



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

Meeting Date: April 7, 2004

Staff Report for Agenda Item: C-3

Issue Determination on Appeal of Approval of Heritage Tree Removal Permit at 648 Menlo Avenue (#04-030)

BACKGROUND

The City applied for a removal permit for two heritage carob trees located in the City right of way at 648 Menlo Avenue because the tree trunks are leaning into the street and vehicles are hitting them. The application and arborist form are in Attachment 1. The appellant, Morris Brown, stated his reasons for appealing the decision were that the trees are healthy and they provide nice canopy (Attachment 2). Three residents also submitted letters objecting to the approval of the removal permit (Attachment 3).

ANALYSIS

The City Arborist evaluated the trees and found that the trunks lean over the street at a low level and the roots are damaging the curb and sidewalk. The tree trunks and low branches have scars from vehicles striking them. The City has received two claims for damages to private vehicles in the last 12 months. State regulations on minimum height clearance above streets requires 15 feet of clearance above the street pavement from the edge of the curb out. Bulging in the sidewalk caused by roots is a potential hazard for pedestrians. The City has replaced the curb and sidewalk at least once.

Letters from residents objecting to the removal of the trees suggest that large vehicles not be permitted to park in either of the two affected parking spaces, that a sign warning about the trees be posted (also stating that owners of vehicles will be responsible for damage resulting from hitting the trees), that the trees be pruned instead of removed, that the sidewalk be repaired and that street trees create beauty and shade downtown.

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Environmental Programs Coordinator
Report Author

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public Notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Heritage tree permit application, with private arborist form
2. Appellant's letter
3. Letters from residents