January 4, 2011

On January 10th City Council will be asked to approve a transfer request for $37,348 to fund a portion of the Pardee Park tree project.

I urge each of you to educate yourselves on the reality of the situation at this park and if possible, to visit the park yourselves between now and next week.

Unfortunately the situation with the hazardous eucalyptus trees has turned into a political debacle. The city staff’s decision has problems financially, with the new replacement plantings and with safety.

1/ Financial Inefficiencies: The city staff has not taken into account the cost for further pruning of these 6 trees in their budget. Further, in this $37,348 staff does not account for the pay for city staff’s labor to install pathways and fencing. They only include the materials for this work. It is illogical not to include the labor in the budget for this project. This is not free labor. The labor is being paid for by taxpayers and should be considered in your decision.

Maintaining these trees that we learned from Torrey Young are at the end of their lives, is a long term financial commitment that exceeds the amount of money staff currently requests. Palo Alto has a huge urban forest to maintain so spending more money on these aged, structurally unsound trees is not fiscally responsible. Further, spending money to move pathways and erect fencing around trees that should be removed is a band-aid fix, NOT a long term SOLUTION.

Please note that city staff stated that the estimate for doing “gradual” tree removal and replanting costs about 3 times more than an “all at once” approach. Consider the economies of scale in the “all at once removal and replanting” strategy. Lets be financially responsible.

2/Replanting Issues: Canopy’s Executive Director Catherine Morteneau has stated that they would prefer all trees removed at once (unless these trees are to remain long term, which Torrey Young does not recommend). Spending money at this time to do just half of a new planting plan is not only more expensive but is not in the best interest of the health and growth potential for this small part of our urban forest.

3/Safety Issues: City staff has openly admitted on numerous occasions that these trees are a known liability. The city has the scientific report prepared by city-hired arborist Torrey Young to back up this statement. This is a HIGHLY used intersection, park and playground. Specifically, this is what makes the situation with these trees so critical.

Sincerely

Amy Kacher
1324 Dana Ave
There have been a minimum of 7 links and loop branches just that I know. That have fallen since learning from these links.
January 3, 2011

re: Eucalyptus trees in Eleanor Pardee Park

To: Members of the Palo Alto City Council

This contains:

1. Letter from Ron & Pat Eadie

2. Article published in the Marin Independent Journal on 12/21/10 showing San Anselmo's disastrous event with a group of Eucalyptus trees. San Anselmo immediately removed all the trees. Does Palo Alto have to have someone injured or killed before we remove these dangerous trees in Eleanor Park?
To our city council members:

We attended all the meetings through Dec 1 on the Eleanor Park eucalyptus trees. The last we knew, the city staff planned to go along with the advice of outside arborist Tory Young. Tory concluded all the trees are dangerous and need to be removed. The choice was doing it all at once or a phased removal, but it needed to be done soon as this is now a safety issue. We were even given several plans on which to discuss the replanting of the trees. There is also a monetary tag to the removing of the trees. Doing it all at once (preferred by Tory Young) would cost about $20,000, and a phased removal would cost $65,000. We were away for several days only to find out the city staff had taken 10 steps backwards. What happened in between the meetings with neighbors and the present time????

We called Gregg Betts who really didn’t answer our question of why the staff has backtracked other than to say “We are trying to please everyone. No one will get everything.” Since this is a SAFETY issue we don’t feel this is a valid answer. Ron Eadie was 10 seconds away from being killed by two huge limbs that dropped last January. Since then 5 more large limbs have dropped, and these trees are on Channing Ave. next to the playground. The trees are still there. There are neighbors who don’t want to lose the trees, because they like seeing them from their home. Council needs to know that this is not an esthetic issue but a SAFETY issue. Please vote to remove the trees all at once.

Sincerely,
Ron & Pat Eadie 877 Sharon Ct
Crews topple trees that threaten traffic

Emergency tree crews worked at a feverish pace Monday to cut down a stand of towering eucalyptus trees threatening to cascade over San Anselmo's busy Red Hill Avenue.

A small slide sent four 120-foot trees into the roof of the Spotless Cleaners at 32 Red Hill Ave. after a downpour Sunday, and large clumps of 11 more trees could come down as well, sending tree crews into crisis mode to avert further damage.

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