LARA WEISIGER

From: Christopher Buckley <cbuckleyaicp@att.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 5:49 PM
To: Trish Spencer; Malia Vella; Frank Matarrese; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Jim Oddie
Cc: Jill Keimach; Liz Warmerdam; LARA WEISIGER
Subject: Improved tree protection ordinance to be considered at City Council's 2-17-17 workshop

Dear Mayor Spencer and City Council Members:

Thank you for including at your January 3, 2017 meeting an improved tree protection ordinance for consideration at the February 17, 2017 priority setting workshop. The proposed ordinance is shown as Item 39 in the "Counsel Referrals" document prepared for the workshop.

Item 39's status column states "… Moved approval of staff could define the size of the project at the priority setting work session; with two large volumes [of the Master Tree Plan], it might be that staff decides to go with a different, more user friendly approach or tweaks the existing document to create a procedure manual or process, which would be two different time commitments from staff…" However, the reference to the Master Street Tree Plan (MSTP) in the status column is inappropriate, since the MSTP applies only to public trees and the proposed ordinance improvements are intended primarily for private property trees. Although Item 39's language reflects some of the discussion at the City Council's January 3, 2017 meeting, I was surprised to see the reference to the MSTP was included as part of Item 39, since the inapplicability of the MSTP to the ordinance improvements was brought to the attention of the Mayor, Council and staff immediately after the January 3, 2017 meeting. In particular, the MSTP does not attempt to define what private property trees are appropriate for protection nor address what type of work involving protected trees (such as topping, cutting major roots, etc.) would require a permit. Tree protection ordinances from other cities, such as those listed in the Mayor's January 3, 2017 referral, would be a much better starting point for an improved Alameda ordinance. Walnut Creek's ordinance seems especially promising.

I would like to reiterate my previous recommendations for an improved tree protection ordinance and ask that these be considered as part of a revised ordinance:

1. Expand the definition of protected trees to ALL trees (not just Coast Live Oaks and the limited number of street trees listed in the current ordinance) over a specified size (perhaps 28" trunk diameter, like Walnut Creek), except, perhaps, for specified "undesirable" species, which could include such
   trees as Blue Gum Eucalyptus.

2. Require a permit for any tree "removal".

3. Define "removal" to include things like removal of over a certain percentage of a tree's canopy or height as well as removal of roots over a certain size within a specified percentage of the protected root zone.

4. For development-related tree removals, require implementation of project alternatives, alternative siting or configuration of the proposed improvements that would avoid removal.

5. Provide construction guidelines around protected trees.

Please call me at 523-0411 if you would like to discuss these comments.

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