



Tree Committee Minutes

July 28, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

Council Hearing Room, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo

Tree Committee Members Present: Member Henry Bonifas, Member Charles Gerencser, Member Dan Shinn, Vice Chair Emily Rosten, Chair Ben Parker

Tree Committee Members Absent: Member Daniel Canella

City Staff Present: Urban Forest Program Coordinator / City Arborist Walter Gault, Deputy City Clerk Sara Armas

1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular Meeting of the San Luis Obispo Tree Committee was called to order on July 28, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Hearing Room at City Hall, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, by Chair Parker.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Public Comment:

Fitzgerald Kelly

--End of Public Comment--

3. CONSENT

3.a CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES - MAY 19, 2025 TREE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Motion By Member Bonifas

Second By Vice Chair Rosten

To approve the Tree Committee Minutes of May 19, 2025.

Ayes (5): Member Bonifas, Member Gerencser, Member Shinn, Vice Chair Rosten, and Chair Parker

Absent (1): Member Canella

CARRIED (5 to 0)

4. TREE REMOVAL APPLICATION

4.a REVIEW A TREE REMOVAL APPLICATION TO REMOVE ONE (1) CHINESE PISTACHE LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE OSOS ST RAILROAD SAFETY INTERSECTION (APPLICATION: TREE-0432-2025)

Urban Forest Program Coordinator / City Arborist Walter Gault presented the staff report, provided an overview of the Tree Removal application on behalf of the City, and responded to Committee inquiries.

Chair Parker opened Public Comment

Public Comment:

Fitzgerald Kelly

--End of Public Comment--

Chair Parker closed Public Comment

Motion By Vice Chair Rosten

Second By Member Shinn

Recommend that the Community Development Director approve the tree removal request per Municipal Code Section 12.24.090(G), based on the findings below, and further recommend a 3:1 compensatory replanting rate in addition to mitigating the soil with organic matter and mulch in the proposed replanting location.

Findings:

- 12.24.090.G(3) Species: Tree is non-native
- 12.24.090.G(4) Forestry Best Practice: Tree is close to other trees - removal may encourage broader canopy from the remaining trees
- 12.24.090.G(6) Compensatory Plantings: Landscaping plan exceeds required minimum for replanting (2:1 offsite) with 3:1
- 12.24.090.G(7) Heritage Status: Not a Heritage tree

Ayes (5): Member Bonifas, Member Gerencser, Member Shinn, Vice Chair Rosten, and Chair Parker

Absent (1): Member Canella

CARRIED (5 to 0)

4.b REVIEW A TREE REMOVAL APPLICATION TO REMOVE ONE (1)
AFRICAN FERN PINE LOCATED AT 1421 BROAD ST (APPLICATION:
TREE-0288-2025)

Urban Forest Program Coordinator / City Arborist Walter Gault presented the staff report and responded to Committee inquiries.

Applicant representative, Ron Combs of Bunyon Bros., provided an overview of the Tree Removal Application and responded to questions raised.

Chair Parker opened Public Comment

Public Comment:

None

--End of Public Comment--

Chair Parker closed Public Comment

Motion By Member Gerencser

Second By Vice Chair Rosten

Recommend that the Community Development Director deny the tree removal request per Municipal Code Section 12.24.090(G), under Section 12.24.090(E)(3), based on the findings below; and further recommend the applicant consider the City Arborist's recommendations for tree maintenance to create a safer environment for the structure and surrounding property impacted by the tree.

Findings:

- 12.24.090.G(1) Size of Tree: Tree is large and visually prominent in the neighborhood
- 12.24.090.G(2) Location of Tree: Tree is highly visible from public right-of-way
- 12.24.090.G(5) Right-of-Way Impact: Tree is not impacting the Public Right-of-Way either by obstruction or displacement

Ayes (5): Member Bonifas, Member Gerencser, Member Shinn, Vice Chair Rosten, and Chair Parker

Absent (1): Member Canella

CARRIED (5 to 0)

5. COMMENT AND DISCUSSION

5.a ARBORIST REPORT

Urban Forest Program Coordinator / City Arborist Walter Gault provided the following update of upcoming projects and activities in the Tree Division:

- The City's Arbor Day event is taking place the first weekend of November at Santa Rosa Park
- City staff is working with EcoSlo to organize plantings at Islay Park and Santa Rosa Park
- The CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps have been adopted by the City; staff will be working on updating the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Code in addition to revising City regulations to align with the State's requirements regarding the Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps
- The City is also experimenting with street tree plantings in partnership with local property owners
- Walter Gault participated in a maintenance event at the South Hills Open Space hosted by the Rotary Club

Vice Chair Rosten inquired about a previous Tree Removal application recommended for approval by the Tree Committee at 2675 Johnson Avenue. City Arborist Walter Gault provided a brief update regarding the replanting done after the tree removal.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m. The next Regular Meeting of the Tree Committee is scheduled for August 25, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Hearing Room at City Hall, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo.

APPROVED BY TREE COMMITTEE: XX/XX/202X