

**TREE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2011
Corporation Yard Conference Room
25 Prado Road, San Luis Obispo**

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Hensinger, David Savory Ben Parker, and
Matt Ritter

STAFF PRESENT: Ron Combs

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

MINUTES: Approval of Minutes of July 25, 2011

Mr. Savory moved to approve the minutes as submitted.

Mr. Hensinger seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

TREE REMOVAL APPLICATIONS

1. 612 MITCHELL (stone pine)

The applicant discussed the removal request, stating the tree was too large for the area and the roots had created numerous continual sewer problems, as well as damaging sidewalk and hardscape. He also noted pine cones dropping caused a hazard. He reported that the sidewalk, street, and driveway had been repaired several times.

Mr. Combs stated it was a large, healthy tree and he could not make his required findings for removal. He noted that the old sewer line would probably need to be replaced with PVC, regardless of the roots.

Mr. Parker felt the large surface roots and shallow soil would continue to create problems and agreed that the recent sidewalk/curb replacement had been due to root damage.

Mr. Savory said that while he did see evidence of recent repair work, the tree was a nice, large specimen.

Mr. Hensinger noted there were many other trees on the street and agreed this tree was causing problems.

Mr. Hensinger moved to approve the removal request, based on undue hardship to the property owner, and required one 15-gallon replacement tree to be chosen from the Master Street Tree List and planted within 45 days of the tree's removal.

Mr. Parker seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. 1351 ROYAL WAY (2 Monterey pines)

Sharon Chernoff, property manager, reviewed the removal request and noted that the trees appeared to be diseased.

Richard Rall, 1445 Ladera Court, property owner, discussed the fence that needed to be rebuilt due to the tree's damage and that the roots were pushing against the foundation and sidewalk. He also noted that large surface roots made access to the backyard difficult.

Mr. Combs reported that the large specimens were in fair health, with large surface roots, and that he could not make the findings necessary for his removal approval.

Mr. Parker noted the large roots had previously been pruned.

Mr. Parker moved to approve the removal request, based on undue hardship to the property owner, and required two 15-gallon replacement trees to be chosen from the Master Street Tree List and planted within 45 days of the trees' removal.

Mr. Hensinger seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. 335 PISMO (Cedar and pittosporum)

The applicant discussed the removal request and felt the cedar was failing in health and was starting to lean and that the pittosporum was causing hardship issues.

Mr. Combs agreed the walkway showed signs of displacement due to the cedar and stated that the cedar appeared to be stressed but was still healthy. He noted that the trunks were stable on the multi-trunk pittosporum and they do not tend to split.

Mr. Hensinger noted it that the pittosporum was a large skyline tree on an otherwise barren street.

Mr. Parker did not feel the tree's lean was an issue and that the sidewalk damage was minimal.

Mr. Parker moved to deny the removal request, as he could not make any of the necessary findings to allow removal.

Mr. Hensinger seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. 366 CORRIDA (Canyon oak)

The applicant discussed the removal request, stating that the tree was too big and that water damage had occurred because debris clogged the storm drains and this was an on-going issue. He also felt the sidewalk was buckling due to roots.

Ron Rinell, Bunyan Bros., spoke to the past flooding issues due to drain clogs.

Mr. Combs noted that the non-native oak was the theme tree of the development.

Mr. Parker stated that maintenance issues were not cause for removal and that the tree enhanced the property and neighborhood. He felt modifications could be made to the storm drain to mitigate concerns.

Mr. Hensinger moved to deny the removal request, as he could not make any of the necessary findings to allow removal.

Mr. Parker seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

5. 165 CHORRO (Strawberry tree)

Tim Selna, applicant's representative, discussed the removal request and stated the shrub had become too large and was crowding the cypress and oak nearby. He felt removal would allow the remaining trees to thrive and fill in the canopy. He discussed previous foundation repairs needed because of the tree.

Mr. Combs reported that the multi-stem tree was a good size and healthy and that he could not make the findings necessary for removal.

Mr. Hensinger agreed the tree was crowding the other trees and removing it would not affect the skyline.

Mr. Parker did not think that the any root damage was being caused by the strawberry tree and that removing it would probably not mitigate future problems. He suggested the root problems were due to the oak and cypress in the area.

The applicant noted that the roots for the strawberry tree had been excavated and that the tree's roots were seen to be invasive.

Mr. Hensinger moved to approve the removal request, based on promoting good arboricultural practice, and requiring one 15-gallon tree to be chosen from the Master Street Tree List and planted within 45 days of the tree's removal.

Mr. Savory seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

6. 3570 SACRAMENTO (Monterey pine and Canary Island pine)

Shaun Collarman, applicant's representative, discussed the re-landscaping plan proposed and noted that the property owners were complaining about rodent problems due to the tree's habitat that were creating health and safety issues.

Mr. Combs reported that he had approved two trees to be removed already and that the remaining two trees were healthy and he could not make the necessary findings to approve the removals.

Mr. Savory felt the Monterey pine was failing and could be removed but did not favor removing the Canary Island pine.

Mr. Parker was concerned that the trees were part of the required development plan.

Mr. Hensinger reported that since he could not locate either tree to review, he would be abstaining from the item.

Mr. Parker moved to allow the removal of the Monterey pine, based on promoting good arboricultural practice and required three 15-gallon trees to be chosen from the Master Street Tree List and planted within 45 days of the tree's removal. He further moved to deny the removal of the Canary Island pine.

Mr. Savory seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously; Mr. Hensinger abstained.

7. 539 CERRO ROMAULDO (Misc. palms)

The applicant requested to submit an in-depth presentation on the removal request.

The Committee agreed to review the packet in detail so they could make an informed decision and the applicant agreed with the request to continue the item to the next regular meeting in November.

8. 2607 JOHNSON (Eucalyptus)

9. 2591 JOHNSON (Eucalyptus)

The Committee agreed to hear both items at the same time, as property owners were in agreement and tandem purposes.

Jeff Wright, 2607 Johnson, discussed the removal request for his property and stated that the neighbors supported the removal request. He was most concerned with the problems the tree posed with the gas line.

Matt Thule, 2591 Johnson, discussed the past limb failure of the trees and was concerned about the liability.

Mr. Combs reported that the healthy trees had been poorly topped but still created a decent canopy.

Mr. Parker was concerned about the improper topping and the subsequent poor limb attachment issues that were created.

Mr. Parker moved to allow the removal of all the trees requested in both permits, based on promoting good arboricultural practice and required three 15-gallon trees

to be chosen from the Master Street Tree List and planted within 45 days of the trees' removal.

Mr. Ritter seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

10. 1531 MONTEREY (Ficus)

The applicant discussed the removal request, stating that he had undergone great expense (\$20K) as the sewer line and water main needed to be replaced due to the tree's roots. He was concerned about the possibility of problems/liability with the gas line breaking, as the tree was planted too close to it. He stated that the next-door motel had also needed to replace their sewer line and requested that the replacement planting be located further up the street, as he was concerned with further utility line damage.

Mr. Combs reported that the moderately large tree was healthy and he could not make findings required for removal within his purview.

Will Powers, Islay St., stated that the beautiful tree was a strong asset to the area and its removal would negatively affect the neighborhood and that it would take years for a replacement tree to compensate for the loss of the existing tree. He suggested moving the orientation of the utility lines instead of removing the tree and asserted that several local people had talked to him in support of retaining the tree.

Mr. Parker noted the tree had a small defect at the street-level base that could allow decay to be introduced into the trunk. He stated that while the tree was mature and large, there was benefit to staggered removals within the overall urban forest.

Mr. Savory acknowledged that while the applicant had undergone hardship based on root damage, the tree was too impressive a specimen and he did not favor removing it.

Mr. Parker moved to approve the removal request, based on undue hardship on the property owner and required one 24" box tree to be chosen from the approved list and planted with 45 days of the tree's removal.

Mr. Ritter seconded the motion.

The motion passed, with Mr. Savory voting against.

11. 65 CHUPARROSA (Magnolia)

The applicant discussed the removal request, noting the root damage to the driveway caused the driveway to need replacing and stated he would be using pavers, but did not want to have to replace the driveway again due to future root damage. He also had concerns about the roots breaking the water main. He discussed wanting to re-landscape his front yard.

Mr. Combs noted that the magnolia was the theme tree for the neighborhood and that the tree was relatively healthy.

Mr. Hensinger suggested the driveway damage was due to poor construction and not the tree; he suggested installing root barriers to prevent the roots from spreading under the driveway. He felt the tree was an asset to the property.

Mr. Savory, Mr. Ritter and Mr. Parker agreed with Mr. Hensinger.

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

Mr. Savory seconded the motion.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Ritter noted the pending appeal regarding a removal denial for the Cook Island pine at 1284 Ella Street.

He discussed the updated arborist report from Greenvale Tree Company regarding the tree, noting that Greenvale recommended removal.

Mr. Ritter stated that upon review of the new report received from Greenvale, the Committee could either uphold their original denial of the request or re-consider the item in light of the new information.

Mr. Parker stated he had not been able to review the application and would be abstaining from the discussion.

Steve Franzman, Greenvale Tree Co. representative reported that the tree had several co-dominant/multiple stems with included bark that created potential for a break out situation in the top of the tree, which was already top-heavy. He recommended removal due to the potential rot situation.

Mr. Hensinger allowed that while the report suggested the tree was in a lesser condition than previously understood, the new information was not compelling enough to change his vote to deny the request.

Mr. Hensinger moved to uphold the Committee's previous denial of the removal request at 1284 Ella Street.

Mr. Savory seconded the motion.

The motion passed, with Mr. Parker abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Ritter discussed the previous month's tree tour and the need to increase the diversity of appropriate species on the Master Street Tree List.

Barbara Lynch discussed the process required to add tree species to the list.

Mr. Ritter agreed to send staff a list of additional selections to be considered for inclusion on the list. Mr. Combs agreed to distribute the list to all Committee members for their review.

ARBORIST REPORT

Mr. Combs discussed the recent forester conference and announced that the City of San Luis Obispo had won an award for the Best Urban Forestry program, highlighting the City's good budget management and use of the Downtown Foresters.

The Committee commended Mr. Combs for his service and commitment to the program.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. to next regular meeting, scheduled for 5 p.m. on Monday, October 24, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Woske, Recording Secretary