



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

Meeting Date: July 1, 2009
Staff Report for
Agenda Item: B-1

REGULAR BUSINESS: Issue Determination on Appeal of Heritage Tree Removal Permit at 1155 Santa Cruz Avenue

BACKGROUND

On September 24, 2008, permit applications to remove two heritage sized tulip trees located in the rear of the residential property at 1155 Santa Cruz Avenue were received from the property owners, John Martin and Gillian Lounsbach (Attachment A). Removal permits for both trees were approved by the City due to structural decline and severe aphid infestation (Attachment B). The owners of the adjacent property at 1158 Windsor Way, Doug and Maureen Teter, filed an appeal on one of the two permits approved (Attachment C).

ANALYSIS

The applicants originally designed additions to their home with the intent of preserving the two tulip trees (Attachment D). They have submitted a synopsis of the efforts that were made to improve the health of the trees (Attachment E). A consulting arborist was hired to evaluate and prepare a report on the trees in August, 2008 (Attachment A). The applicants notified their neighbors via letter of their intent to remove the trees due to the overall declining health and aphid infestation (Attachment F).

Staff approved the removal permit because there is clear evidence that the overall health of the tree is in decline. The City Arborist observed extensive sticky aphid excrement on the ground and patio in the back yard. He agreed with the consulting arborist's evaluation and recommended removal based on the worsening aphid infestation, in addition to oak root rot and fungal decay (Attachment B).

The appellant states in their appeal letter that they feel the applicant has not done enough to preserve the trees, citing the Heritage Tree Ordinance section 12.24.025, which requires property owners to use reasonable efforts to maintain and preserve their heritage trees. They have also verbally stated that their view shed will be impacted by the removal of the tree.

The property owners at 1135 Santa Cruz submitted a letter to the City stating that they have no objections to the removal of the tulip trees (Attachment G).

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the removal permit for the tree be upheld due to declining health, fungal decay and aphid infestation. The owner has made sufficient efforts to preserve and maintain the tree.

Dianne Dryer
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

- A. [Heritage Tree Permit Applications \(two\) and arborist report with photos](#)
- B. [City arborist's evaluation and approval](#)
- C. [Appeal request letter](#)
- D. [Site plan](#)
- E. [Email synopsis from applicant on efforts to reduce aphid infestation](#)
- F. [Letter to neighbors from applicant regarding removal of trees](#)
- G. [Letter from 1135 Santa Cruz Ave in support of removal of trees](#)