

Tree Committee Members:

Susann Ortega-Chair
Kellie Carlin- Vice Chair
Edie Kausch
Kacey Stotesbery
Carol Troy
Susan Allen-Alternate

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
ST. HELENA TREE COMMITTEE
ST. HELENA CITY HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM
1480 MAIN STREET, ST. HELENA
Friday, November 22, 2013
3:30 pm**

1. ROLL CALL

Meeting called at 3:30 pm.

Present: Susann Ortega, Edie Kausch, Kacey Stotesbery, Carol Troy, Susan Allen and Kellie Carlin.

Absent: None.

Staff: City Arborist Jim Haller, Senior Management Analyst Kathy Robinson

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 23, 2013 – Special Meeting; Approved with revisions.

Motion to approve with revision by Committee Member Stotesbery seconded by Committee Member Kausch to approve. Approved 5-0.

3. PUBLIC FORUM: An opportunity for the public to directly address the Committee on items of interest to the public that are not listed on the agenda. Any person addressing the Committee should provide his or her name and address, and limit comments to five minutes. **Because of restrictions imposed by the Brown Act, the Committee may not engage in substantive discussion, nor take action on matters not described on the agenda.**

None.

4. REPORTS BY STAFF AND COMMITTEE: Reports by staff and/or committee on items of general interest. *Brief questions for clarification may be posed and answered, and Committee may request that items be placed on a future agenda. Except under certain circumstances, the Brown Act prohibits any other discussion or action by the Tree Committee.*

Arborist provided an update on Arbor Day activities. City Arborist Haller handed out a Sacramento list of Certified Arborists that the Committee had asked him to bring to the meeting.

5. PERMITS TO BE DISCUSSED:

A. 1065 Main Street; tree removal;

Committee discussed health of the leaning tree and Arborist Haller stated that the tree will never be a viable tree, that it will in time fall over and cannot support its weight the way it is growing. He stated that the Committee has two choices they could leave it there until it falls over or he takes it down because it's a hazard; or they can be proactive, take it out and put a tree that can survive. Committee member Kausch asked if these three trees were the worst. Arborist Haller answered yes. The other two (1153 and 1400) were suffering from uni-branch die back and hacked back to where there is not much left on them.

Chair asked for comments from public and there were none. Member Troy commented that she took pictures of replacement trees and asked if an adjacent tree could be planted from the Chevron tree location. Arborist Haller gave several reasons why not too. Arborist restated that if the committee does

nothing with the trees that in 10 years they will be left with stumps and will not be able to plant anything. Committee member Troy said that there is nothing there at the corner and Chair Ortega suggested moving the trash can that is across the street and put largest tree that Arborist could suggest, and make it bigger. Haller said that Tree Committee would need to talk to Downtown Renaissance.

Committee member Troy said that as a group we should start removing Raywood ash. Chair Ortega further stated that it was important to know, when, what and how it the tree would be watered. Arborist Haller stated that he would like to still plant in this winter season, one tree at a time. The Chevron tree would be priority and Arborist suggested a Chanticleer. Tree Committee suggested Chinese Pistache. Committee member stated that the form is more important than size and Stotesbery suggested that Arborist be allowed to make choice of size according to area. Choice: Chinese Pistache in front of Chevron, Chinese Pistache in front of Napa petroleum, Nyssa Sylvatica in front of Umpqua.

Motion made by Committee Member Kausch to remove existing trees for all three permits discussed and replace with trees suggested by Arborist Haller and to allow him to replant according to his schedule. Seconded by Committee member Stotesbery. Approved 5-0.

- B. 1153 Main Street; tree removal;

See comments under 5.A.

- C. 1400 Main Street, tree removal;

See comments under 5.A

6. SCHEDULED MATTERS:

- A. Tree Elm Tree Tunnel update and discussion on contractual maintenance arrangements with Caltrans, Beringer and the City.

Arborist Haller clarified jurisdictional rights on the Tunnel of Trees. City does weed abatement, fertilization, inoculations and soil injections. Caltrans is responsible for identifying hazardous trees, removal of hazardous trees and pruning. They are Elm trees and because of the Elmwood beetle they can only be pruned three months out of the year December, January and February. If a limb is cut at any other time during the year it will attract the beetle and the tree will be lost to Dutch Elm disease. Inoculation that the City does slows the disease but no way of curing the disease. This costs the City approximately \$14k annually with Caltrans contributing another \$4 to \$5K annually. Beringer has no jurisdiction over the trees but they do have a vested interest, they allow the City to use their water to water the replacement trees, use the parking lot to stage for the inoculations, and the trees are historic trees because they are part of Beringer.

According to Haller, six trees have been identified as hazardous with each tree being over 50% dead. Trees cannot be removed until State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) approves the removal and the replacement. Once approved, Caltrans will remove the tree, grind the stump and then the City will come in and replace with disease resistant trees. Caltrans will be pruning at the appropriate time. Haller briefed the Committee on the history of taking care of the diseased trees. There were 120 trees with 160 trees replanted over that time. After replanting, for first four years the trees are City Arborist's responsibility. Once the tree is establish it becomes Caltrans responsibility to prune.

Public comment: Sandra Ericson stated that she started the Tree Tunnel petition and there are over 300 who have signed it. Ericson mentioned that information about the petition can be found on www.shwindow.org. Ericson's also stated that the groups interest was not to offer any criticisms, but rather looking to Caltrans to provide the public some type of schedule that lets the public know how the Tunnel of Elms are being taken care of. As it stands the appearance to the community is that it looks as though the trees are being neglected. Ericson stated that the petition is simply to generate political will and move the project up the priority list.

Committee member Kausch staff if the City was provided a schedule of maintenance and if not was there a possibility that one could be provided. Arborist Haller responded that the best route to take in working with Caltrans is to work with the local Caltrans representatives. Haller said he would talk to the local reps and express to them that the community wants to know that the diseased trees will be taken out by a time certain. Ericson mentioned their group will focus on ensuring that the pruning happens during this open window of time. She stated that if this is done, then she will promote positive PR for Caltrans on how they took care of the trees.

B. Main Street Tree Plan, development of Tree Committees' draft vision.

No discussion.

C. Vitner's Court- discussion of possible appeal on Resolution No.2013-59 that was approved by Planning Commission & Council regarding "the one foot acceptable excavation under canopy of neighbors Oak tree."

Prior to Committee getting into a discussion on whether or not the committee should file an appeal Senior Management Analyst Robinson informed the committee that according to code an appeal must be filed with the City Clerk within 14 days of the City Council's decision. Committee member continued discussion on being notified of decisions. Chair continued to explain to the committee what occurred at the Planning Commission (PC) meeting. Committee member Stotesbery indicated that while it would be nice to have staff to inform us, it is ultimately the responsibility of the committee to follow the Planning Commission closer on matters that may impact the tree issues.

Committee discussed how best to communicate with PC. Committee member discussed that inviting the PC members to TC meeting would be good and they would ask the Mayor to invite the PC members to attend a TC meeting. Committee member Stotesbery offered to write the initial letter and then bring back to committee to review on agenda.

D. Arborist update on 1000 Crane Avenue/Mitchel Avenue; stump grinding and selection of replacement trees, planting and maintenance schedules.

Arborist Haller indicated that he will not go against what the committee already agreed to. He just wants to make sure the home owner plants in between the stumps with a smaller stature tree. Haller also stated that all future permits need to be tight and that the City's code need to include that "removal" includes removing the stump.

E. Magnolia Oaks Subdivision update on acquiring CC&R's and potential dates for site visits during Phase 2 & 3.

Chair Ortega said she contacted the developer and that the CC&R was written by the developer who is an attorney. It is recorded at the Napa County Recorder's office if the TC committee wants to look at it. The developer also wrote a water easement restriction plan for the homeowners and apartment dwellers which the developer said was highly restrictive and that new homeowners cannot start changing the landscape. Joe Schneider and Company will be investigating each property once a year to ensure that no changes have been made, and monitoring the water usage as this would show that there were some altercations. Homeowners are not able to alter their timers, they are computer controlled.

7. TENTATIVE AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

A. 1131 Paulson Court Tree Permit, Jim Haslip discussion of fees and approval process. Sacramento list of licensed tree companies. List of tree companies that have tree companies. Tree policy, violations for moving cutting trees.

8. ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn to a regularly scheduled meeting of the Tree Committee on December 12, 2013 at 3:30 P.M. in the main conference room of City Hall located at 1480 Main Street, St. Helena, CA was made.