

STAFF REPORT

DATE: November 3, 2011

TO: Trees and Views Committee

FROM: Alison Thornberry-Assef, Assistant Planner

SUBJECT: Status Report on the Investigation of Illegal Tree Removals/Alterations

Discussion

At the last meeting on September 1, 2011, Staff informed the committee that we are working on the process to start enforcement actions against the illegal removal or alteration of protected trees. Since two committee members were absent at the meeting, discussion of this item was pushed to the next fully attended meeting.

Since the last meeting Staff has been investigating two possible illegal tree removals and one possible illegal alteration. Staff has found:

1. 2 Bulkley Avenue: The property owner has recently informed Staff that two trees were removed on her property as part of an approved building permit to renovate the existing residence. She has stated the removal without permit was on accident and a misunderstanding on her part. Staff is in the process of researching the approved building permit, and other previous approvals at the property. The property owner did have an Arborist Report prepared, and Staff is reviewing the report and working with the Arborist to ensure that both trees removed were, in fact, Protected.
2. 626 Sunshine Avenue: Staff has started the initial investigation of the removal of possible protected trees. Staff has been to the site and is working to determine whether the trees are protected due to their large size, or if the trees are of an undesirable species.
3. 56/58 Rodeo Avenue: Staff has investigated and determined that one Red Cedar located on the property was illegally altered by topping. Staff is working to determine if the other tree on site, a Coast Live Oak, has also been illegally altered or if the property owner has just performed a routine pruning. Staff will be notifying the property owner of the investigation and findings over the next few weeks to start the enforcement and penalty process.

Any outcome of these investigations, that shows illegal tree activity, will be presented to the Trees and Views Committee (TVC) in the upcoming months for review and action.