

SAUSALITO TREES & VIEWS COMMITTEE
Thursday, December 1, 2011
Draft Summary Minutes

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Bickford called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 420 Litho Street, Sausalito.

Present: Chair Grant Colfax, Vice Chair Marylee Bickford,
Committee Member Betsy Elliott, Committee Member Ronald Reich

Absent: Committee Member Wingham Liddell

Staff: Assistant Planner Alison Thornberry

Selection of Chair and Vice-Chair

Committee Member Reich moved and Committee Member Elliott seconded a motion to nominate Grant Colfax to continue as Chair of the Trees & Views Committee until December 2012. The motion passed 4-0.

Committee Member Reich moved and Committee Member Elliott seconded a motion to nominate Marylee Bickford to continue as Vice-Chair of the Trees & Views Committee until December 2012. The motion passed 4-0.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Approval of Minutes

None.

Public Comments of Items Not on Agenda

None.

Public Hearings

1. **TRP 11-361, Tree Removal Permit, Leitch, 330 Ebbtide Avenue.** Tree Removal Permit to allow the removal of one hazardous Coast Live Oak located on the property at 330 Ebbtide Avenue (APN 052-322-02).

The public hearing was opened.

Assistant Planner Thornberry-Assef presented the Staff Report.

The public testimony period was opened.

1 Presentation was made by Louis Brunn of Marin County Arborists, the applicant.

2
3 Committee question to Mr. Brunn:

- 4 • When you say the cavity in the tree is continuous, is it moving? *Mr. Brunn*
5 *responded the decay column starts at the bottom of the tree where large*
6 *branches were probably cut off 30 or 40 years ago and extends all the way up*
7 *to where another branch was cut off ten feet high.*
- 8 • Can you tell by looking at the tree how much longer it may be able to stand?
9 *Mr. Brunn responded no, there is no way to tell.*
- 10 • What is the percentage of the tree that is destroyed? *Mr. Brunn responded*
11 *there is no way to tell how much of the tree's strength has been lost.*
12 *Unfortunately in this case the decay is in one of the worst positions in the back*
13 *of tree where strength is most needed.*
- 14 • How close to the ground can you get the stump? *Mr. Brunn responded they*
15 *could get it within three or four inches of the ground if nothing is in the way.*
16

17 The public testimony period was opened.

18
19 The public made no comments.

20 The public testimony period was closed.

21
22 Committee question to staff:

- 23 • What is staff's recommendation for a replacement tree? *Staff responded their*
24 *standard condition is the tree shall be replaced with a 24-inch box of a*
25 *desirable tree species to be determined by the property owner.*
26

27 Additional Condition of Approval:

- 28 • The tree shall be cut to within three to four inches of the ground level.
29

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31 **Committee Member Reich moved and Committee Member Elliott seconded a**
32 **motion to approve a Tree Removal Permit for 330 Ebbside Avenue subject to the**
33 **additional Conditions of Approval. The motion passed 4-0.**
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36 **2. TRP 11-359, Tree Removal Permit, Prouty and Herring, 112 Cazneau**
37 **Avenue. Tree Removal Permit to allow the removal of one Coast Live Oak**
38 **located on the property at 112 Cazneau Avenue (APN 065-101-20).**
39

40 The public hearing was opened.

41 Assistant Planner Thornberry-Assef presented the Staff Report.

42 The public testimony period was opened.

43 Presentation was made by Louis Brunn of Marin County Arborists, the applicant.
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1 Committee questions to Mr. Brunn:

- 2 • Where is the urgency for the removal of this tree? Also this tree is in the
3 beginning stages of Sudden Oak Death and can live for an extended period of
4 time with SOD. The gutter appears to be damaged. *Mr. Brunn responded the*
5 *roots lifting up the concrete and causing it to fracture have damaged the stucco*
6 *on the side of the house recently. It is unknown how long trees can live with*
7 *SOD, but the illness is only a factor in determining the long-term viability of this*
8 *tree. The treat is to the house itself.*
- 9 • Are you saying the damage to the roots will weaken the tree's strength? *Mr.*
10 *Brunn responded the roots are not damaged. The roots are damaging the*
11 *gutter and side of the house. The threat is that the tree is growing completely*
12 *horizontal, which in itself creates a high risk of failing.*
- 13 • The tree shows some symptoms of Sudden Oak Death, but has the tree been
14 diagnosed? *Mr. Brunn responded there has been no confirmation.*
- 15 • So the tree is not proposed for removal because it may have Sudden Oak
16 Death? *Mr. Brunn responded if a tree with SOD is a threat to a house and has*
17 *SOD it can decay and become weakened very quickly and becomes more of a*
18 *threat.*
- 19 • What is the circumference of the tree at breast height? *Mr. Brunn responded*
20 *70 inches.*
- 21 • What is the hazard rating for this tree? *Mr. Brunn responded ten out of twelve.*
22

23
24 Committee question to Wren Haring:

- 25 • If the tree fell would only the lightest of the branches brush the house? Tell us
26 about your relationship with the tree. *Ms. Herring responded the tree has a*
27 *huge canopy that is directly over her house. To trim the canopy would leave*
28 *nothing but the trunk and the branches. When it is windy the branches brush*
29 *the house and chimney. If the tree falls it will take out at least half the house.*
30

31 The public made no comments.

32
33 The public testimony period was closed.

34
35 Committee comments:

- 36 • In view of the fact that there is an abundance of Live Oaks on that property and
37 that this tree can be replaced it removal is a reasonable given the liability.
- 38 • Having seen the tree it is understandable how frightening it must be to live
39 under it. The tree should be removed.
40

41
42 Additional Conditions of Approval:

- 43 • The tree shall be cut to within three to five inches of the ground level.
44

45 **Committee Member Reich moved and Vice-Chair Bickford seconded a motion to**
46 **approve a Tree Removal Permit for 112 Cazneau Avenue subject to the additional**
47 **Conditions of Approval. The motion passed 4-0.**
48

49 The public hearing was closed.
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1 **3. TRP 11-352, Tree Removal Permit, Roberts-Feurzeig, 168 San Carlos**
2 **Avenue.** Tree Removal Permit to allow the removal of four Coast Live Oaks
3 located on the property at 168 San Carlos Avenue (APN 065-092-44).
4

5 The public hearing was opened.
6

7 Assistant Planner Thornberry-Assef presented the Staff Report.
8

9 The public testimony period was opened.
10

11 Presentation was made by Mary Roberts, the property owner.

- 12 • As an additional comment regarding Tree T-7 that hangs over the driveway,
13 the Fire Department determined a fire truck could be placed on the down side
14 of that tree and the hoses could still reach the three houses, so the truck would
15 not have to go by that tree.
- 16 • In the past all four of the trees were severely topped and horse tailed so they
17 do not have enough leaf structure to feed the large trunks.
18

19
20 Committee question to Ms. Roberts:

- 21 • It seems you have completed your investigation with regard to T-7 and at this
22 point you do not wish to remove the tree? *Ms. Roberts responded yes. The*
23 *tree is leaning severely over the driveway, but the arborist did not think the lean*
24 *was hazardous.*
25

26 **Committee Member Reich disclosed that Ms. Roberts and Mr. Feurzeig are close**
27 **friends and neighbors of his.**
28

29 Committee questions to Ms. Roberts:

- 30 • With respect to the tree T-7 that overhangs the driveway, is there room for
31 trimming of that tree in the future in the event that the foliage grows downward,
32 and is it top heavy at this point? *Ms. Roberts responded the arborist did not*
33 *mention that it was top heavy. The portion that leans over the driveway is*
34 *causing cramping for large vehicles to go by and there is no way to cut*
35 *anything because it is the trunk of the tree, and as it grows bigger and*
36 *becomes heavier it may encroach more on the driveway.*
- 37 • You indicated that fire trucks could stay on the downside of that tree, but would
38 a moving truck or a vehicle of that size be able to get by that tree? *Ms. Roberts*
39 *responded she did not know, as they have not had anyone moving in or out.*
- 40 • Do you have a number of this species of tree on your property? *Ms. Roberts*
41 *responded they started out with eleven of them and now have eight remaining.*
42

43 The public testimony period was closed.
44

45 Committee comments:

- 46 • It is clear from walking on the property that trees T-4 and T-5 will soon be a
47 problem if they aren't already, and that trees T-6 and T-7 should not be
48 removed but should be monitored.
49
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1 Vice-Chair Bickford moved and Committee Member Elliott seconded a motion to
2 approve a Tree Removal Permit for 168 San Carlos Avenue. The motion passed
3 4-0.
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5 **Old Business**

6 None.
7

8 **New Business**
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10 **4. 2012 Meeting Calendar**
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12 Assistant Planner Thornberry-Assef presented the Staff Report.
13

14 **Committee Member Elliott moved and Vice-Chair Bickford seconded a motion to**
15 **continue the Trees & Views Committee meetings on the first Thursday of each**
16 **month from 6:30pm to 9:30pm. The motion passed 4-0.**
17

18 **6. Oversight of Trees on Public Property**

19 **7. Update of Trees and Views Regulations**
20

21 Chair Colfax presented an overview.
22

23 Committee comments:
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- 25 • It is hypocritical that the Trees & Views Committee asks private property
26 owners who remove trees to replant, yet the City Council removes trees in
27 public right-of-ways and never replants, which they should.
- 28 • Private property owners are able to cut stumps down to three or four inches
29 from the ground when trees are removed and the City should do the same with
30 trees removed from public property.
- 31 • The Trees & Views Committee should adopt a plan of action moving forward
32 with regard to management of trees of public property without challenging the
33 knowledge, work or authority of those currently in charge, but understanding
34 that the City used to have a full-time staff person who managed the trees and
35 understood the larger picture, but then that job was shifted to someone who
36 already has a full-time job.
- 37 • Question: How are citizens notified and able to give input about removal of
38 trees on public lands? Because of workloads of staff arborists who have a
39 financial incentive to remove the trees provide much of the input. Large
40 numbers of trees have been removed with increasing public concern about it.
41

42 Staff comments:
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- 44 • The City does not use arborists who trim or cut down the City's trees and have
45 financial incentive to do so.
- 46 • The Public Works Department tags trees on site to inform the public they are
47 up for removal. If the Trees & Views Committee wished to have more done
48 than posting on site, when the item of writing the ordinance comes up that is
49 something that would be discussed.
50

1 Committee comments:

- 2
- 3 • It is not about an individual or a department, it is about the broader perspective
- 4 of what is the vision moving forward so that when anything is done it can be
- 5 measured about how it fits or does not fit with the broader perspective and the
- 6 broader approach. It is an attempt to add some context to how do we manage
- 7 our flora in our city and it behooves the Trees & Views Committee to try to
- 8 figure out how there can be more citizen voice around that.
- 9 • It is important that the Trees & Views Committee determines the objectives of
- 10 such a master plan. Paying for a CAD system may be the first step so the
- 11 master plan can be on computer.
- 12 • Part of the master plan should be that topping of trees be made illegal. Most
- 13 trees coming before the Trees & Views Committee with problems are due to
- 14 poor maintenance in the past. There needs to be outreach and education on
- 15 the TVC web site with **ANSI Guidelines for Proper Tree Trimming**, because
- 16 people are not aware.
- 17 • The Trees & Views Committee seeks to restructure and create a standard for
- 18 protocol and decision making so it is a simpler and streamlined standardized
- 19 process. Change the rules and regulations to give the TVC more power over
- 20 decision making for trees on public land.
- 21 • The City should be governed by the same policy as the private sector. The way
- 22 to do that is to have one standardize plan for the whole city.
- 23

24 **Staff Communications**

- 25 • Department of Public Works Tree Maintenance Activities — October-November
- 26 2011.
- 27 • Arborist's report for 50 Central.
- 28

29 **Adjournment**

30 The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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34 _____

35 Submitted by

36 Alison Thornberry-Assef

37 Assistant Planner

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39 Approved by

40 Grant Colfax

41 Chair

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