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**UNAPPROVED DRAFT MINUTES**

TREE BOARD  
 CITY OF SEBASTOPOL  
 MINUTES OF September 18, 2019

SEBASTOPOL CITY HALL  
 CONFERENCE ROOM  
 7120 BODEGA AVENUE  
 4:00 P.M

**TREE BOARD:**

The notice of the meeting was posted on September 12, 2019.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Vice Chair Bush called the meeting to order at 4:03 P.M.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

<b>Present:</b>	Ted Luthin, Chair Cary Bush, Vice Chair Christine Level, Board Member Lars Langberg, Board Member Ron Hari, Board Member
<b>Absent:</b>	Gregory Beale, Board Member (excused)
<b>Staff:</b>	Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director Becky Duckles, City Arborist

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** June 05, 2019 and August 21, 2019

Board Member Langberg made a motion to approve the minutes of June 05, 2019 as submitted.

Board Member Level seconded the motion.

AYES: Board Members Level, Hari and Langberg  
 NOES: None  
 ABSTAIN: Chair Luthin and Vice Chair Bush  
 ABSENT: Board Member Beale

Vice Chair Bush made a motion to approve the minutes of August 21, 2019 as submitted.

Board Member Langberg seconded the motion.

AYES: Vice Chair Bush and Board Members Hari and Langberg  
 NOES: None  
 ABSTAIN: Chair Luthin and Board Member Level  
 ABSENT: Board Member Beale

#### **4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:**

Director Svanstrom provided an update and was available for questions.

**5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:** There were none.

**6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** There were none.

#### **7. REGULAR AGENDA:**

**A. TREE REMOVAL (Continued Item)** – 699 Gravenstein Highway North – This is a Tree Removal application from Burbank Housing requesting approval to remove 12 protected native trees and 1 non-heritage tree from the Gravenstein Apartments property. This application first came before the Board on August 21, 2019.

Director Svanstrom presented the staff report and was available for questions.

The Board asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

City Arborist, Becky Duckles commented:

- The plan proposed by Burbank to replace the trees and maintain them is comprehensive.
- The plan involves a commitment from their landscape contractor to follow through with ensuring that the irrigation system is adequate to establish and maintain the trees
- The plan also discusses period where inspections with City staff will occur to ensure that the trees are being taken care of.
- Appreciate the level of detail and follow through with the plan.
- The accommodation of the replanting plus the commitment to getting the new trees established is a nice solution.
- Happy with the progress.
- Will be meeting with Burbank's landscape contractor to establish exact locations of the replacement trees.
- Was on-site earlier this week to observe some of the construction that they're doing around some of the trees.
  - Everything was done according to plan.
  - The trees were being protected during the work that was being done.

Director Svanstrom commented:

- Recommended adding the following condition, as was raised during the Tree Board meeting on August 21, which would require that Burbank provide a 2-week notice, at minimum, to the residents once the removals have been scheduled, assuming the removals are approved.
  - The redwood trees are the primary issue.

A member of the public interjected that they'd like to have notice for all trees that are approved for removal.

Chair Luthin asked for questions of Ms. Duckles.

Hearing none, Chair Luthin asked to hear from the applicant.

Elizabeth Putnam, Project Architect provided some handouts to the Board, gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Asked clarifying questions on trees 'O', 'N', and 'M'.
- Asked questions regarding other trees that appeared to be in poor health but that were not being proposed for removal.

Ms. Duckles responded:

- Since this application was first filed back in April, several trees on the site, the alders especially, have gone further into decline and don't have a chance of recovering.
- Some of the other redwoods on the site are causing some structural problems to the hardscape as well as some of the oaks in the narrow planters.
- It is likely that the applicant will have to apply for additional removals at some point in the future.

Ms. Putnam responded:

- Initially, they wanted to cause the least amount of disruption to the site as possible.
- Ms. Duckles pointed out additional trees that are in poor health when meeting to go over this application.
- Wanted to be as conservative as possible and the trees are lovely to have.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Expressed concerns over what appears to be a pretty serious mistletoe infestation.
- Maintenance of the trees is important.
- It appears that many of the trees that have been removed were removed due to their not being well taken care of.
- Concerned with neglect, particularly when it comes to the replacement trees that will be planted.

Board Member Level asked Ms. Duckles to comment on tree 'O' and the root system.

Ms. Duckles responded:

- Believes the curb has already been cracked by the tree roots.
  - If that is not the case currently, she would expect it to happen soon due to how confined the roots are.
- The planter is way too small for the volume of roots to develop in a way for them to anchor the tree.
- Mistletoe seems to attack really stressed trees.
- The alders are unsuitable for this site because they really need a lot of water.
- The owners have gone to great lengths to provide commitments to upgrading the irrigation system.
  - Unfortunately, that will not improve the condition of the existing alders.
- Since 1991, she has been working with the City on trying to control mistletoe.
- Mistletoe is really hard to control once it's established.

Board Member Level asked Ms. Duckles if mistletoe infestation can be found in a healthy tree.

Ms. Duckles responded that mistletoe is hardly ever seen in a healthy tree.

Board Member Hari commented:

- The only place that he has seen alders growing naturally is next to a creek.

- Alders never should have been planted here.
- Alders mainly grow in Washington and Oregon.

Chair Luthin opened the public hearing.

Kalia Mussetter, a resident of Gravenstein Apartments, commented:

- Learned a lot during the last Tree Board meeting.
- During the last meeting, Board Member Hari asked that more tenant input be provided.
- A tenant by the name of Tay Mabella helped survey the tenants.
  - Ms. Mabella spoke with about 25 tenants.
- In listening to the other tenants, she wished to highlight the following:
  - The tenants have learned and understand that these trees need to be removed .
  - They understand that the infrastructure cannot be harmed in this way.
  - Interested in saving any of the trees that are proposed for removal, if possible.
  - Trusts the Board to make the best decision.
  - Would love to see a 2:1 replacement requirement.
  - Loves trees and wants them on the site.
  - Interesting in knowing more about the size and the amount of time it will take for them to become established and grow for the replacement trees.
  - Asked if the trees would be larger with a 1:1 replacement.
  - Asked if the trees would be smaller with a 2:1 replacement.
  - Would prefer larger trees.
- After the last meeting she made a small questionnaire for their survey of the tenants.
  - It was very important to her that she not lobby her neighbors with her opinions.
  - The questionnaire she created was very neutral.
  - Shared the types of questions that were on the questionnaire.

Tay Mabella, a resident of Gravenstein Apartments, commented:

- Confirmed that she'd spoken with about 25 tenants.
- Reiterated their support for a 2:1 replacement.
- Brought signatures and phone numbers of the people that she'd spoken with, however noting that some people wished to remain anonymous.
- Interested in knowing more about the replacement trees.

Ms. Mussetter continued:

- There are some issues with the landscape contractor.
  - Will submit a letter detailing those issues later.
- Appreciates hearing that there is a comprehensive plan to care for the replacement trees once they're planted because that has not happened for the 16 years that she's lived there.
- Burbank sent a very kind letter to the tenants regarding the trees which has made a huge difference.
  - Appreciates the City for suggesting that Burbank do that.
  - The letter was important and meant a lot.
  - The only issue with the letter was that many of the tenants misunderstood it to read that the application had been decided.
  - It is important that accurate information be provided.
  - The tone of the letter was very helpful.
- Some of the tenants have discussed having a memorial for the trees because they are grieving.

Tai Wright, Regional Manager at Burbank Housing, commented:

- Spoke on upkeep and maintenance of the landscape.
- Spoke on water and drought issues as well.
- Burbank is trying, but some things are beyond their control.

Ms. Mussetter continued:

- As mentioned by Director Svanstrom, the residents would appreciate having at least a 2-week notice before any trees are removed because the removal will be devastation and some of the residents do not want to be on the property when it happens.
- The rehabilitation of the Gravenstein Apartments property is taking one year.
- Thanked the Board.

Chris Veres, a resident of Gravenstein Apartments, commented:

- There is too much concrete around the redwoods.
- Knows the trees need to be removed.
- Would appreciate advance notice so he can not be on the property when the removals occur.
- Likes that new trees have been planted in the plaza.
- Sees hope for Gravenstein Apartments, but it will really hurt a lot when these significant trees are removed.

Loriel Golden, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- The replacement trees will help.
- Heard about this project a few months ago.
- Cares about every tree in Sebastopol.
- Appreciates Director Svanstrom for keeping her apprised on various tree-related matters in Sebastopol.
- Spoke about the process that led to the allowed removal of two redwood trees at Pacific Market which happened in the later part of 2017.
  - The replacement planting has still not occurred.
  - Expressed concerns over the viability of any trees that are planted in that landscape strip.
  - Urged the Board to go back and look at the decision they made on the application she has discussed.

Board Member Hari interjected that Ms. Golden was off-topic.

Ms. Golden continued:

- Her comments are relevant as they have to do with trees that are approved for removal and the replanting plan that has not yet be satisfied.
- This is a terrible precedent.
- We need all our trees for the oxygen, water and beauty they provide.
- Doesn't approve of redwood trees being removed and replacement trees not being planted year after year.

Ms. Putnam commented:

- The placement of the replacement trees are indicated on the site plan she brought with her.

A member of the public commented:

- Has lived at Gravenstein Apartments since 2013.
- Asked how the trees would be watered and cared for if the water is turned off.

- The only time she's seen anyone work on the existing trees on the site is when a branch has come down and the hazard needs to be addressed.

Mr. Strifler commented:

- They are looking at the existing irrigation, testing and repairing it as needed.
- In addition, new pipes will be added for the new trees.
- The water has been turned off to some of the zones due to the irrigation system being so damaged.
- They're trying to get back to having a functional irrigation system.

Mr. Veres commented:

- Suggested that crushed granite be used in place of some of the sidewalks to allow more room for the trees and their irrigation needs.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Luthin closed the public hearing.

In terms of replacement plantings and some of the questions that were raised, Director Svanstrom commented:

- The City's ordinance requires 15-gallon trees at a minimum.
- With a 1:1 replacement, the Board could consider requiring a larger tree if they felt that appropriate.

The Board asked questions of Ms. Duckles and discussed tree sizes and replacement planting.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Based on the minutes from the last meeting, it sounds like the Board is in support of the tree removal.

Vice Chair Bush, and Board Members Hari and Langberg responded in the affirmative.

Chair Luthin continued:

- As a Board, these kinds of decisions are difficult to have to make.
- The Board feels that this is an unfortunate situation, just as the residents do.
  - However, something must be done.
- The property is heavily forested.
- Great investments to the project are being made.

Board Member Level commented:

- She was not in attendance at the last meeting and has not yet had a chance to voice whether she supports the trees being removed.
- The tress up against the building must be removed because if not, they'll just continue to grow and put pressure on the building.
- The trees that are infested with mistletoe are in poor health.
- As for the oak tree that is in between the parking area, she deferred to Ms. Duckles who has indicated that it is unstable.
- A lot of thought has gone into identifying the trees that are proposed for removal and all have very good reasons for being removed.
- Would like to require 2:1 replacement planting either on-site, or by some being planted on-site and by some being satisfied through the in-lieu fee.
- In terms of tree replacement requirements, she commented that consistency is important.
- The replacement trees need adequate irrigation.

- Appreciates the effort that has been shone in ensuring that the applicant provides for that.
- The removals are warranted.

Vice Chair Bush asked Board Member Level if she would consider requiring a larger replacement tree for a 1:1 replacement instead of requiring a 2:1 replacement.

Board Member Level responded:

- Interested in maintaining the number of trees that a 2:1 replacement would provide.
- If the requirement to accommodate all the trees on-site can't be met, they can pay the in-lieu fee so they can be met elsewhere.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- The residents want a 2:1 replacement.
- There are already a lot of trees on-site.
- The residents also want open space and there isn't much of it as is.
- Supports 1:1 replacement on-site.
- The Board may want to discuss requiring an additional 1:1 requirement through payment of the in-lieu fee.
- Requiring more than 1 tree per every tree removed on-site doesn't seem like a good solution.

Board Member Level responded:

- Concurred with Board Member Langberg on requiring 2:1 replacement on-site as it would likely be too congested.
- Suggested that the applicant be allowed to satisfy the 2:1 replacement requirement with both on-site replanting as well as payment of the in-lieu fee.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- Setting a precedent that a lesser requirement should be imposed because this is a low-income housing project may not be the right thing to do.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- Other municipalities have a matrix that bases the replacement requirement on the total diameter of trees that are being removed.
- To hold fast on a 2:1 replacement value is a bit outdated and it's clear that it doesn't represent a fair value.
- Sebastopol City code calls for a 2:1 replacement.
- Supports requiring a 2:1 in-lieu fee.
- Supports giving the applicant the opportunity to upsize the trees to give them the value for a 1:1 ratio which could provide larger trees that are more suitable for the conditions of the site.

Ms. Duckles commented:

- Appreciates the ideas that have been discussed.
- Has walked the site with the applicant and staff several times and there really isn't a lot of room on-site.
- Likes Vice Chair Bush's suggestion on upsizing the replacement trees.
- The Board can require that the City approve the plant material.
- Likes the idea of giving the residents some larger trees to start with.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- Agrees on precedent and the need for the Board to be consistent.

- Believes there may be value in allowing the applicant to upsize the trees to give them the value for a 1:1 ratio.

Director Svanstrom commented that the code does provide for some flexibility in terms of replacement planting at the Board's discretion.

Vice Chair Bush thanked the applicant for the additional information they provided.

Board Member Level commented:

- Although bigger than a 15-gallon tree, a 24" box tree is not a big tree.
- Spoke on her personal experience with tree planting and various types and sizes.
- There are too many variables to consider.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- Respectfully disagrees with Board Member Level.
- A 24" box tree will have a bigger presence than a 15-gallon.
- Agreed on there being many variables to consider.
- Through this process a management plan and a maintenance program have been put in place.

Chair Luthin made a motion to approve the application with the following:

- The property owners shall provide a minimum of two weeks notice to all residents prior to removal of the trees. The notice shall include the dates and, if proposed, phasing plan for all tree removals.
- A replacement ration of 2:1 shall be required for each tree removed, with a minimum of 13 trees required to be planted on-site. Additional replacements may be done on-site or through the in-lieu fee. However, if 24" container grown box trees are selected and planted, these shall count as two trees.

Vice Chair Bush seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Bush, Vice Chair Bush and Board Members Hari, Level and Langberg  
 NOES: None  
 ABSTAIN: None  
 ABSENT: Board Member Beale

Vice Chair Bush requested that staff agendize discussion of a new value for replacement planting.

**8. DISCUSSION ITEMS:** (none)

**9. REPORTS FROM THE BOARD/STAFF:** There were none.

**10. ADJOURNMENT:** Chair Luthin adjourned the meeting at 05:23 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Tree Board meeting will be held on October 02, 2019 at 4:00 p.m., at the Sebastopol City Hall, 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kari Svanstrom  
 Planning Director