PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 22, 2015 **ITEM NUMBER: 8b**

SUBJECT: TREE REMOVAL REQUEST - 1869 NEW JERSEY STREET

DATE: OCTOBER 7, 2015

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT, MAINTENANCE SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: BRUCE A. HARTLEY, MAINTENANCE SERVICES MANAGER

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: BRUCE A. HARTLEY (714) 754-5123

RECOMMENDATION

Deny the request to remove one (1) City owned parkway tree growing in the public right-of-way at 1869 New Jersey Street.

BACKGROUND

The Maintenance Services Division was initially contacted by the Applicant on June 23, 2015, stating that he would like to replace the turf in the parkway in front of the residence with drought tolerant plants and inquiring as to what options are available for plant material choices and to discuss the possible removal of the parkway tree.

On July 8, 2015 the Acting City Arborist inspected the tree. The Arborist determined that the tree did not meet the criteria to be removed by the City at no cost to the Applicant (Category 1 – Health and Safety Removal). The Acting City Arborist informed the Applicant regarding appropriate plant materials for the parkway and the process to pursue his tree removal request for further consideration.

The Applicant submitted the request via letter mail to the Maintenance Services Manager on July 31, 2015. See Attachment 1. In the letter the Applicant provides two main reasons for the removal request:

1. The tree drops litter and branches regularly that are a hazard and unsightly.

2. The tree is not very full and does not provide much shade where it is planted nor fit in with my front landscape.

The Applicant is also requesting to plant three (3) replacement Foxtail Palms, *Wodyetia bifurcate,* as replacements for the loss of the City parkway tree. The Foxtail Palm, while rather rare and not typically found growing locally, is an acceptable plant species for a drought tolerant landscape in a narrow parkway. It grows very similarly to Queen or King Palms, both of which are used successfully as street trees in Costa Mesa. Typically, the City allows for one tree to be planted in front of a residential property, with two additional trees permitted on the side of a corner property. In this situation, staff would support the planting of two palms, should the Commission approve the Applicant's request for the removal of the City-owned parkway tree.

ANALYSIS

The tree is a Brisbane Box, *Lophostemon confertus*. The tree was found to be in good health with no apparent structural issues or diseases present. The tree is approximately twenty-feet (25') in height with a trunk diameter of nine inches (9"). It is growing in a parkway that is five and one-half feet (5.5') in width, with a sidewalk that is four feet (4') in width. The tree has been maintained by the City on a consistent 3-4 year cycle and was last trimmed on February 13, 2015. See Attachment 2.

The tree is not a risk to health and safety, is not dead, diseased or dying and does not appear to be creating any significant exposure to liability for the City. The tree does not meet the criteria for a staff level authorization for removal, as stated in the Streetscape and Median Development Standards. The City Arborist evaluated the tree for possible relocation, but believes due to the size and cost of relocating the tree, relocation is not recommended.

The Applicant has been notified of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting and has been sent a copy of this staff report.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

1. The Commission could authorize the removal of the tree as a Category 1 – 'Health and Safety' removal with all removal and replacement costs paid for by the City and determine if a replacement tree is to be planted.

2. The Commission could authorize the removal and replacement of the tree, per the Streetscape and Median Development Standards, Section 4.0.3 Category 3 – Discretionary Removals, which would require the replacement of the tree with one (1) twenty-four inch box-size tree and two (2) fifteen gallon-size trees to be planted elsewhere on City property. The applicant would pay all removal and replacement costs.

   If the tree removal is approved by the Commission, the payment for the removal of the parkway tree and any required mitigation trees must be provided to the City prior to removal and within one year from the date of final approval, after which the approval expires.

3. The Commission could authorize the removal of the tree, per the Streetscape and Median Development Standards, Section 4.0.3 Category 3 – Discretionary Removals, but could condition the Applicant to plant two (2) Foxtail Palms, *Wodyetia bifurcate,* as an alternative to the typical 3:1 replacement requirement. The Applicant would pay the City for the removal costs ($135) and would provide and install the substitute palms at his expense; in locations within the parkway to be approved by the City Arborist.

   If the tree removal is approved by the Commission, the payment for the removal of the parkway tree must be provided to the City prior to removal of the tree and the replacement palms must be planted within sixty (60) days of the removal of the City parkway tree. The Commission approval expires one year from the date of the meeting where final action is taken.

FISCAL REVIEW

There would be no fiscal impact to the City if the request to remove the tree was denied, or approved as a Category 3 - Discretionary Removal, as the Applicant would pay all costs.

For the Commission's information, removal cost for this tree would be $135. The replanting costs for the mitigation trees (1 – 24" box size and 2 – 15 gallon container size) would be $425. Costs are based on current City contract prices. The total cost for removal and replacement would be $560.

If the Applicant were allowed to plant palms, the total cost to the Applicant would be $135 for the removal, with the cost of the replacement palms unknown, but borne by the Applicant.

If approved as a Category 1 – Health and Safety Removal, the cost to the City for the removal would be $135; with a cost of $225 for the installation of one 24" box-size replacement tree. Total cost would be $360.

The value of the tree is estimated to be $2,070.

LEGAL REVIEW

No legal review is required for this item.

CONCLUSION

The City-owned tree that has been requested to be removed at City expense is located within the public right-of-way at 1869 New Jersey Street. The tree is in good condition, has been maintained appropriately on a regular schedule and is not causing any damage to vital infrastructure; it does not meet the criteria for removal. It is recommended that the Commission deny the request to have the tree removed.

Bruce A. Hartley
BRUCE A. HARTLEY
Maintenance Services Manager

ERNESTO MUNOZ
Public Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Letter From Resident
2. Tree Information and Maintenance History
3. Photographs

C: Matthew Martinez
1869 New Jersey Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

ATTACHMENT #1

RECEIVED AUG 03 2015

Matthew Martinez

1869 New Jersey Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
[redacted]

July 31, 2015

City of Costa Mesa,
PO Box 1200
Costa Mesa, CA. 92628-1200
Attn: Bruce Hartley
Maintenance Services Manager

Dear Mr. Hartley,

I am writing to request a category 3 tree removal on the public parkway outside of my residence at 1869 New Jersey Street. I am the homeowner. After a very helpful conversation with Mr. Jim Ortiz, Acting Maintenance Superintendent, it was determined that this tree does not qualify for a category 2 or 1 removal and I am interested in paying the costs associated with removal. My reasons for this request are two fold:

1. The tree drops litter and branches regularly that are a hazard and unsightly.
2. The tree is not very full and does not provide much shade where it is planted nor fit in with my front landscape.

If this request is granted, I would like to further request that I be allowed to plant three Wodyetia bifurcata (Foxtail) palm trees on the parkway. These are medium sized palm trees that are self-cleaning, drought tolerant once established, attractive, and relatively uncommon in our area. Furthermore, they thrive with the reflective heat generated along a street and sidewalk. They would be a nice compliment to my front landscape. I would utilize existing irrigation and replace pop-up sprinkler heads with efficient drip irrigation to water these palm trees. I would bear the responsibility for all costs associated with planting and maintaining these three trees.

If this latter portion is not granted, I am still interested in the category 3 removal, but would, of course, prefer both.

I take great pride and enjoyment in my property's landscaping. I appreciate your consideration in helping me make this improvement that would not only benefit me, but also help the neighborhood aesthetically while not adversely impacting adjacent property owners.

Thank you for your time,

Matthew Martinez

City of Costa Mesa
Maintenance Services Division
FIELD INSPECTION – TREE INFORMATION

ATTACHMENT #2

Date Request Received: **June 23, 2015**

Name of Resident: **Matthew Martinez** Requesting Party: **Same**

Address: **1869 New Jersey Street** Address:

Date Inspected: **July 8, 2015**

Inspected By: **Jim Ortiz**

Tree Species: **Brisbane Box** Removal Cost: (DBH x $ 15.00)= $ **135.00**

Height: **25 Feet** Width of Sidewalk: **4 Feet**

Trunk Diameter: **9 Inches** Size of Right-of-Way: **10 Feet**

Health: Good☒ Fair☐ Poor☐ Date of Last Pruning: **2/13/15**

Is the Tree a good candidate for Relocation? Yes☐ No☒

Likelihood of survival: Good☐ Fair☒ Poor☐

Comments:

Concrete Damage: Yes☐ No☒

If Yes, describe damage:

Can the Tree be Root Pruned: Yes☐ No☐ Date: _____

Root Pruning Comments:

Date of Response to Resident: **7/06/15**

Date Information Packet Mailed: **7/09/15 via electronic mail**

Photos Taken: Yes☒ No☐ Date Photos Taken: 7/7/15 & 8/4/15

Photo #1: **Street view looking west**

Photo #2: **Street view looking east**

Photo #3: **Street view looking at tree**

Photo #4: **Base of tree**

Site Detail (33.68794780119,-117.93576581183)

District	Address	Location	Species	DBH	Height
4	1869 NEW JERSEY ST	Front-1	*Lophostemon confertus* BRISBANE BOX	07-12	15-30

Condition	Maintenance	Removal Priority	Estimated Value	Parkway Type	Parkway Size
Fair	Grid Trim	N/A	$2,070	Parkway	5

Utility	Valid
No	Yes

Work History

Crew	Work Date	Work Type	Job #/Acct #	Amount
WCA	2/13/2015	Grid Prune - 15% thinning	28318	$46.00
WCA	4/8/2011	Grid Pruning	16780	$46.60
WCA	7/1/2008	Grid Pruning	12656	$46.60
WCA	7/12/2005	Grid Pruning	8470	$41.50

Notes

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ATTACHMENT #3