

**TREE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2009
Corporation Yard Conference Room
25 Prado Road, San Luis Obispo**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Matt Ritter, Ellen Dollar, David Savory, Craig Kincaid,
and Allen Root

STAFF PRESENT: Keith Pellemeier and Ron Combs

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

MINUTES: Approval of Minutes of October 26, 2009

Mr. Savory moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Dollar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TREE REMOVAL APPLICATIONS

1. 1661 FREDERICKS (Eucalyptus)

Joseph O'Connor, applicant's representative, discussed the previous pruning and sewer problems, noting that the lateral had been replaced already. He submitted a contractor's inspection report which outlined the structural and site problems, including walkway and driveway upheaval and damage to the retaining wall; the report recommended removal of the tree and mitigating those problems before fixing issues. He discussed re-landscaping with native species, e.g. live oaks, and installing a drip system.

Mr. Combs noted it was a large healthy tree and agreed that the roots could be damaging the shallow slabs.

Ms. Dollar stated she did not see evidence of the exterior damage to the foundation and felt the tree could be pruned more extensively.

Mr. Kincaid felt the tree was too close to the house and was concerned about the damage it seemed to be causing. Mr. Savory also agreed

Mr. Ritter agreed with Mr. Kincaid and the re-landscaping proposal discussed.

Mr. Kincaid moved to approve the removal request, based on undue hardship to the property owner, and required replacement planting of two minimum 15-gallon trees to be chosen from the Master Street Tree list and planted within 45 days of issuance of permit. Mr. Savory seconded the motion.

The motion passed, with Ms. Dollar voting against.

2. 3063 ROCKVIEW PLACE (Pepper)

Ron Rinnell, Bunyan Bros., applicant's representative, submitted pictures of the older topped tree that was located too close to the structure and was lifting the driveway. He felt the tree was too large for the site and suggested replacing it with a live oak.

Mr. Combs reported it was a healthy tree and that there was some asphalt/hardscape displacement evident.

Mr. Savory stated it was an attractive tree, but questioned whether it had really been pruned.

Mr. Ritter felt the tree was too close to the house and that the tree would grow wider and taller. He favored removal with replacement.

Ms. Dollar agreed with Mr. Ritter.

Ms. Dollar moved to approve the removal request, based on undue hardship to the property owner, and required replacement planting of one minimum 15-gallon tree to be 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. 1991 HAYS (Pine)

Jason Woolwind, applicant's representative, submitted new landscaping plans in an effort to try to improve the site. He discussed the roots causing sewer problems and wanted to replace it with five birch trees.

Mr. Combs reported that the tree was in reasonable health and had been pruned several times.

Mr. Root did not feel the scale of the tree on the site was appropriate, especially located under power lines. He favored removal with the five-tree replacement plan.

Mr. Ritter agreed it was the wrong tree to be growing under power lines.

Ms. Dollar stated she would have preferred to have receipts submitted outlining the sewer problems.

Mr. Root moved to approve the removal request, based on promoting good arboricultural practice, and required replacement planting of five minimum 15-gallon birch trees to be planted away from the power line area and completed within 45 days of issuance of permit.

Mr. Savory seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. 506 MITCHELL (Aleppo pine)

The applicant discussed the interference of the tree with power lines and stated the tree was too close to the neighbor's house, noting that there had been past tree damage to the neighbor's property and that PG&E had past dealings with downed power lines. He was concerned about liability with the tree's weakened structure and from branches breaking. He did not feel past pruning had mitigated concerns and liabilities. He agreed to plant a replacement tree.

Mr. Combs reported that PG&E had topped the tree and there was an irregular growth pattern, although the tree itself was in fairly good health. He noted the property was heavily planted.

Ms. Dollar felt removal was warranted, based on past problems and damage from the tree.

The rest of the Committee agreed with Ms. Dollar.

Mr. Ritter moved to approve the removal request, based on promoting good arboricultural practice, and required replacement planting of one minimum 15-gallon tree to be planted within 45 days of issuance of permit.

Mr. Root seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. 1310 FOOTHILL BLVD. (Eucalyptus)

Eric Ward, applicant's representative, discussed the removal request and the development phase of the three-story building with planting plan, stating that the footing of the retaining wall would affect the root system of the tree and was also stated a concern about the tree falling.

Mr. Combs reported that he could not make the removal findings necessary for the large tree.

The Committee felt the tree was out of scale for the property and favored removal with replacement; Ms. Dollar was concerned about the on-going maintenance and watering of the replacement tree.

Mr. Ritter noted the replacement tree should be planted at 1310 Foothill Blvd. as an additional tree to the approved landscaping plan.

Mr. Ritter moved to approve the removal request, based on promoting good arboricultural practice, and required replacement planting of one minimum 15-gallon tree to be planted as an additional tree within the landscape plan at 1310 Foothill Blvd.

Mr. Kincaid seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. 125 LONGVIEW (Liquid amber)

Linda White, applicant's representative, discussed the sidewalk damage and the lifting of the gas/power lines. She submitted a letter from Power Plumbing recommending the removal of the tree to properly repair the utility lines. She discussed replacement with a Bronze loquat.

Mr. Combs reported it was a healthy, large diameter tree that was damaging the shallow slabs.

Mr. Root agreed with the Power Plumbing recommendation.

Mr. Savory felt it was an attractive tree, but agreed with the evidence of damage.

Mr. Root moved to approve the removal request, based on promoting good arboricultural practice, and required replacement planting of one minimum 15-gallon Bronze loquat tree to be planted within 45 days of issuance of permit.

Ms. Dollar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. 2075 HUTTON/489 HIGH ST. (Eucalyptus)

The applicant discussed concerns with safety and reported that large branches had fallen three times last month. He discussed the past damage to a neighbor's deck and was concerned about pedestrian safety. He stated the tree was right on the property line and that both owners favored removal, citing hardship as an issue. He noted the resident was disabled and unable to maintain the tree; he did not feel that pruning would mitigate the concerns. He stated Jerry Martin, neighbor, had supported the tree's removal.

Lisa Maksoudian, 474 Sandercock, stated the tree was very attractive in the neighborhood and favored retaining the tree and having it pruned to mitigate concerns.

Mr. Rinnell noted that pruning would need to be severe, as there were not many lateral limbs left.

Mr. Ritter reiterated that pruning itself and the associated costs were not factors in considering undue hardship.

Mr. Savory stated it was an attractive skyline tree and did not see a lot of damage evidence.

Mr. Root was concerned about the past damage to the deck and of the tree pulling down power lines and therefore favored removal.

Mr. Kincaid agreed with Mr. Root.

Ms. Dollar moved to approve the removal request, based on undue hardship and promoting good arboricultural practice, and required replacement planting of two minimum 15-gallon tree to be chosen from the Master Street Tree list and planted within 45 days of issuance of permit at the 2075 Hutton property.

Mr. Root seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Mr. Savory and Mr. Ritter voting against.

8. 1350 OSOS (Carrotwood)

Diane Helbert, applicant's representative, discussed the heavy foot traffic in the narrow space available around the tree on the sidewalk and noted the sidewalk was significantly lifting. She noted the tree was growing towards the front door of the church and that it was in the way of pedestrians – many of whom are elderly – and that it was hard for wheelchairs to navigate the area. She was concerned about liability. She did not want to replace a tree in that particular tree well, as that would not alleviate the restrictions of foot traffic and pedestrian concerns.

Mr. Combs reported the tree was a healthy specimen that needed pruning and discussed the possibility of moving the location of any required replacement tree per USA processing.

Mr. Ritter agreed with investigating the relocation process for a replacement tree, as he did not favor totally removing a healthy street tree with no replacement.

The applicant agreed to discuss the process with the church staff.

Mr. Kincaid moved to continue the item to allow the applicant to work with staff on the feasibility of relocating the replacement tree if the current tree is removed.

Ms. Dollar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Pellemeier discussed the trees previously removed at 1661 Fredericks and noted Bunyan Bros. was facing a fine for removing trees with too large a dbh. He stated Bunyan Bros. planned to appeal the fine at the next Tree Committee meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Update from last Tree Committee meeting

1527 Royal Way: The applicant who did not appear at the last meeting might re-apply to remove the tree in the spring.

1053 Islay: The applicant has since fixed the sewer leak and had withdrawn the application.

2. Heritage Trees at Cal Trans

The Committee agreed to accept and approve the list of proposed trees to become Heritage Trees. The report will now go to Council as a Consent Item to be approved.

3. Arbor Day

It was determined that Arbor Day celebration would be set for Saturday, May 1, 2010.

ARBORIST REPORT

1. Removals

Mr. Combs noted he had removed 16 trees since the last report.

2. Utility Conference

Mr. Combs reported there had been a 2-day conference with utility companies to work on better communication and public relation perceptions of PG&E within the community.

3. Tree Campus USA

Mr. Combs suggested Mr. Ritter pursue Cal Poly becoming a Tree Campus USA participant. Mr. Ritter agreed to look into it.

LIAISON REPORT**1. Tree Inventory Survey**

Mr. Pellemeier reported that the survey of median/downtown trees was approximately 70% completed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. to next regular meeting scheduled for **Monday, January 25, 2010**, at 5:00 p.m. in the Corporation Yard Conference Room, 25 Prado Road.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Woske, Recording Secretary