



CITY OF ASHLAND



TREE COMMISSION MINUTES August 9, 2018

Commissioners Present:	Parks Liaison
Christopher John	Peter Baughman
Russell Neff	Steven Jensen - Absent
Mike Oxendine	Staff Present:
Asa Cates – Absent	Nathan Emerson

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christopher John called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room of the Community Development and Engineering Services Building located at 51 Winburn Way.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Neff/John m/s to approve the minutes of July 12, 2018. Voice vote. ALL AYES. Motion passed

ANNOUNCEMENTS & LIAISON REPORTS

- **Council Liaison – Steven Jensen**
Councilor Jensen was unable to attend.
- **Parks & Recreation Liaison**
Baughman shared that over a million dollars has been donated to upgrade the Japanese Garden in Lithia Park. The garden will be receiving a significant overhaul, including trees but no specific plans as of yet.
- **Community Development Liaison**
Emerson shared that newly appointed City Councilor, Jensen was unable to attend the meeting and stressed that it was due to the hazardous levels of smoke in the valley.

PUBLIC FORUM

There was no one in the audience wishing to speak.

PLANNING ACTION: PA-TREE-2018-00014

SUBJECT PROPERTY: 1730 Greenmeadows Way

APPLICANT/OWNER: Mountain RCH Property Owner's Association

DESCRIPTION: A request for a hazard tree removal of two trees in the Mountain Ranch common area (addressed as 1730 Greenmeadows Way). The trees, both weeping willows, have a history of limb failure and recently caused damage to an adjacent property. The applicant submitted photos and an arborist report recommending removal and replacement of the trees. *The applicant submitted new material, extended this planning action, and it will be reheard by the Tree Commission.* **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION:** Single-Family Residential; **ZONING:** R-1-7.5; **ASSESSOR'S MAP:** 39 1E 23BB; **TAX LOT:** 1300

Emerson gave the staff report and commented that the applicant has continued their action and returned with an additional arborist report.

Douglas Kay, HOA President, residing at 2350 Ranch Rd and Bill Stephens, member of HOA board, residing at 1400 Green Meadows Way spoke on behalf of the application. They explained their concerns, how they got to the current application, and that they brought an additional arborist report. They reported that multiple times, large limbs, of up to 12-14 inches in diameter, have fallen, including a time when a large limb damaged a fence and came within 8 feet of a home. Mr. Kay and Mr. Stephens expressed their desire to replace the trees with more appropriate specimens and believe the HOA will be liable if these trees cause damage to people or property. Mr. Stephens explained that he has a tree of the same type in his yard and it has significant limb failure despite maintenance. He went on to say that children play near the trees in question and other visitors who don't live in the neighborhood frequent this common area.

Oxendine initiated a discussion with the applicants about turning the trees into habitat trees. The Commission also discussed potential mitigation options and the impact of the federal Migratory Bird act on the timing of tree removals.

Oxendine/John m/s to **approve** PA-TREE-2018-00014 with the recommendation that the removal of the two trees be done with a 1:1 mitigation of species that will do well in the area and reach a similar mature size. The Commission also recommended that the applicant consider alternatives such as habitat trees and that removal is done after the nesting season for migratory birds has passed. Voice vote. ALL AYES. Motion passed.

PLANNING ACTION: TREE-2018-00020

SUBJECT PROPERTY: 621 Elkader St

APPLICANT: Rogue Planning & Development

OWNER: Livni Trust

DESCRIPTION: A request for a Street Tree Removal Permit to remove two non-hazardous trees blocking a private driveway that was approved in previous planning actions.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION: Single Family Residential;

ZONING: R-1-7.5

Emerson provided a short staff report along with an explanation that street tree permits do not have any criteria in Ashland Municipal Code but that city staff created a permit with some guidelines. Senior Planner Derek Severson provided additional material with background on related approvals and went on to say that the trees in question are in the public right of way and thus subject to a street tree removal permit.

The background on this project is substantial and has been subject to 11 separate Planning Actions. The lots have been approved with access taken from the proposed driveway in the current configuration. The minimization of curb cuts and additional tree removals led to the driveway setup.

John, after a short discussion with his fellow Commissioners, decided that he did not have a conflict of interest on this action and did not recuse himself. He stated that he has no work currently related to the property or applicant.

Gil Livni, the property owner, spoke on behalf of the application. There was a discussion between the Commission and Mr. Livni about the health of the trees on the property, the history of neighboring trees, and the need to water the remaining trees on the lots.

John/Oxendine m/s to **approve** TREE-2018-00020 with the recommendation that the remaining trees be watered extensively. Voice vote. ALL AYES. Motion passed.

PLANNING ACTION: TREE-2018-00022

SUBJECT PROPERTY: 793 & 802 N. Mountain Ave/802 Mountain Meadows Dr.

APPLICANT/OWNER: Mountain Meadows HOA

DESCRIPTION: A request for a Street Tree Removal Permit to remove eight *Prunus Cerasifera* (Cherry Plums) adjacent to the corner of N Mountain Ave and Mountain Meadows Drive. The trees are all approximately eight inches diameter at breast height and approximately 20 feet tall. The application asserts the trees have begun to lean and that heavy fruit production creates a slipping hazard. *This is a resubmittal of a previous application.*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION: Single-Family Residential and Healthcare Services;
ZONING: NM-R-1.5 & HC

Emerson provided a short staff report. He impressed upon the fact that a very similar request was approved on Plum Ridge in 2017.

There were no applicants present.

The Commissioners had a short discussion about why the previous application was denied. It was briefly outlined that this application did include a plan for mitigation, unlike the previous permit.

Oxendine pointed out that *Prunus Cerasifera* is not actually on the prohibited tree list, but instead on the recommended list as the flower plum.

The Commissioners discussed the problem of the excess fruit dropping on the ground and creating a slip hazard for the elderly and disabled.

Oxendine/John m/s to **approve** TREE-2018-00022 with the recommendation that the trees be replaced with Persian Perrotias or tree form Crepe Myrtles of at least 2 ½ to 3 inch caliper. Voice vote. ALL AYES. Motion passed.

PLANNING ACTION: PA-T1-2018-00018

SUBJECT PROPERTY: 365 Strawberry Lane

APPLICANT/OWNER: Regenesys/William Potts and Sarah Esterling

DESCRIPTION: A request for a Physical and Environmental Constraints Permit to implement erosion control methods, earth moving, and site drainage improvements around the residence at 365 Strawberry. **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION:** Low Density Residential; **ZONING:** RR-0.5; **ASSESSOR'S MAP:** 39 1E 08AC; **TAX LOT:** 602

Emerson gave the staff report and went on to say that three of the trees are less than six inches DBH and could be removed without a permit and were not required to be addressed at all.

There was no applicant present.

The Commission had a short discussion about the plans, identifying the trees in question, and the quantity of soil that would be moved.

John/Oxendine m/s to **approve** PA-T1-2018-00018 as presented. Voice vote. ALL AYES. Motion passed.

DISCUSSION

Ashland Municipal Code clarification of vertical clearance requirements over public right of way.

Emerson gave a short report explaining that the City is interested in reconciling existing code requirements for vertical clearance in the public right of way.

John noted that his company is typically already pruning trees to this height.

Oxendine remarked that he observes frequent broken limbs along Wightman Street adjacent to campus where there is established tree canopy and heavier truck traffic.

The Commissioners as a whole, believed that the new code change would generate a substantial amount of new street closure requests. The permits, while simple, were seen as costly and they thought it might be appropriate to reduce the price or waive the fee of the permits.

The Commission was generally supportive of the proposed changes and hoped that some flexibility could be exercised not to prune young trees aggressively.

Commission Recommendations:

- Use the 14-foot standard while the trees are establishing themselves so they don't develop an imbalanced or one-sided growth habit.
- Don't prune as tightly near the curb, over on-street parking and focus more on facilitating the flow of traffic in the travel lanes.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11p.m. Emerson noted that the next regular meeting would be held on Thursday, September 6, 2018 at 6:00 pm in the Siskiyou Room of the Community Development and Engineering Services Building located at 51 Winburn Way.

*Respectfully submitted by,
Regan Trapp*