

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
LARKSPUR PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
VIA TELECONFERENCE DUE TO COVID-19  
OCTOBER 15, 2020

COMMISSION:       PRESENT: Chair Harrison, Blauvelt (arrived 6:40),  
Friedel, Sunshine

COMMISSION:       ABSENT: Koepfel

STAFF:               PRESENT: Community Services Director Franklin Escobedo  
Planning Director Neal Toft  
Assistant Planner Aaron Matthews  
City Clerk Alison Foulis

1. Roll Call

Chair Harrison called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Approval of the Consent Calendar

3.1 Approval of Minutes: September 17, 2020

M/s Friedel/Sunshine, to continue approval of the September 17, 2020 minutes to the end of the agenda.

Ayes: Friedel, Sunshine, Chair Harrison

Absent: Blauvelt, Koepfel  
(through a roll call vote)

4. Public Hearing

4.1 Protest Hearing of Heritage Tree Permit Application at 391 N. Almenar Drive

Assistant Planner Matthews presented the staff report. He cited the Tree Ordinance Findings that must be made to approve the removal of the trees. The City received one letter of protest and a petition signed by seventeen neighbors supporting removal of the trees. He clarified that the Commission could vote on each tree separately.

Chair Harrison opened the Public Hearing

Mr. Michael Bridges, applicant, stated if there were anything he could do to not remove the trees he would do it. They are gorgeous and provide shade and privacy. They dug a trench along the side of the house for drainage but they still get flooding into the garage due to the cracks in the foundation. There are eight primary slabs in the driveway and four of them are damaged. They are a trip hazard. They will have to completely rebuild

the driveway and redo that side of the house once the trees are removed. They will also have to fix the fence from the damage due to these trees. There are exposed roots on his property and his neighbor's property. These trees would be replaced with other trees.

Ms. Karen Peoples stated they are neighbors and acknowledged that the roots of the trees were affecting the foundation. She supported any alternative that would save at least one or two of the trees that front on the street and are farthest away from the foundation of the house.

Dr. Julian, arborist, stated it is clear that there is not adequate growing space for these relatively young trees. They are cracking the driveway, the garage, and the curb along the side of the house. These trees have the potential to get very large and will continue to damage both properties. This is a reasonable request.

Commissioner Blauvelt stated the report indicated these trees were planted about 1995 and she asked Dr. Julian how he came up with that date. Dr. Julian stated trees are usually planted around the time the home is developed. He came up with the date based on the size of the trees.

Commissioner Sunshine referred to the root damage and asked about potential mitigation measures. Dr. Julian stated the roots are clearly uplifting the soil and the driveway. To address the roots that are beneath the driveway they would need to be pruned or cut. This would impact the stability of the tree. Commissioner Sunshine asked if the trees could be preserved even though the roots were cut. Dr. Julian stated cutting the roots would destabilize the tree. In addition, these trees are a high fire risk.

Chair Harrison noted there were seven trees along the east/west row and she asked Dr. Julian if they were all equally responsible for the damage to the foundation and the driveway. Dr. Julian stated the two closest to the road are causing the worst damage to the driveway. They are all equally damaging the hardscape.

Chair Harrison asked Mr. Bridges how long he has lived in the house. Mr. Bridges stated they have lived at the house since 2012.

Ms. Lisa Quinn stated she lives across the street from the Bridges whose driveway is buckling. She has tripped many times. It is a hazard. The garage slopes and causes water damage. The trees need to be removed.

Mr. Jim Kurdawitz stated he lives next door to the subject property and has experienced uplifting of his driveway cause by the subject trees. This is a trip hazard. These trees will get much larger and cause further damage.

Chair Harrison closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Blauvelt stated she is the "torchbearer" for trees but these need to be removed. They were planted improperly and are doing terrible damage to the subject property and neighboring property. She stated these trees are valuable and wondered if they could be transplanted. This would be a win-win.

Commissioner Friedel stated she is house-hunting with her parents and is cognizant of these types of situations. She agreed with the comments made by Commissioner Blauvelt- these trees should come down.

Commissioner Sunshine stated the trees look healthy but are causing so much damage. She is impressed with the support of the neighbors. She agreed that the trees need to be removed.

Chair Harrison agreed with the comments made by the other Commissioners. The photographs do not do justice to the amount of damage being caused by these trees. They were planted in the wrong location.

M/s Blauvelt/Friedel, to approve the permit application for the removal of four trees at 391 N. Almenar Drive due to the ability to make the necessary findings.

Ayes: Blauvelt, Friedel, Sunshine, Chair Harrison

Absent: Koepfel

(through a roll call vote)

Chair Harrison stated there was a 15-day appeal period.

### 3. Approval of the Consent Calendar

#### 3.1 Approval of Minutes: September 17, 2020

M/s Blauvelt/Sunshine, to approve the September 17, 2020 minutes as submitted.

Ayes: Blauvelt, Sunshine, Chair Harrison

Abstain: Friedel

Absent: Koepfel

(through a roll call vote)

### 5. Business Items

None

### 6. Director's Oral Report

Director Escobedo reported last month's tree application has been appealed and will be heard by the City Council next Wednesday. He was happy to report that playgrounds have reopened. He is meeting with Recreation Supervisor Stone soon to begin planning for next summer. Staff looks forward to planning some very fun activities for the summer!

### 7. Commissioner's Reports

There were no reports.

### 8. Adjourn Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis, Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Larkspur Parks and Recreation Commission.

*Franklin Escobedo*

Franklin Escobedo, Community Services Director