

Midcoast Community Council

representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar
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Date: February 13, 2019

To: Joe LaClair

cc: Mike Shaller, Daniel Krug

From: Midcoast Community Council/ Claire Toutant, Chair

Subject: **MCC response to Draft Heritage Tree Ordinance**

Thank you for your presentation of the Draft Heritage Tree Ordinance to the MCC on January 23.

Trees are obviously looked at from many different viewpoints. We all see a need for balance among the needs of beauty, safety, and environment. And most see a value in your emphasis on protecting heritage and indigenous trees. You asked specifically for a list of remarks made in response to your presentation. Here are viewpoints of members of the council and the community.

--One of the biggest concerns involved the care of trees in the roadside medians in El Granada and the rest of the Midcoast. There appears to be conflicting information about who is responsible for them and that will need to be clarified.

--Some community members were frustrated by difficulties finding information. They had trouble navigating to County tree information and in finding out about hearings on policy or knowing which trees are considered indigenous. It was also not totally clear to some how the regulations applied differently in different situations. It was suggested that people use MCC website for information and that County information be more accessible.

--People were surprised that County Ordinances did not apply to County property, but needed a CDP for projects.

--The management of eucalyptus was discussed. They are perceived as potential fire risks but also as providing desired canopy and habitat. The fact that local eucs are not nearing the end of their natural life span was mentioned along with recommendation that root systems be inspected and self-seeding managed.

--Concerns about the health of pine trees was discussed.

--The costs and permits of maintaining indigenous trees was cited as a concern. It was not always immediately clear which regulations applied to which size and species of trees.

--There was also a concern cited that fines for destruction of indigenous trees might not be high enough to serve as a deterrent or to provide adequate funding for proper enforcement.

--The hazards trees can pose was discussed, including the "hazards clause" in the ordinance. It was useful to get information on the natural course of tree

disease and death and on the role of arborists in assessing risk from trees, since healthy trees are less hazardous.

--It was also helpful to review the role trees play in maintaining watershed, reducing atmospheric carbon, and mitigating temperature extremes. The goal of the ordinance is to maintain the degree of forestation, while protecting the health and variety of trees.

--It was thought to be prudent, but expensive, to require consulting arborists to be separate from ones doing the work on trees.

--There was concern and frustration expressed about large trees that belong to other people who may not maintain them, obstruction of views, and about unusual uses of trees, such as carrying utility wires. There was also some concern about landowners removing trees in an area to be developed prior to seeking building permits that would oversee tree management during construction.

--A desire to see stumps removed when trees are removed was expressed.

In sum, it was an interesting presentation and we would like to remain involved as your planning progresses.