

TO: JAMES L. APP, CITY MANAGER

FROM: ROBERT A. LATA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO REMOVE TWO OAK TREES- 523 GRAND CANYON DRIVE (HUMBLE)

DATE: FEBRUARY 18, 2003

Needs: For the City Council to consider a request to remove two (2) Native Blue Oak trees from a residential lot proposed for development. The size and species of each tree are noted as follows (see corresponding site map attached):

Tree No. 1: 8-inch Blue Oak
Tree No. 2: 10-inch Blue Oak

Facts:

1. The City has received a written request from Gene Humble for the removal of the two trees to accommodate the construction of a new house on the parcel located on Lot 123 of Tract 2281, 523 Grand Canyon Drive. There are in excess of 50 trees on the subject property.
2. Elder & Elder Ltd., performed an arborist report on January 15, 2003 and an additional Abstract was provided on February 3, 2003. The information provided by the Arborist indicates that although the trees do have some moss hanging from the limbs, which usually indicates stress, the reason for removal of the trees is to accommodate the construction of a house.
3. The Arborist indicates in his report that there is a grove of trees on the site and the need for thinning of the trees to allow quality growth. The Arborist recommends that the trees be removed in order to begin the thinning process.
4. The subject trees are on the periphery of the grove. With the removal of the trees there would still be over 50 trees that would be preserved, including a 24-inch oak tree located in the front yard area. With the removal of the two trees requested by the property owner, once the house is built the impacts of the tree removals would not appear to be significant. There would be prominent oak trees preserved in the front yard area, and the grove of trees at the rear of the house would remain as the view looking back up at the site from the north.
5. Also submitted and attached to this staff report is a letter from the property owner explaining that the proposed house design is the third attempt to design a house for the lot, and that the latest design best fits with the required setbacks and established easements.

6. As described in the attached letter from the applicant, Mr. Humble indicates that the proposed design is the third design for a house on the subject lot. He maintains that extraordinary efforts to design a house on the lot have been taken, and requests reasonable use of the property for which it is zoned.
7. The oak tree ordinance replacement policy would require the applicant to install "like species" at a replacement requirement of 4.5 inches (18" removed x 0.25 replacement factor). This requirement could be satisfied by planting three (3) 1.5-inch trees or other combinations that add up to the 4.5-inch requirement based on 1.5 -inches being the minimum tree size.

Analysis

And Conclusion:

City policies strongly encourage oak tree preservation. Section 10.01.140 (D) of the Paso Robles Municipal Code states that five factors should be considered when oak trees are proposed for removal. These factors are:

- The condition of the oak trees with respect to its general health: According to the Arborist Report by Elder & Elder Ltd., the trees have moss hanging from the branches, which usually indicates that the trees are stressed or unhealthy. The Arborist recommends removal of the trees in order to help thin out the grove of trees.
- The necessity of the requested action to allow construction of improvements or otherwise allow reasonable use of the property for the purpose for which it has been zoned: Allowing the removal of the two trees would allow the room necessary to build a single family residential house. With the removal of the trees, there would be over 50 trees that would be preserved.
- The topography of land, and the potential effect of the requested tree removal on soil retention, water retention, and diversion or increased flow of surface waters: the removal of the tree, if authorized, is not expected to severely impact drainage runoff.
- The number, species, size and location of existing trees in the area and the effect of the requested action on shade areas, air pollution, historic values, scenic beauty and the general welfare of the city as a whole: the Arborist has indicated that removal of the three trees would allow the adjacent trees to have a better chance of good development.
- Good forestry practices, such as, but not limited to, the number of healthy trees the subject parcel of land will support: with the removal of the three trees there would be over 50 trees preserved on the lot. Also the replacement ratio of 4.5 inches (18" removed x 0.25 replacement factor). This requirement could be satisfied by planting three (3) 1.5-inch trees or other combinations that add up to the 4.5-inch requirement based on 1.5 - inch being the minimum tree size.

Policy

Reference: Paso Robles Municipal Code Section 10.01

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Impact: None.

Options:

- a.** Adopt Resolution No. 03-xx approving the removal of two native Blue Oak Trees, 1:8-inch and 1:10-inch, based on the arborist identifying the trees as being stressed or unhealthy and the fact that there are over 50 other oak trees on the lot that would be preserved, and approving a replacement ratio of 4.5 inches of Blue Oaks, to be planted in a location that is appropriate for the species of tree as determined by a horticulture professional (e.g., Blue Oaks shall be planted in a non-irrigated environment).
- b.** Deny the request to remove the two Blue Oak trees and require the applicant to design a home in a manner to avoid all oak trees.
- c.** Amend, modify or reject the above options.

Attachments:

- 1. Site Plan
- 2. Letter from Applicant
- 3. Arborist Report
- 4. Resolution to Approve Tree Removal

RESOLUTION NO. 03-

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES
APPROVING THE REQUEST FOR THE REMOVAL OF TWO OAK TREES ON
LOT 123 - TRACT 2281 - 523 GRAND CANYON DRIVE
(APPLICANT: GENE HUMBLE)

WHEREAS, the City has received an application by Gene Humble to remove two (2) Native Blue Oak trees located on Lot 123 of Tract 2281 (Shadow Canyon); and

WHEREAS, the trees requested to be removed are the following sizes:

Tree No. 1: 8-inch Blue Oak
Tree No. 2: 10-inch Blue Oak

WHEREAS, an Arborist Report performed by Elder & Elder Ltd. was submitted and states that each tree has moss hanging from the branches which is usually a sign that the trees are unhealthy and stressed, and

WHEREAS, there are in excess of 50 trees on the subject property and the Arborist recommends that removing these trees would help thin out the trees and allow the other trees a better chance for good development, and

WHEREAS, as shown on the site plan attached as Exhibit "A" the removal of the two trees would still provide the preservation of over 50 feet, and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. That the City Council of the City of Paso Robles does hereby authorize the removal of one 8-inch Blue Oak and one 10-inch Blue Oak, on Lot 123 of Tract 2281.

SECTION 2. As agreed upon, the applicant is required to install "like species" at a replacement requirement of 4.5 inches (18" removed x 0.25 replacement factor). This requirement could be satisfied by planting three (3) 1.5-inch trees or other combinations that add up to the 4.5-inch requirement based on 1.5 -inch being the minimum tree size.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Paso Robles this 18th day of February 2003 by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Frank R. Mecham, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sharilyn M. Ryan, Deputy City Clerk