

**TREE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2009
Corporation Yard Conference Room
25 Prado Road, San Luis Obispo**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Matt Ritter, Ellen Dollar, and Craig Kincaid

STAFF PRESENT: Keith Pellemeier and Ron Combs

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

MINUTES: Approval of Minutes of August 24, 2009

Ms. Dollar moved to approve the minutes as submitted.

Mr. Ritter seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

TREE REMOVAL APPLICATIONS

1. 490 HENDERSON (Fan Palm)

Bill Dannenbring, Davey Resource Group/applicant's representative, discussed the tree slightly to the side of PG&E's power lines. He noted the heart of the tree was below the lines presently, but fronds would grow higher and interference would be a problem until they grew past the lines. He stated they were required by PG&E to get 18" clearance for the span of a year and felt the tree was too large to be controlled with pruning.

Mr. Combs felt pruning could mitigate in the interim, but agreed the growth is vigorous.

Ms. Dollar felt pruning could mitigate the issues and was concerned that any replacement tree(s) would not get proper watering and maintenance.

Mr. Kincaid did not feel the tree was a particularly attractive specimen and favored removal.

Gerald Mintz, property owner, stated he supported the removal of the tree and agreed to replacement planting in an area away from the sewer line on Loomis St. side.

Mr. Ritter felt that the tree could grow past the lines without damage and then would be clear of issues.

Ms. Dollar moved to deny the request, as she could not make the findings necessary for removal.

Mr. Ritter seconded the motion.

The motion passed, with Mr. Kincaid voting against.

2. 290 CLOVER (Monterey pine)

The applicant discussed the large tree and his concerns about it falling on the house and posing additional hazard/liability issues. He noted the obvious lean of the tree and the cut below the root ball. He felt the large amount of mass leaning towards the house was cause for great concern.

Mr. Combs noted it was a skyline tree, but that there were many other trees established in the immediate area.

Mr. Kincaid agreed the area was heavily planted and landscaped and agreed with concerns about the tree's leaning and potential for falling.

Mr. Ritter agreed the safety issue concerns were valid and favored replacement planting.

Mr. Ritter moved to approve the removal request, based on promoting good arboricultural practice, and required one 15-gallon tree to be planted, chosen from the Master Street Tree list and planted within 45 days of issuance of permit.

Mr. Kincaid seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. 540 BUCHON (Redwood)

Jeff Simmons, applicant's representative, was concerned about the safety of the tree and of the tree falling. He stated it was too close to the house and sidewalk and felt the location restricted strong root systems. He was also concerned about the dual trunk structure. He believed the roots were lifting the house and damaging the foundation. He was concerned the tree was not getting enough water and stated nothing was able to grow beneath the tree and that the house got no sun nor did it have any front view. He submitted a structural engineering report for review.

Mr. Combs stated it was a healthy, large redwood and did not feel falling would be an issue, although he agreed there were potential issues with the split trunk. He noted some evidence of concrete damage to the sidewalk and driveway.

Mr. Kincaid noted there were not many trees in the neighborhood and while he did not think the tree would fall, he agreed it was too large for the location.

Ms. Dollar favored retaining the tree, as it was one of the only specimens in the area and felt watering would improve the tree's health and appearance greatly. She noted the succor growth could be pruned.

Mr. Ritter felt the tree was too massive as it stood, but felt pruning could mitigate concerns and would increase the value of the property and the appearance of the tree.

Ms. Dollar moved to deny the request, as she could not make the findings necessary for removal.

Mr. Ritter seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. 919 PALM (3 Palms)

Dan Van Beveren, City of SLO Public Works representative, discussed the removal request for the Railroad Safety Trail Phase 4A, allowing one continuous bike trail. He discussed the revisions to the design re-circulation and bike crossing and stated as such, three palms were now being requested for removal to allow for the third lane.

Mr. Ritter determined that moving the palms was not an option.

The Tree Committee discussed the significance and historical value of palms on that thoroughfare.

Mr. Van Beveren discussed the possibility of not widening the street where the trees are, noting that the Traffic Study did not support that particular alternative.

Mr. Ritter stated he did not favor improving the intersection for cars at the cost of the palms' removal and felt the extra bike lane could be added without removing the palms. He believed the trees to be iconic to the area.

Mr. Ritter moved to deny the request, as he could not make the findings necessary for removal.

Ms. Dollar seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Ritter noted that many new street trees were not getting watered at properties and felt owners needed to be reminded that it is their responsibility to maintain the trees. He suggested a small posting with new plantings that reminded owners of same.

Ms. Dollar asked that the recent denial for removal at 1408 Johnson be re-visited/re-agendized at the next meeting. She stated that otherwise, the item would go directly to Council on appeal and she felt the removal request should be re-examined prior to Council review.

Mr. Ritter moved to re-agendize the removal request at 1408 Johnson to the next regular meeting.

Ms. Dollar seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

It was also determined that there would be no regular Tree Committee meeting held in December, due to the holiday season.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Heritage Tree Designation

The Committee reviewed the packet of 16 trees and agreed to make a site visit to confirm all of the species and selections.

ARBORIST REPORT

1. Downtown Foresters

Mr. Combs discussed the program and the pruning performed in the parking lot across the street from Big Sky restaurant.

2. Revision of Engineering Standards

Mr. Combs noted a standard for tree guard installations had been created.

LIAISON REPORT

1. Advisory Body Training

Mr. Pellemeier invited the Committee to the training dinner on Thursday, October 15th at 5:30 at the Ludwick Center.

2. Tree Ordinance

Mr. Pellemeier noted that Legal Dept. was still reviewing the document prior to Council submission. There was general discussion about the diameter limitation language.

3. Tree Appeal to Council, 1408 Johnson Ave

Mr. Pellemeier discussed the appeal.

4. Mayor's Quarterly Lunch

Matt Ritter agreed to attend. (Matt Ritter was unable to attend, last minute emergency meeting in Santa Cruz)

5. Illegal Street Tree Removal

Mr. Pellemeier noted an illegal removal on Chorro Street and felt there was sufficient evidence that allowed for fine waivers and a requirement to plant two Crepe myrtles and require them to be watered/maintained to maturity.

Mr. Ritter suggested both trees be 24" box specimens.

6. Tree Appeal Fee Waiver to Council

Mr. Pellemeier discussed the request for waiver of fee to file a tree appeal for 546 Higuera.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. to next regular meeting scheduled for **Monday, October 26, 2009**, at 5:00 p.m. in the Corporation Yard Conference Room, 25 Prado Road.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Woske, Recording Secretary