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**APPROVED MINUTES**

TREE/DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
 CITY OF SEBASTOPOL  
 MINUTES OF December 02, 2020  
 4:00 P.M.

The notice of the meeting was posted on November 24, 2020.

**TREE BOARD:**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Luthin called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. and read a procedural statement.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

<b>Present:</b>	Ted Luthin, Chair Lars Langberg, Vice Chair Ron Hari, Board Member Christine Level, Board Member (arrived at 4:35 p.m.)
<b>Absent:</b>	Cary Bush, Board Member (excused) Gregory Beale, Board Member (excused)
<b>Staff:</b>	Alan Montes, Associate Planner

**3. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:**

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

**5. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** There were none.

**6. REGULAR AGENDA:**

**A. TREE REMOVAL – 652 Petaluma Avenue,** Vintage Tree Care – Project #2020-058 – This is a Tree Removal application, requesting approval to remove eleven (11) protected redwood trees.

Associate Planner Montes presented the staff report.

The Board asked questions of Associate Planner Montes.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

I had a question for the arborist. It is not the first time that we have been asked to remove redwood trees because they are planted in the wrong place. The report talks about the trees being 25 years old. In this case, it seems like they are mostly disrupting a parking lot. I guess there is some worry that they are also going to disrupt the foundation of the neighboring house. I know that trees get planted in the wrong place, but is there not any way to save some of these trees? Is it that they either have to be cut down or deal with the consequences?

**Fred, Applicant**

It is a matrix. Part of it is that you are looking to the future. These trees will continually get larger, this species is capable of a lot more growth, you take what already is occurring and you know that it is going to get exponentially worse at some point. It is sort of like you are seeing the fork in the road. Some mitigation options would be root severance or root barriers. The challenge with that is, then you destabilize the tree, and it is an immeasurable concept. Then you are worried about them toppling, which could get higher, and then given the fact that they are tall structures, and they would definitely have the ability and the geometry to strike a parked vehicle or a pedestrian. It is kind of one of those slippery slopes. Had they been a little more remote. Maybe root severance and a slightly elevated risk for failure might be tolerable. In this circumstance, it is not something that the property owner wants to take the risk of doing. In the effort to minimize the infrastructure damage that is already started, and which will only get worse with time, it is the unfortunate option that seems the best at the moment.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

If the pacific wax myrtle gets planted in the same location, do we have the same problem 20 years from now?

**Fred, Applicant**

The pacific wax myrtle is a much smaller species, so you should not expect anything remotely close. All woody plants have the potential to cause root problems, but wax myrtles are definitely not something that is going to give you the grief that a coastal redwood has the potential for.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Board Member Level joined the meeting. No further questions from the Board and no public comment. Asked for Board deliberation.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

I went over and walked the property. Obviously, again, these are the wrong tree for the wrong place. They never should have been there in the first place. On one side you have got the pavement, down below it you have a small runoff ditch on the downhill side which is most likely where the roots are headed. The roots are headed towards the houses mainly downhill from there. I doubt whether many of the roots will be heading underneath the concrete because the water has been stopped at that point. I guess my point here is that I do not really see any reason for any trees to be planted here at all. A good hedge would work better. It is in between a rock and a hard place and I guess I am getting a little tired, we are going to be myrtle town pretty soon. My suggestion would be, I do not think there really needs to be any trees, and there sure does not need to be 12 more trees there. There is nothing wrong with certain spots in city having no trees at all and this is probably one of them. In my opinion we should not require any replacement trees to be planted at all. But if they want to, they can.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

The Board can override the requirement for placement trees and the applicant can pay an in-lieu fee instead if they go below the threshold for replacement.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

What about shading for the houses that are to the east of there, what would you say about that?

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

Well, it depends on whether you want shade or sun. That is facing west, it will not block noontime sun at all. Wax myrtles I do not think will put up much shade compared to the redwoods at all. I do not know how tall they are at maturity.

**Fred, Applicant**

They are being described as a 2- to 10-meter-tall tree, so 20 feet or so.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

That is going to take 20 years to provide any shade at all. I do not think it will have much effect at all. They may want the sun.

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

The City does have a requirement for shade trees for parking lots. There has to be one tree for every five parking spaces.

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

How many parking spaces are there?

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

There is like 20.

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

Correct. On the side with the redwoods, I counted 12.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

Then you do not need a dozen trees there at all.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

The properties that are adjacent, they do have structures that are 5' off the property lines, or something like that. They might like some screening between them and a parking lot.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

Yes.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

There is that huge fence, have you seen the fence?

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Yes.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

That is a good 6-8' tall. They have got plenty of visual blockage there.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

I just do not like the City requiring something that really is not necessary.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Understood.

**Christine Level, Board Member**

It seems like there was a time period where these trees were all planted, and that they are just not appropriate for the sites anywhere that we find them. I feel that the trees can be removed. In terms of replacement, I would like to see, or I think it would be reasonable to replace the number of trees that would provide a healthy environment. Not too many trees crowded together. I am not an arborist, I am not going to be able to say this many trees, but we have got these 5 parking spaces per tree standard. We need to get a tree replacement in there that will grow well in that environment. I disagree with Board Member Hari. I think trees, even in urban environments, are essential. I would like to see some trees replaced there. Maybe not necessarily 12, but I do want to encourage that. This is a difficult situation because we have the in-lieu fee. I would like to see some sort of standard with the City where we plant trees, instead of just take the money. I would like to see 12 trees replaced with 12 trees, but not necessarily here. Otherwise, the include fee, but I can understand planting lesser trees. These trees get too crowded and do not grow well. I am for the removal of the existing trees with the replanting of the appropriate trees that are suggested in a density level that will allow the trees to have an opportunity to grow in a healthy manner. Because I have had this happen to me, when you are a neighboring property and a big tree gets removed, it is a shock. They are going to have to deal with a shock period, because they will have new trees, but if you get a fast-growing tree, you can get the environment back that the neighboring tree imposed onto your property.

**Fred, Applicant**

I would agree with Board Member Level. I think putting some back is appropriate. The applicant has suggested four, so the Board could take that recommendation with the rest going to the in-lieu fund. If I am not mistaken, that money gets spent on planting trees in the city.

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

Yes, that money is earmarked for that purpose.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

We are looking at the site plan that has numbers 1 through 12 of the ones to be removed and that has four x's, which I assume are the new trees, they appear to be evenly spaced with more room than the existing ones, which seems pretty good to me.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

When I was looking at this, I was surprised to see 6' spacing between those 12 trees. That would create basically a giant hedge across that whole border which maybe is what City Arborist, Becky Duckles was thinking. 12 seems dense to me. I wish Board Member Bush were here as I am not a tree expert. I think trees in that space are a nice thing for that property, it softens the edge between the property and the neighbors. It seems like a pretty good place for a row of trees. I guess it is a question of how many. A pacific wax myrtle is a small to medium tree that will grow to about 20' tall. They are in 15-gallon containers and they may be planted 6' apart.

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

In a communication from Ms. Duckles, she clarified that up to 12 trees could be accommodated in the space.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Ms. Duckles said that There is adequate room for 12 new 15-gallon sized container trees planted 6' apart, to replace the 12 redwoods.

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

The 12 myrtles would be a similar spacing and sizing to the redwoods.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Ms. Duckles may have been going for replacing a row of green with another row of green that just is not quite as tall and will still provide the same function as what is there currently.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

Why is the applicant only proposing 4?

**Fred, Applicant**

We are working on behalf of the property owner. Since we do not specialize in the install part, they have contacted a landscape designer, I think it is Gill with Gill Landscape, Inc. It was based on a recommendation following a discussion between the landscaping person and the owner of the property. Unfortunately, I do not have a lot of insight as to what led to the decision. We were instructed to notify you of that decision moving forward.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

I am not against planting trees here, do not get me wrong. I just think there are certain spots that are excellent for trees, and certain places that are not. I think 4 would be fine. As far as a whole row of them there, that makes no sense to me in that location at all. You were worried about the neighbors missing those trees, of course they will but those trees will not be substantial height for another 10 or 20 years. Planting myrtles there will not have any effect on that property for quite some time. Yes, it will be a shocker if They are gone, plus or minus, we do not know whether they like them there or not. I think 4 is plenty. I would like to go along with the property owner if That is what they want, and their arborist or landscape architect, if That is what they recommend and They are willing to pay a couple extra bucks. That is what I would say we should do. I am big on native trees here. As you know, redwoods are not net native in Sebastopol and neither are myrtles, I think they come from the east coast. I would like to see some native trees planted here.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Would somebody like to make a motion? It sounds like we are all somewhat in agreement on a reduced number of trees, rather than requiring 12 trees to be replanted.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

Board Member Hari made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the following:

- Recommends going along with the applicant team on what they would like to do when it comes to replacement planting.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

That would mean approving this with 4 on-site replacement trees being planted, not 12. The motion would be to approve this application as submitted in that case.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

Yes.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

The motion does not reference payment of the in-lieu fee for the remaining required replacement trees, so it is incomplete.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

His motion includes payment of the in-lieu fee for the remaining required replacement trees as well.

Vice Chair Langberg seconded the clarified motion.

Chair Luthin asked for Board discussion of the motion.

**Christine Level, Board Member**

I would like to clarify something. There are 12 trees proposed to be removed.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Yes.

**Christine Level, Board Member**

We replace 12, but the 12 is essentially 4 trees plus 8 through the in-lieu fee, correct?

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

I believe That is correct.

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

Yes, that is correct. It would be the in-lieu fee for the remaining 18 trees.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

That is because the in-lieu fee is a 2:1, right?

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

Correct. It is an in-lieu fee for the 8. If this were a 2:1 replacement, they would be planting 22 trees if we were to hold them to the regulations. If They are planting 4 trees, they would be paying the in-lieu fee for 18 trees.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

14 trees. There is 11 that are protected that need to be taken down or planted there. That is 7 left over, is that not 14 in-lieu?

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

No, there are the eleven trees that are being removed and those are typically replaced at a 2:1 ratio. That is 22 trees less the 4.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

Okay. Got it. How much is the in-lieu fee per tree?

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

The fee is \$75.00 per required replacement tree. In the report I had calculated the total replacements being \$1,350.00.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Just for clarification, we are approving as submitted which would be the removal of 12 trees, planting 4 replacement trees on-site, and the payment of in-lieu fees for 18 trees totaling \$1,350.00.

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

One small correction, there are 11 protected trees. The other tree is noted as being removed.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Thank you for that. Is everybody in agreement with the motion as we have it?

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

I will just make one point, I looked it up and the pacific wax myrtle is an evergreen shrub native to the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Oh, there we go. Any further discussion?

Hearing none, the Board voted on the motion as follows:

AYES: Chair Luthin, Vice Chair Langberg, and Board Members Hari and Level

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Board Members Bush and Beale

Chair Luthin thanked the applicant for being present.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

I am very much in thought of dealing with native trees here, old growth or first growth. This is a great example of planted trees. They are in a whole different category as far as I am concerned. Humans planted them and humans can remove them if they were planted wrong or diseased, I have no problem with that. I do not think we have to plant trees all over the place, frankly. That is my opinion. You know I am very in tune with redwoods for all my thousands of hours at Armstrong.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

Thanks, Board Member Hari. That concludes the Tree Board meeting.

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD:**

**7. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Luthin called the meeting to order at 4:28 p.m.

<b>8. ROLL CALL:</b>	Present:	Ted Luthin, Chair Lars Langberg, Vice Chair Ron Hari, Board Member Christine Level, Board Member
	Absent:	Cary Bush, Board Member (excused) Gregory Beale, Board Member (excused)
	Staff:	Alan Montes, Associate Planner

**9. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:** None

**10.COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:** None

**11.STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** None

**12.REGULAR AGENDA:**

- A. DESIGN REVIEW: 110 North Main Street,** Portico – Project #2020-067 – This is a Design Review application, requesting approval to recess their front façade approximately 11’-6” back, to accommodate a patio for outdoor dining.

Associate Planner Montes presented the staff report.

Hearing no questions for staff, Chair Luthin asked for Board discussion.

**Christine Level, Board Member**

I just want to say that I really support this. I am supportive of anything that we can do to help these businesses through this time. I think this request is straightforward.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

I totally agree. I think that that building is almost kind of crying out for this as well. It is got a slightly recessed existing storefront, might as well push it back and make some use of some patio space. The more outdoor patio space we can get on Main Street, the better.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

There is no parklet in front of this, right?

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

The parklet is further north.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

Down the way, yes, but there is not one there in front of their restaurant, right?

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

I think the issue with that was that it would interfere with the turning lane.

**Ron Hari, Board Member**

We cannot put a parklet in front of this business legally?

**Alan Montes, Associate Planner**

Correct, it would conflict with that right turn onto Bodega Avenue.

**Lars Langberg, Vice Chair**

I think this is awesome. It is a radical approach to getting some outdoor dining. To actually think of moving the storefront back, it is not that difficult, but what a great idea, we have such narrow sidewalks in this town. Any way we can walk in them, that is great.

**Ted Luthin, Chair**

I agree.

Board Member Level made a motion to approve the application as submitted.

Vice Chair Langberg seconded the motion.

Hearing no further discussion, the Board voted on the motion as follows:

AYES: Chair Luthin, Vice Chair Langberg, and Board Members Hari and Level

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Board Members Bush and Beale

**13.ADJOURNMENT:** Chair Luthin adjourned the meeting at 04:31 p.m. The next specially scheduled Tree/Design Review Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 09, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kari Svanstrom  
Planning Director