

**CITY OF REDLANDS  
STREET TREE COMMITTEE  
Special Meeting  
May 16, 2016**

[NOTE: This special meeting was called primarily because the City's PARIS Project will soon be replacing or repairing broken sidewalks in the neighborhood which includes 429 Phlox Court. Roots from a street tree at that address have caused severe damage to the adjacent sidewalk, and a prompt decision was needed as to the disposition of said tree. As the Street Tree Committee was already notified of this special meeting, an additional item was added to the agenda, as a courtesy and convenience to the homeowners at 1264 W. Crescent Ave, who also have concerns about damage allegedly caused by street trees adjacent to their property.]

**1. Call to Order at 5:35 pm – Attendance**

Present: Don Buchanan, Chair  
Janet Ward  
Andrejs Galeniaks  
Andy Hoder  
Roy Mannickarottu  
Chuck Dykes

Absent: Linda Richards (excused by prior notice)

City Council: Absent

QOL Staff: Erik Reeves

Redlands Community  
Foundation Liaison: Absent

Visitors: Chris Sedmack  
Matt Levesque, a general contractor representing the Jacobson family,  
homeowners at 1264 W. Crescent Ave.

**2. Public Comments – None**

**3. New Business**

A. *Ash tree at 429 Phlox Ct.*—Erik Reeves, City Arborist, briefed the Street Tree Committee (STC) on the circumstances and conditions surrounding this tree. The tree is estimated to be about 53 years old, is quite large, and generally in good health. However, over the years the roots have severely uplifted and damaged the adjacent sidewalk and curb, as well as a short retaining wall on the homeowner's private property. In order to bring the sidewalk back down to a level that would meet ADA standards, Erik Reeves estimates roots would have to be ground down to a depth of at least 18 inches. This could put the ultimate survival of the tree in doubt. Also, the loss of this much root structure would potentially destabilize the tree and make it vulnerable to falling over. Even with these concerns aside, it was, in Erik Reeves' opinion, very likely that if the tree survives, the roots will eventually raise and damage the sidewalk and curb again, meaning we'd have to repeat this process over and over.

Further concerns were a nearby storm drain which is prone to blockage by foliage and debris from the subject tree, resulting in flooding of the street during rain storms. Also, there are apparently underground utility lines near the tree, and there is believed to be at least one report of a water line being damaged by these tree roots.

Erik Reeves informed us that the City's PARIS project will soon be replacing or repairing sidewalks in this neighborhood, and a prompt decision is needed in order to avoid delaying this work. Erik Reeves recommended that the tree be removed as soon as possible.

The STC discussed possible alternatives, such as "ramping" the sidewalk over the invasive roots, but Erik Reeves said such a ramp would be too steep to meet ADA compliance. Also, this would not address the concerns with the broken curb and adjacent street pavement deformity, nor the homeowner's damaged retaining wall (which would only get worse), nor the concerns with the storm drain blockage by leaves and/or the underground utility lines.

One other suggestion was to build an entirely new sidewalk that would extend out into the street and go around the tree. However, according to Erik Reeves, such a configuration is not acceptable because it would encroach too much of the street. The address in question is at the end of Phlox Court, which is a cul-de-sac with a limited turning radius, which would be reduced to an excessive degree with such a sidewalk extension. Again, this would not resolve the damage occurring to the homeowner's retaining wall, or the concerns with the storm drain and the utility lines.

After some further discussion, it was the general discussion of the STC that the only realistic option was to follow Erik Reeves recommendation to have the tree removed, although the opinions thereupon were not unanimous. It was mentioned that this particular tree was on the STC agenda in 2008, but it was not clear why no action was taken at that time.

It was also suggested that we could engage the services of a firewood company to reduce costs to the City, as this is a very large tree which would generate a lot of quality wood. However, based on comments from the Quality of Life Department staff and others in the meeting, the consensus was that the urgency of the tree removal would not allow enough time to negotiate and establish a formal agreement with a firewood company, and that a single tree would not generate enough revenue to make it worthwhile anyway.

There was additional discussion of whether a new tree should be planted to replace the proposed tree removal, and if so, what type of tree and specifically where in proximity to the site of the old tree (considering sufficient delay after stump grinding). Although the STC members generally agreed that a new tree should eventually be planted, it was Andy Hoder's suggestion that the selection and location of the new tree could be decided at a future date, upon the recommendations from Erik Reeves in that regard. It would have to be a tree from the City's approved palette, and the type and location would have to be such as to prevent a recurrence of the present circumstances.

At this point, Don Buchanan called for a motion on the matter. Andy Hoder motioned that the subject tree should be removed in accordance with the recommendations from Erik Reeves, on a schedule coordinated with the appropriate City departments. Chuck Dykes seconded the motion. The vote was called and the motion carried. (Don Buchanan, Andy Hoder, Roy Mannickarottu, Andrejs Galenicks and Chuck Dykes voted aye; Janet Ward, voted nay). Erik Reeves will keep the STC informed as the project evolves.

*B. Discussion and possible recommendation regarding proposed tree removal at 1246 W. Crescent Ave.* Mr. Matt Levesque described his representation of the homeowners at this address, stating that their main concern was damage occurring to a retaining wall on their

property, because of invasive root growth from the nearby street tree (a very large Camphor). Mr. Levesque informed us that the homeowners had also engaged their own arborist and a structural engineer to evaluate these circumstances, and that it was their opinion that the subject tree had caused the problem and the only practical solution was the removal of the tree.

Erik Reeves informed the Street Tree Committee that he had inspected the site and generally agreed that removal of this tree would be appropriate. However, in a larger context, there are four identical trees in a row, with three of those trees in front of the subject property and the fourth tree in front of the next home at 1266 W. Crescent Ave. One of the trees shows significant die-out from an undetermined cause. The extent of the disease or damage suggests that this tree would have to be removed in the foreseeable future anyway.

It was also noted that roots from these four trees were heaving the adjacent curb and street pavement. In addition, one of the trees has a large branch which is extending out into the street at such an angle and height that it has been impacted by larger vehicles such as trash trucks, etc.

There was general discussion among the STC members as to whether it would be more practical and cost effective to remove all four of these trees at the same time. However, Mr. Levesque said he was only concerned about the three trees that related directly to his client's property, implying that he would not like to see the STC's decision delayed while it debated the fate of a tree on the adjacent property.

Regarding replacement trees, the STC noted that the usual size for this type of location would be a 15-gal pot, but Mr. Levesque said his client would be willing to pay a portion of the cost in order to get a 24" box (i.e. a larger, more mature tree).

It was then noted that three of our STC members had not had the opportunity to inspect the site due to the addition of this additional item to the special meeting, and one STC was absent from this meeting. None of the STC members were aware of a retaining wall on the owner's property at this time, so Roy Mannickarottu recommended that we delay any decision until all STC members are able to visit the site for evaluation and discussion at our next meeting.

After further discussion, Don Buchanan suggested that we table this item until our next regular meeting. Additionally, the homeowners at 1266 would be notified of the proposed tree removal and the reasons therefore, so that they might have the opportunity to speak on their behalf. Don Buchanan made a motion to that effect, which was seconded by Chuck Dykes. Motion carried unanimously (Don Buchanan, Andy Hoder, Roy Mannickarottu, Andrejs Galenicks, Chuck Dykes, and Janet Ward).

*C. There was further informal discussion of a small tree at 411 Phlox Court, which is severely deformed and leaning well out into the street in such a way as to create an obstruction to vehicular traffic. At the present time the tree is only being held up by a piece of scrap lumber braced against the trunk of the tree. Erik Reeves said he was aware of this tree, but thought it might be a tree that had been planted by someone, even though it was in a street tree. Erik Reeves agreed to remove this tree at the same time as the tree at 429 Phlox Court.*

**4. Adjournment** at 6:20 p.m. Next Regular Meeting scheduled for June 23, 2016.

Submitted by Andy Hoder, Acting Secretary