICATION OR ACCOMMODATION IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN A CITY MEETING SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY CLERK AT 909-399-5461 "VOICE" OR 1-800-735-2929 "TT/TTY" AT LEAST THREE (3) WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING, IF POSSIBLE.

I, DAWN BONNELL ROSS, SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT OF THE CITY OF CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA, HEREBY CERTIFY UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT THE FOREGOING AGENDA WAS POSTED AT CLAREMONT CITY HALL, 207 HARVARD AVENUE, ON FEBRUARY 12, 2026, PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54954.2.

POST THROUGH: February 19, 2026



Claremont Community and Human Services Commission Tree Committee

Agenda Report

File #: 5874

Item No: 1.

TO: TREE COMMITTEE

FROM: JEREMY SWAN, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

DATE: FEBRUARY 18, 2026

SUBJECT:

TREE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Tree Committee approve and file the regular Tree Committee Meeting minutes of November 19, 2025.

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCESS

The agenda and staff report for this item have been posted on the City website and distributed to interested parties. If you desire a copy, please contact the Community Services Department.

Submitted by:

Jeremy Swan
Community Services Director

Prepared by:

Dawn Bonnell Ross
Senior Administrative Assistant

Attachment:

11-19-25 Draft Tree Committee Meeting Minutes

**CLAREMONT TREE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at 6:00 PM
City Hall Council Chamber, 225 W. Second Street, Claremont, California

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Binder called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

COMMITTEE MEMBER: BINDER, SIFUENTES

ABSENT:

COMMITTEE MEMBER: NONE

LATE ARRIVAL:

COMMITTEE MEMBER: BROWER (Arrived at 6:34 PM)

ALSO PRESENT:

Cari Dillman, Community Services Manager
Richard Hecker, Landscape Maintenance Supervisor
Kyle Jennings, Maintenance Craftworker I
Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant
Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director

CEREMONIAL MATTERS, PRESENTATIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice Chair Binder invited public comment.

Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant, announced that no written public comment had been received.

James Manifold and Margaret Russell, Claremont residents, spoke in favor of removing the Canary Island pine trees in the canyon west of Padua Hills, due to fire danger.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Vice Chair Binder closed public comment.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Vice Chair Binder invited public comment.

Senior Administrative Assistant Ross announced that no written public comment had been received on this item.

There were no requests to speak.

Vice Chair Binder closed public comment.

Committee Member Sifuentes moved to approve the Consent Calendar, seconded by Vice Chair Binder, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: ***Committee Member – Binder, Sifuentes***
NOES: ***Committee Member – None***
ABSENT: ***Committee Member – Brower***

1. Tree Committee Meeting Minutes of October 15, 2025
Approved and filed the regular Tree Committee meeting minutes of October 15, 2025.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM

2. Claraboya Pine Tree Proactive Removal and Replacement Program

Cari Dillman, Community Services Manager, provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Manager Dillman and Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director, responded to questions from the Committee regarding the value of planting 24"-box trees over 15-gallon trees, the effect on fire risk of removing Canary Island pine trees, the ability to predict which trees would have fallen during the windstorms, how removals would be prioritized in a phased removal, whether survey responses from Claraboya residents were weighted over those from other community members, how many residents changed their opinion after the survey period, how the issue came before the City Council and why the City Council directed staff to develop a removal and replacement program, why the Sustainability Committee did not recommend Option 3, whether a three-year cycle would be considered overtrimming, whether the City has any history of forming a special assessment district, how enhanced maintenance prevents a tree from falling in a windstorm and if it would be possible to quantify the reduction in risk of failure, the trim history of the pine trees that fell during the 2022 windstorm, how many pine trees fell in Claraboya during both windstorms, Los Angeles County Fire Department response protocols, whether staff has considered the potential for property damage during the removal process, whether stumps would be removed as part of the removal process, whether residents would be able to pay for trees larger than 24"-box size, the effect of the various options on local wildlife, possible effects of removal on property values, why safety wasn't included in the survey, whether staff has had communication with residents regarding the street tree list, and whether staff would find an additional survey helpful.

Chair Brower joined the meeting at 6:34 PM.

Vice Chair Binder invited public comment.

Senior Administrative Assistant Ross announced that two written public comments had been received on this item.

Fred Roth expressed concern that the justification for removing the trees is primarily ingress/egress issues in an emergency situation and asked why no statement on that subject from an emergency response agency was included in the report. Dr. Roth suggested evaluating the loss of environmental benefits, along with the cost of removal and replacement.

Jason Annigian, Claremont resident, stated that one of the reasons he bought his house was the trees in the area, and that it is the responsibility of the residents to manage the nuisance debris. Mr. Annigian supports an additional survey and finds the idea of removing all of the pine trees to be “anti-Claremont.”

Kenneth Wenzl, Claremont resident, supports the enhanced trimming option to mitigate risk from falling pinecones but does not support forming a special assessment district to cover the additional costs.

Valerie Martinez, Claremont resident, spoke against the full removal of the trees because of the ecosystem they support, and she supports either taking no steps or enhanced trimming. Ms. Martinez stated that Claraboya residents are aware of fire danger and take steps to prepare and reduce risk.

Connie Fuentes, Claremont resident, asked why eucalyptus removals are not being considered, as they are more flammable than pine trees.

James Manifold, Claremont resident, feels that the real issue is not tree failure due to winds and resulting ingress/egress challenges, but rather fire danger because the resin in pine trees causes them to explode. Mr. Manifold cautioned that there is limited time to respond and evacuate in case of emergency.

Unidentified speaker, Claremont resident, stated that she lost her home in the 2003 fire but that the two pine trees sustained no damage and are still standing. She enjoys seeing the pine trees when driving up Mountain Avenue and feels their loss would be unimaginable.

Larry Olin, Claremont resident, stated that the loss of street trees in other areas has directly affected the value of those homes, and he feels that the same thing could happen in Claraboya if the trees were removed. Mr. Olin acknowledges that this is a difficult issue and complimented the Committee for asking insightful questions.

Sorrel Stielstra, Claremont resident, supports the validity of the safety concerns expressed by other residents and feels there is serious potential for loss of life or property. Ms. Stielstra feels that none of the options presented are sufficient and called for an evidence-based evaluation of risk with the participation of public safety experts and emergency responders. Because the trees are a community asset, Ms. Stielstra recommended a broader urban forest strategy to manage the trees Citywide, rather than for a specific neighborhood.

Unidentified speaker, Claremont resident, agreed with comments from a previous speaker stating that the trees are a fire hazard. While a tree itself may not fall, winds may carry flying needles and embers and spark fires. The speaker states that a tree falling across Mountain Avenue could trap residents from up to 215 homes. He spoke in favor of the survey and doesn't feel it necessary to issue a second one.

Lilia Hawkins, acknowledged the serious fire danger and encouraged further investigation into strategies to address fire risk, safety, and emergency exit plans. Ms. Hawkins stated that trees are essential for a healthy, climate-resilient city and that the benefits of trees, including Canary Island pines, are substantial.

Unidentified speaker spoke in support of keeping the trees and stated that the residents should be responsible for making their own preparations for emergencies without destroying the environment.

John Niero, Claremont resident, stated that removal of the trees would lead to the loss of a huge ecosystem and the many environmental benefits they provide. He understands the safety concerns but stated that Mountain Avenue is not the sole ingress/egress—Johnson's Pasture is a viable escape route if necessary. Mr. Niero stated that residents have a responsibility to develop their own safety plans and that we shouldn't make drastic decisions based on a worst-case scenario.

There were no additional requests to speak

Vice Chair Binder closed public comment.

The Committee discussed the City Council's original concern about ingress/egress issues if a tree falls during a fire and how the resulting survey and conversation have veered away from the focus on safety and fire issues, whether the Committee should stick to their focus of evaluating whether the trees pose an immediate danger versus the requirements in the *Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual* for non-emergency removals, the environmental impact of removing the trees, that the enhanced trimming options would not necessarily reduce the risk of whole tree failure, the fact that the trees are currently healthy and that the arborists are available to assess them at any time, the possibility of arranging for special collection of pinecones and needles, having an emergency response agency provide input and evaluate an evacuation plan for the neighborhood, and offering enhanced trimming to one neighborhood over others.

Director Swan responded to questions raised during Public Comment and stated that the proposed enhanced (three-year) trim cycle would reduce the number of pinecones in trees and that the eucalyptus trees in Claraboya are privately-owned and not City trees.

Chair Brower moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission approve Option 1 (Keep with Standard). The motion died for lack of a second.

The Committee discussed the possibility of obtaining an emergency response plan from an emergency services agency before presenting the item to the Community and Human Services Commission.

Director Swan stated that the Emergency Preparedness Ad Hoc Committee recently completed preparation of a City Emergency Operations Plan for presentation to the City Council in early 2026.

Chair Brower moved to recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission approve Option 1 (Keep with Standard), seconded by Vice Chair Binder, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: Committee Member – Binder, Brower, Sifuentes
NOES: Committee Member – None

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Binder adjourned the meeting of the Tree Committee at 8:12 PM. The next regular meeting of the Tree Committee will be held on December 19, 2025.

Chair

ATTEST:

Recording Secretary



Claremont Community and Human Services Commission Tree Committee

Agenda Report

File #: 5882

Item No: 2.

TO: TREE COMMITTEE

FROM: JEREMY SWAN, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

DATE: FEBRUARY 18, 2026

SUBJECT:

REQUEST FOR TREE REMOVAL - 347 INDIANA AVENUE

SUMMARY

The property owner at 347 Indiana Avenue is requesting the removal of one City-owned Canary Island pine tree located within the right-of-way in front of the property. The resident cites risk to economic and personal safety, stating that the tree's height and size and existing wind patterns could lead it to being blown over in a wind event. The property owner's request is included as Attachment A.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Tree Committee recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission deny the request for the removal of the Canary Island pine tree at 347 Indiana Avenue.

ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION

In addition to the recommendation, there are the following alternatives:

- A. Recommend that the Community and Human Services Commission approve the request for the removal of the tree at 347 Indiana Avenue and the replanting of two trees, as required by the *Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual*, at the property owner's expense, for an estimated total cost of \$2,260.
- B. Refer the matter back to staff for additional information.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The removal cost of a tree is determined by its diameter at breast height (DBH). The cost to remove the tree in question is \$49 per DBH. The tree measures approximately twenty-nine inches DBH, for an approximate removal cost of \$1,420. If approved for removal, two replacement trees will be planted, as required by the *Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual*. The cost to plant two 24"-box-sized trees is \$840. The total estimated cost of removal and replacement is \$2,260.

The staff cost to prepare this report is estimated at \$1,600 and is included in the operating budget of the Community Services Department.

ANALYSIS

The property owner at 347 Indiana Avenue is requesting the removal of one Canary Island pine tree adjacent to his property. There is one viable planting site at this property, which is currently vacant. The pine tree is located on the Michigan Drive side of the property, in the parkway north of the driveway and within the City right-of-way. Additionally, there are three Canary Island pine trees on the south side of the property along Indiana Avenue. The owner is requesting that the tree be removed due to the potential for future failure during a high wind event. Photos of the tree in question are included as Attachment B.

The Canary Island pine trees along Indiana Avenue and Michigan Drive and in the surrounding neighborhoods were likely planted as part of the housing development, and the City has no record of their planting. Due to the size, structure, and other considerations of the species, the City no longer plants Canary Island pine trees as street trees. These considerations include characteristics such as branch strength, root damage potential, possible allergens, and disease/pest susceptibility. According to the *Street Trees Recommended for Southern California* guide, Canary Island pines are only recommended for planting in spaces greater than seven feet. The Canary Island pine is no longer a tree that the City actively plants due to the space requirements and other considerations. The Canary Island pine remains on the Designated Street Tree List for only two streets within the City, as a means of preserving neighborhood character. According to the *Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual*, staff cannot remove healthy trees due to size, structure, or other considerations of the species.

In response to the January 7, 2025 wind event, the City Arborist and a second staff arborist evaluated the trees on Indiana Avenue, and both noted that the trees are healthy and within City standards. In accordance with the appeal process, the City Arborist conducted a Level I inspection on the Canary Island pine tree at 347 Indiana Ave and noted the following:

Tree S-2 has a diameter at breast height (DBH) of approximately 29 inches and a height of 45-60 feet. The tree is in good health with no observable structural defects. The tree was pruned in January 2020 and February 2024 as part of routine grid trimming. The approximate value of the tree is \$14,740.

Per the *Tree Policies and Guidelines Manual*, identifying a tree as potentially hazardous shall be based on, but not limited to, the severity of the following conditions:

- Large dead branches in the tree
- Cavities or rotten wood along the trunk or in major branches
- Mushrooms or conks present at the base of the tree
- Fractures or splits in the trunk
- Fractures or splits at the crotch or branch attachment
- Strong, uncorrected lean at the trunk with lifting soil
- Multiple branches with poor attachments arise from one point on the trunk
- Damaged, broken, or injured roots
- Tree has been topped or otherwise heavily pruned, resulting in poor structure

Based on the above-mentioned conditions, the tree would not be considered hazardous. The concern regarding pine cone drop is a seasonal issue, most prevalent during the summer months. For these reasons, staff recommends denying the request for removal. However, Claremont Municipal Code Section 12.26.020 authorizes the Community and Human Services Commission to grant approval of such requests, if it finds that not removing the tree would result in a burden on the property owner that substantially outweighs the benefit to the public of maintaining the tree. If the request for removal is granted, the City Arborist will work with the resident to select the best viable planting sites and species for replanting.

CEQA REVIEW

This item is not subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCESS

The agenda and staff report for this item have been posted on the City website and distributed to interested parties. If you desire a paper copy, please contact the Community Services Department.

Submitted by:

Jeremy Swan
Community Services Director

Prepared by:

Cari Dillman
Community Services Manager

Attachments:

- A - Request from Property Owner - 347 Indiana Avenue
- B - Photos of Canary Island Pine Tree - 347 Indiana Avenue

January 14, 2026

Mr. Jeremy Swan
Director of Community Services
City of Claremont

Dear Director Swan,

We have just discovered a life-threatening situation posed by one of the street trees in front of our newly-purchased home at 347 Indiana Ave. The Municipal Code and Tree Policy Guidelines appear to grant you authority to remove this tree immediately, once you confirm the facts described below.

This tree is part of a small planting (the Indiana Ave. planting) that has been proven, at maturity, to be dangerously unstable during Santa Ana wind events. Indiana Ave. contains 9 houses, and in just the last 5 years, 7 or 8 of these massive trees have fallen! That is almost as many trees fallen as there are houses on all of Indiana Ave.! Some of the trees were blown over outright by Santa Ana winds, while others were removed upon being found unacceptably high-risk for blowing over by qualified arboriculturalists. I have all of the addresses for you, but you may prefer to confirm by using your own city records.

Our lives are imperiled because when the massive tree in question (9 feet in circumference at 4 feet trunk height) blows over, it has absolutely nowhere to land but on top of our house. Santa Ana wind patterns have been scientifically plotted (please see below). They attack our tree on its northeast side. Our house is directly downwind, on the tree's southwest side. Worst of all, this tree is only twenty-nine (29) feet from our house. Geometrically and scientifically, when this unstable tree blows over, it is certain to crush our house. This proves that a life-threatening condition exists. It needs to be eliminated quickly.

To help you do this, please be aware of the following:

1. If we must, we will pay for the removal of the tree, and we will pay for its 20-gallon replacement. There will be no financial burden to the city.
2. It is important that all professional opinions be in writing. Written opinions keep professionals honest, and it is impossible to accurately evaluate something a professional is reported to have said.
3. People are emotional about trees, so please assure all parties that we love trees as much as they do. As a botany major at UCSB, my advisor and mentor was the famed expert on oak trees, Dr. Cornelius Muller. He was my friend, and he has been honored by having a tree named after him, the Muller Oak, *Quercus cornelius-mulleri*.

In closing, Mr. Swan, please appreciate that this is not a letter of opinion; it is a letter of fact. Losing almost as many trees as there are houses on Indiana, in only five years, is very concerning. These trees have proven to be wind-unstable at maturity. That is a fact. When our tree blows over, meteorology and geometry dictate that it will fall onto our house. That is a fact. One Claremont city document states that tree removal is justified when the tree places a burden on the homeowner greater than the value of the tree. The stress we suffer every time Santa Ana winds are forecast is extreme, and sleep is virtually impossible. A fact-supported emergency exists, and we respectfully ask that you remove this one tree quickly.

Thank you,



Richard W. Suter, Ph.D.



Carol A. Suter

Map illustration showing propagation of a Santa Ana wind event in southern California, USA

Permission details

This image is in the public domain because it contains materials that originally came from the U.S. National Oceanic and

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