

**TREE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2011
Corporation Yard Conference Room
25 Prado Road, San Luis Obispo**

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Hensinger, David Savory, Suzan Ehdaie and Matt Ritter

STAFF PRESENT: Ron Combs, Barbara Lynch

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sandra Lakeman, retired Cal Poly professor, was concerned about the beautification of the downtown area and supported the efforts of Save Our Downtown. She did not favor removal of any healthy downtown trees, especially the signature ficus species.

MINUTES: Approval of Minutes of October 24, 2011

Mr. Savory moved to approve the minutes as submitted.

Mr. Hensinger seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

TREE REMOVAL APPLICATIONS

1. 539 CERRO ROMAULDO (6 palms)

Mary Parker, applicant, discussed the removal request, noting that the various palms were crowding the fence, impacting the foundation, and dangerously leaning. She reported that she wanted to re-landscape with drought-tolerant plants and that she did not feel replacement tree plantings were necessary, as the property was heavily planted.

Mr. Combs reported that the trees were relatively healthy and he could not make the findings necessary to approve the removal within his purview.

Mr. Hensinger moved to separate the tree removal discussions and consider the three by the house as one action item and the three in the front as a separate action item.

Mr. Savory seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hensinger felt the tree against the side of the house were too close to the building and the fence and agreed that the site was heavily planted.

The Committee agreed with his comments.

Mr. Hensinger moved to approve the removal of the three trees by the side of the house, based on promoting good arboricultural practice, and did not require any replacement plantings.

Ms. Ehdaie seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hensinger felt the three palms in the front area were healthy, were an asset to the property, and improved the skyline.

Mr. Savory agreed the trees were an asset to the property and skyline, but felt the front yard tree on the side of the walkway was misshapen and could be removed.

Ms. Ehdaie agreed with Mr. Savory.

Mr. Savory moved to approve the removal of the one front yard tree on the side of the walkway, based on promoting good arboricultural practice. He could not make the necessary findings to remove the two other proposed trees on the application.

Mr. Ritter seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. 308 SAN MIGUEL (Aleppo pine; Italian Stone pine)

Shaun Collarman, applicant representative, discussed the removal request, noting in specific the Aleppo's poor structure and history of broken limbs and the significant lean of the Stone pine. He stated removals would allow nearby oaks to thrive.

Mr. Combs reported that the Aleppo had a hanging limb and agreed the Italian Stone pine was leaning. However, he reported that the trees were relatively healthy and he could not make the findings necessary to approve the removal within his purview.

Mr. Hensinger agreed the pines were crowded and the oaks could fill in if the pines were removed.

Mr. Savory agreed.

Ms. Ehdaie favored keeping the Italian Stone pine, as she could not make the findings necessary for its removal.

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

Mr. Hensinger seconded the motion.

The motion passed, with Ms. Ehdaie voting against.

3. 1125 ATASCADERO (Modesto ash)

Rick Graziani, applicant's representative, discussed the removal request and noted that the tree had split crotches and increasing disease. He stated the surface roots were interfering with plumbing, sewer lines, and that the irrigation system was getting ruined. He was concerned about possible limb failure.

Mr. Combs reported that the trees in the area had evidence of anthracnose and while the tree had poor structure, it was relatively healthy and he could not make the findings necessary to approve the removal within his purview.

Mr. Hensinger agreed the tree had poor structure and might present safety issues.

Mr. Savory and Ms. Ehdaie agreed and were also concerned about the disease factor.

Mr. Ritter stated that the tree's health issues and poor form could cause limb failure.

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

Ms., Ehdaie seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. 1663 PHILLIPS LANE (Ficus)

Jen Tucker, applicant's representative, discussed the removal request and the root damage to the driveway, walkway, and foundation. She also noted the roots were causing sewer damage.

Mr. Combs reported that there was evidence of hardscape damage and it was not clear that the roots were causing the foundation damage. He stated the medium-sized tree was very healthy and he could not make the findings necessary to approve the removal within his purview.

Michele Abba, 1666 Phillips, stated the tree looked healthy, was well shaped, and was a significant asset to the area, especially in light of the trees that had been removed previously in the neighborhood. She requested that the root damage be mitigated by methods other than removal.

Roger Suiker, 1666 Phillips, agreed with Ms. Abba. He suggested the driveway damage could be caused by the nearby redwood tree and that the damage could be mitigated. He reiterated that the ficus was an asset to the area.

Mr. Hensinger felt that trenching should be performed to better assess roots were damaging the foundation. He agreed the tree was an asset to the area and that other trees might be contributing to the damage and removal was not the only option.

Ms. Ehdaie and Mr. Savory agreed with Mr. Hensinger.

Mr. Combs discussed phased trenching and root pruning possibilities.

Mr. Ritter stated the removal would harm the character of the neighborhood and that trenching should be performed to determine that the damage was being caused by the ficus.

The Committee agreed to continue the item to the next regular meeting to allow the applicant to return with documentation that the ficus tree was causing the damage outlined.

5. 1130 GARDEN ST. (Carrotwood)

Alex Benson, applicant, discussed the removal request and stated the tree was lifting the sidewalk which was causing flooding issues, creating a trip hazard, and resulting in a slope that was not ADA-compliant. He spoke of past sewer damage and the re-alignment of the line. He reported on the retrofitting project that was going to require the slope be corrected and felt that concrete replacement would compromise the tree's health. He also noted the tree was too close to the building's frontage and front door area. He intended to replace the tree with a jacaranda or post a bond against subsequent development for the Garden St. Terraces project.

Mr. Combs agreed there were sidewalk issues, but stated the tree was healthy and he could not make the findings necessary to approve the removal within his purview.

Mr. Hensinger felt the tree was in the wrong place and was creating sidewalk issues. He noted that any replacement tree needed to be protected in that area to ensure that it survived vandalism.

Mr. Savory noted that it was a theme tree in the area, but agreed with the sidewalk damage issues.

Ms. Ehdaie favored fixing the sidewalk with more flexible options that would allow retaining the tree.

Mr. Hensinger moved to approve the removal request, based on promoting good arboricultural practice, and required one 24"-box replacement tree to be chosen from the Master Street Tree list and planted within 45 days of issuance of permit.

Mr. Ritter seconded the motion.

The motion passed, with Ms. Ehdaie voting against.

6. 884 BOUGAINVILLEA (Redwoods)

Jeff Spannbauer, applicant, discussed the removal request and stated that removal would not harm the character of the neighborhood. He was very concerned about the one tree being too close to the neighbor's house and that it might be causing foundation damage. He stated he wanted to replace the trees with dwarf citrus.

Mr. Combs noted that only "Tree A" was over the diameter limit that required a permit and the other three did not require permits to remove. He stated Tree A was healthy and he could not find for removal.

Mr. Hensinger agreed that Tree A was causing issues. He further noted that if the remaining trees had required permits, he would not be voting in favor to remove them and clearing out the entire grove.

Mr. Savory and Ms. Ehdaie felt Tree A was an asset to the neighborhood, especially in light of the other tree removals.

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

Mr. Savory seconded the motion.

The motion passed, with Mr. Hensinger voting against.

7. 3960 S. HIGUERA #201 (Avocado; cedar)

Pat Fleming, applicant's representative, discussed the removal request and submitted the site's tree inventory. He discussed the need to replace the old

mobile home with a larger model and that the trees were in the way of updating that lot.

Mr. Combs stated the trees were relatively healthy and he could not make the findings necessary to approve the removal within his purview.

The Committee agreed with the need to improve the lot area and that the trees were in the way.

Mr. Hensinger moved to approve the removal request, based on undue hardship on 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 issuance of permit.

Ms. Ehdaie seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

8. 230 MARLENE (Ficus)

There was no applicant or representative to speak to the item, so the item was continued to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss Advisory Body Training

Mr. Combs reported on the recent meeting.

2. Heritage Tree Application

Mr. Combs reported on the Osage orange tree proposed in Exposition Park.

Mr. Ritter noted the tree species was rare and the specimen should be adopted.

Mr. Ritter moved to recommend to Council that they adopt the proposed tree into the Heritage Tree program.

Mr. Savory seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Master Street Tree List Revisions/Additions

There was general Committee discussion about the comments submitted by the Community Development Dept. on various proposed species for addition to the Master Street Tree list and the need for species diversity on the list.

Mr. Ritter stated the Committee sincerely appreciated the time and consideration the CDD spent in providing feedback, however he felt all of the species had been thoroughly vetted as proposed and felt the additions should move forward as outlined.

The Committee agreed.

Mr. Ritter moved to submit the proposed species list to Council for addition to the Master Street Tree list.

Mr. Hensinger seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

ARBORIST REPORT

Mr. Combs discussed the Upper Monterey St. plantings.

The Committee confirmed there would be no December meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. to next regular meeting, scheduled for 5 p.m. on Monday, January 23, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Woske, Recording Secretary