

**BURLINGAME BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION**  
**Draft Minutes August 6, 2020**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Beautification Commission was called to order via Zoom at 6:30 pm by Commissioner Kearney.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Kirchner, Kearney, Dinuri and Bauer  
Absent: Hunt  
Staff: Parks and Recreation Director Glomstad, City Arborist/Parks Superintendent Disco and Recording Secretary Borba  
Others: None

**MINUTES**

Commissioner Kirchner made a motion to approve the May 7, 2020 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bauer and was approved 4-0-1 (Hunt).

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Appeal to the Approved Removal of a Redwood Tree at 133 Pepper Avenue**

Commissioner Kearney read the Order of Business for appeals. Director Glomstad read the staff report.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Kirchner stated the original arborist report in 2017 stated the Redwood tree was in poor condition and another arborist report in 2020 stating the tree continues to be in poor condition. He asked if the tree is declining in health. Arborist Disco confirmed the Redwood tree is declining, based on how the top of the tree is browning out due to lack of water and draught stress. There was also a grade change at the base of tree which is cause for concern. Commissioner Kirchner inquired if the tree needed to use up 500 gallons of water a day to maintain its health. Arborist Disco stated it would depend on the size of the tree. Commissioner Kirchner stated looking at the plans it looked like there was a lot of excavation around the tree, and hardscape resulting in the tree getting less water. Arborist Disco agreed the tree appears to be getting less water.

Commissioner Kearney asked for an explanation of cabling a tree. Arborist Disco responded that cabling a tree refers to putting rods and/or cables in between co-dominant limbs and high in the tree to prevent the codominant limbs from splitting apart. Commissioner Kearney inquired if the City has any trees that are cabled. Arborist Disco stated the City does not cable trees. He noted that there are some on El Camino Real, but they were not maintained and the cables have snapped. As the tree grows it puts tension on the cables and the cables have to maintain and adjusted otherwise they break.

Commissioner Dinuri asked how often a tree that is cabled has to be maintained. Arborist Disco responded it depends on the tree and how fast it is growing but on average every two to three years. Redwoods are soft wooded trees so the cables and bolts on the sides will damage the wood and will need to be adjusted, and inspected to make sure the cables aren't frayed, worn or corroded. Commissioner Dinuri asked about the cost to cable a tree and the ongoing maintenance. Arborist

Disco replied that since the City doesn't cable trees, he didn't know the cost. Commissioner Dinuri inquired about the planning process and the 2017 arborist report. She wanted to know about the process for determining what trees can be removed. Arborist Disco stated the ordinance states that if the tree is within the footprint of a proposed new structure, it can be approved for removal. Commissioner Dinuri asked if there were any plans for irrigation of the Redwood tree. Arborist Disco stated there wasn't.

Commissioner Bauer inquired if the tree was solely located on the 133 Pepper Avenue property. Arborist Disco stated it was but it is tearing up the fence and retaining wall on the shared property line. Commissioner Bauer asked if the cabling, watering and maintenance of the tree would fall to the property owners at 133 Pepper Avenue. Arborist Disco confirmed the property owner at 133 Pepper Avenue would be responsible for the maintenance costs.

#### Public Comments

Secretary Borba read an email statement from the appellant's sister Mary Beaulaurier on behalf of the appellant Susan Beaulaurier. The letter read, "Burlingame's heritage trees are a part of our history and our identity and what make this town unique and special. My family has lived next to the majestic Redwood Tree at 133 Pepper for fifty-three years. We and the neighborhood and community at large are enhanced by not only the aesthetic impact of its beauty and grandeur but by the long list of environmental benefits and the positive impact it has on the ecosystem as a whole. It has stood vital and strong despite the co-dominant leaders for over five decades and in all probability much longer. Three years ago, Kielty Arborist Services made an assessment and recommendations. They did not recommend removal of the tree but instead simple maintenance to support the tree. They also outlined the appropriate measures to take in order to safeguard the tree during the impending construction (refer to Exhibit E, page 6) I wonder why three years later we are being notified that damage was done to a "protected tree" during the construction. I don't believe that a tree that has been vital for decades and deemed safe by an arborist would take such a drastic nose-dive in a couple of years without explicit neglect and human disregard (please refer to Exhibit A-Tree Ordinance, 11.06.010 and 11.06.020). Our family filed an appeal and tried to have our arborist do a thorough and complete inspection of the tree. However, due to time constraints imposed by the deadline and the owners of the property not responding to our request, we were unable to do so and only able to submit a partial report. We were shocked and saddened to get the notification of the proposed removal of this protected tree. We are distressed by the trend of the past year of the removal of neighborhood heritage trees due to construction. Burlingame Park's beauty and appeal has everything to do with the hand-full of large, heritage trees. This Redwood Tree is one of its remaining jewels and we should be protecting it for our community and future generations to enjoy."

Eric Klein co-owner of the property at 133 Pepper Avenue along with Jennifer Colvin stated that they have owned the property at 133 Pepper Avenue for the last 5 years. Their goal was to maintain the historical preservation of the original structure. Their landscaping plans which generated the 2017 arborist report noted there were some very sizeable trees that could not be saved. In the original plans submitted in 2017, the goal was to keep the Redwood tree and protect it during construction. They never entertained cabling the tree because of the maintenance and cost. Their goal is to build an environmentally sustainable property conscious of water use. They would love to keep the tree for all the reasons the neighbors pointed out but when looking 100 years into the future the Redwood tree is not appropriate for the area. They requested removal and replacement with an appropriate tree that fits the neighborhood and will provide shade and beauty for all to enjoy. He also stated their concerns for limb failure for his property and his neighbors.

Geralyn Beaulaurier stated her sister Susan was not able to make the call due to a family medical emergency. The family is represented today, but her sister Mary can't get on to speak. She noted that during construction there were some roots that were compromised, and she asked why they weren't protected. She stated that the tree is a beautiful part of our environment and she doesn't understand why the roots were damaged which has led to the ancient Redwood's approved removal.

She committed her family to watering the tree or contributing in any way they can to help support the tree. She stated that the tree has been part of our lives for 60 years.

Eric Klein responded to the root damage during construction. The tree was protected during construction by a fence around the tree area. The grading was in the original permit and there was the possibility of some root damage but the intention was to keep the tree.

#### Commissioner Discussion

Commission Dinuri stated her concern is the health of the tree and looking at the vitality of the tree it seems to have issues. She was concerned about safety and that the tree limbs could fall on the structure or neighboring home. She noted that as part of the City Ordinance 11.06.060(d)(7) economic consequence to let the tree remain would place a burden on the homeowner.

Commissioner Kirchner stated the tree is declining in health and it is not going to get better and he didn't feel that asking the owner to take on that financial burden was right. He stated that he wished that the Commission could save the tree but that he was leaning towards removal.

Commissioner Bauer is in agreement with Commissioner Kirchner and Commissioner Dinuri and felt it was a shame to remove this tree, however it has been declining in health since 2017 and the construction has hurt the growth of the tree. She noted that it would be an undue burden for the homeowner to try and maintain the tree.

Commissioner Kearney stated she agrees with her fellow Commissioners since it had been established the tree is a potential danger. She was also concerned about the burden to the homeowners.

Commissioner Dinuri made a motion to deny the appeal because the tree has co-dominant leaders with included bark, and the excavation at the base of the tree has caused the tree to become a potential hazard and referenced Chapter 11.06.060 (d) (1) and 11.06.060 (d) (7) of the Municipal Code. The Commission also required the replacement of one 24" box size tree be planted. Commissioner Bauer seconded the motion. Motion passed 4 (Kearney, Kirchner, Dinuri and Bauer) 0 – 1 (Hunt).

## **REPORTS**

### **1. Director Glomstad**

Director Glomstad stated the construction of the Community Center is well on its way and on schedule to date. She noted that they have removed a large amount of soil and some will be stored and reused. It is anticipated that some of the framing will be seen in September.

There have been some challenges in the parks during COVID. The play structures at some of the parks have been fenced due to the closure signage not being followed. Additional signage has been posted at the Bay Front. The Recreation Division does have fitness programming and have helped the local business community with offering park space to hold fitness classes. They are also offering skilled base programming for youth sports and working with the schools to develop programming.

### **2. Parks Superintendent/City Arborist**

City Arborist Disco reported the grass field at Ray Park is being renovated it will include a new ball field and batting cages. Skyline Park will open up in August which will include a natural open space and dog off lease area. The Parks Division has a new tree trimming and stump removal contact with Timberline.

### **3. Commissioner Hunt**

None

### **4. Commissioner Bauer**

None

### **5. Commissioner Kirchner**

None

**6. Commissioner Kearney**

None

**7. Commissioner Dinuri**

None

The next Beautification Commission meeting is September 3, 2020. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Borba

Administrative Staff