



**CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE**  
300 Forest Avenue, Pacific Grove, California 93950

**AGENDA REPORT**

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
**FROM:** Council Member Scott Miller  
**MEETING DATE:** September 6, 2006  
**SUBJECT:** CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A MORATORIUM ON  
REMOVAL OF HEALTHY TREES, PENDING POLICY  
REVIEW

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Establish a Moratorium on Removal of Healthy Trees, or Suitable Alternative Plan**

**DISCUSSION:**

We have heard a number of significant and repetitive complaints regarding the possibility that perhaps several hundred healthy trees have been destroyed in our town over the past several years. In that we, as a community, have always prided ourselves on preserving our natural environment, specifically including trees, any possibility that needless destruction of trees has occurred should be cause for concern.

A number of possible factors are in play in regards to our tree removal policy. The position of City Arborist was reduced from a full time position about three years ago. In the intervening period, the position of arborist was filled on a half-time basis by the former full-time arborist; filled for several months by a new part-time arborist; and filled as an ancillary duty with public works employees. During this time of flux, private parties were allowed to hire their own arborists, whose professional opinions led to varying results. Additionally, the City has no real, bona fide tree management plan for those filling the arborist role to use as a guide. A tree management policy found among Council Policies has no real application to the decision-making process as to whether or not a tree can or should be removed.

We now have a new full-time City Arborist as part of our City staff. As he goes about performing his duties, it would likely be helpful to him and our residents if Council established clear tree removal policies and procedures. Such a policy should be designed to preserve our urban forest, while allowing for the prompt removal of dead and eminently hazardous trees.

I understand the Beautification and Natural Resources Committee has been working on such a tree management policy. We should determine the status of their work to date and obtain a timeline for completion. I would suggest that until they complete their work, a moratorium be established that prohibits removal of healthy trees. The authority for issuance of tree permits

for the removal of trees that are dead or hazardous to public safety would remain under the purview of the City Arborist.

As an alternative to a complete moratorium on removal of healthy trees, specific findings could be developed that would allow tree removals in very limited situations, such as trees destroying foundations, streets or sidewalks, where steps to mitigate the damage appear impossible. I would suggest this finding not apply in cases where previous agreements were struck for the preservation of trees as conditions of obtaining building permits and so forth.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Miller", written over a horizontal line.

Scott Miller  
COUNCILMEMBER