

Los Altos Hills
Open Space Committee & Environmental Design and Protection Committee
Meeting Minutes (Approved 10/13/20)

Date: August 31, 2020 at 10 am

Location: by Zoom Video Conference

Committee Members OSC: Kit, Sue, Peter, Richard, George, Wendie

Committee Members EDPC: Vijay, Nancy, Carol, Haj, Peter

Council Liaison: George Tyson

Guests: Birgitta, Jay Sutaria

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Presentations from the Floor**
3. **Discussion of the Town's Proposed Tree Protection Ordinance**
 - a. Discussed history. Presentation by EDPC/OSC to April 20, 2017 City Council. Got approval for planning staff to hire arborist to review tree ordinance.
 - i. Concerned that Native trees are not protected but play an important role for local eco system.
 - ii. Most of the native trees added to protected list are rare to find in LAH.
 - iii. Discussed that previously LAH may have had historically different landscape with fewer oaks.
 - iv. Discussed how the tree ordinance can be made compatible with wildfire protection.
 - v. Identification of species and trees for removal – staff arborist needed to provide professional expertise and consistent approach to tree issues. Residents can also fairly easily identify species (apps available). Stumps are hard to identify.
 - vi. We do see rules getting violated.
 - a. Reviewed prelim presentation for Thursday's Planning Commission
 - b. Discussed whether or not a permit is needed for removal of protected trees for defensible space.
 - c. Discussed purpose of tree ordinance
 - i. Maintain semi-rural ambience
 - ii. Protect the many ecological functions of trees for habitat, property value, beauty, screening, shade, groundwater recharge, storm water management, reduced runoff, water quality, flood protection, slope stability, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, climate resilience.
 - iii. Requires balance between ecological functions and fire safety.
 - d. Details: The existing ordinance defines a Heritage oak as any oak with diameter ≥12 inches. Other Protected Trees will have a new threshold for protection of ≥30 inches in diameter.

- e. We do need to address fire safety. Request a representative from LAHCFD or other fire org to attend the PC meeting to speak to fire danger? Comparison to ordinances in other towns. (Comparison chart shared – Attachment 1)
 - i. More detailed suggestions:
 1. Permit for tree removal – have standardized form with clear rules as is done in other towns.
 2. Field inspection for tree removals (Saratoga/Woodside send out arborist for site visit).
 3. Neighbor notice for removals should be expanded to 500 feet radius (ie. Include parcels across the street).
 4. Community education is important; consider also informing tree companies of revised ordinance
 5. Make tree removal within defensible space easier.
- f. Tree ordinances should be based on science. Natural hazards in LAH include both fire and flooding.
- g. More detailed suggestions:
 - i. Detail: Arborist hired by town. Woodside and Portola Valley have arborists, and we can model.
 - ii. Separate and clear rule for tree removal in defensible zone.
 - iii. Planning director to approve tree removal permit
- h. More details: Committee discussed management of bay laurels, given they are the primary vector for infecting oaks with Sudden Oak Death. Follow UC Berkeley recommendations for when it is good to cut vs not. Discourage planting of bay laurels near oaks. Remove small bays near oaks; leave large bays and bays on slopes and riparian areas in place.
- i. Next steps: Edit the presentation further.
- j. Motion: EDPC and OSC will make a joint presentation to Planning Commission, with edits as noted with input from EDPC and OSC on the tree ordinance.
 - i. Passed. Yeas: Kit, Sue, Peter, Richard, George C, Vijay, Nancy, Carol, Haj.
Nos: none.

4. Meeting adjournment.

Attachment 1: Tree regulations by town

*Document NOT created by EDPG or OSC.

Tree Regulations				
Jurisdiction	Permit Required for removal?	Size Criteria (trunk diameter)	Protected Species	Exempted Species
				Replacement Trees
Town of Atherton	Yes	Any size 15-inches	Oaks (<i>Quercus</i> species) All other species	None Replacement trees may be required
Town of Hillsborough	Yes	12-inches 36-inches	All tree removals related to construction or improvements Trees not related to property improvements	Removal of Blue Gum Eucalyptus and Acacia is encouraged Replacement tree(s) required
Town of Los Gatos	Yes	8-inches 12-inches 4-inches	Slower growing species Other species Related to development proposal	Fruit or nut trees less than 18-inches Black Acacia, Tulip Tree, Tree of Heaven, Eucalyptus, Palm and Privet less than 24-inches Canopy replacement (min. size 15-gallon for single-family properties, otherwise 24-inch box minimum) In-lieu fee if no space for replacement tree(s) on property
City of Los Altos	Yes	15-inches Heritage trees All trees	All trees Designated by Historical Commission Trees required to be saved or planted with development approval or located in R-O-W	None Replacement tree considerations include cost and owners input on desired species
City of Menlo Park	Yes	10-inches 15-inches Heritage trees	Native oaks All other trees Council designated trees	None One to one replacement

Jurisdiction	Permit Required for removal?	Size Criteria (trunk diameter)	Protected Species	Exempted Species
				Replacement Trees
City of Monte Sereno	Yes	6.5-inches 7.9-inches Removal of three or more trees regardless of size	Oaks, Redwood Other species	None
				One or more replacement trees required
City of Mountain View	Yes	4-inches 15-inches Heritage trees	Oaks (<i>Quercus</i>), Cedar, Redwood Other species Council designated tree or grove	None
				Payment of in-lieu fee, off-site replacement trees or replace on-site
City of Palo Alto	Yes	11.5-inches 11.5-inches 18-inches Designated trees Heritage Trees	Coast Live Oak Valley Oak Redwood Trees required as part of discretionary approval Designated by Council	Trees not within one of the stated categories
				One or more replacement trees required (canopy replacement)
Town of Portola Valley	Yes	11.5-inches 11.5-inches 11.5-inches 5.0-inches 17.2-inches 17.2-inches 11.5-inches 7.6-inches 7.6-inches	Coast Live Oak Black Oak Valley Oak Blue Oak Coast Redwood Douglas Fir California Bay Laurel Big Leaf Maple Madrone	Trees other than specified species
				Replacement tree(s) required
City of Saratoga	Yes	6-inches 10-inches	Native trees Other species Street or Heritage	None
				Replacement trees required
Jurisdiction	Permit Required for removal?	Size Criteria (trunk diameter)	Protected Species	Exempted Species
				Replacement Trees
Town of Woodside	Yes	7.6-inches slower growing native species 9.5-inches faster growing native trees 11.5-inches	Alder, Big Leaf Maple, Blue Oak, Buckeye, Tan Cottonwood, Madrone, Tan Oak (7.6") Black Oak, CA Bay Laurel, Coast Live Oak, Douglas Fir, Valley Oak, Sycamore (9.5") Other species	None
				36-inch box California native tree
Town of Cupertino	Yes	12-24-inches 24-48-inches	Coast Live, Valley, Black, Blue, Interior Live Oaks; Buckeye, Big Leaf Maple, Deodar Cedar, Blue Atlas Cedar, Bay Laurel, Western Sycamore Heritage Trees	None
				24 – 48-inch box depending on trunk size of removed tree
Town of Los Altos Hills	Yes	12-inches	Oaks	All except oaks
				1 to 5 24-inch box trees depending on size and condition of tree being removed