

From: [Matassa, Gordon \(ENV\)](#)
To: [Valdez, Anthony \(ENV\)](#)
Subject: FW: Council Mtg: Public Comments Summary
Date: Wednesday, October 25, 2017 10:17:20 AM

From: Joshua Klipp [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2017 12:05 AM
To: Matassa, Gordon (ENV) <gordon.matassa@sfgov.org>
Subject: Council Mtg: Public Comments Summary

Hi Gordon,

A quick summary of my comments at tonight's council meeting:

1. BUF arborists tasked to review tree removal requests for anything other than the health of the tree should partner with other city departments/employees having expertise in that area (e.g. requests based on utilities, construction-related, soil excavation, street light installation, etc.). Otherwise, if a member of the public objects to a tree removal that's based on non-tree health related reasons, that lay citizen is stuck trying to make sometimes highly technical arguments (and often on the fly, since there's little information given about proposed tree removals). I learned this first hand when I opposed the removal of 2 healthy, mature trees in my neighborhood, and got sandbagged at the removal hearing by a team of 5 architects armed with blue prints and all sorts of information I knew nothing. I had to become an expert to file my appeal. I've seen this scenario repeat month after month. This might be avoided if BUF had expert resource to deep dive into the reasons for the requested removal.

2. Tree removal penalties. The burden should not be on BUF to recreate an illegally removed tree in order determine the appropriate fine. This only incentivizes tree removers to do it quickly, completely, and outside the required process. Instead, penalties should be assumed at the high end of the range, and the burden placed on the remover to explain why the penalty should be mitigated (e.g. with an arborist report, etc.).

3. The city needs a comprehensive environmental strategy which features trees, and this strategy should include assessment of tree removal requests, plantings and re-plantings. Right now it looks like decision making happens silos, which does not serve a greater goal of an environmentally sustaining canopy. (I'd also point out that the lack of a comprehensive strategy leads to a lot of public confusion and upset, apparent from what I've observed at the removal hearings). Maybe this sort of strategy is already in the works. My suggestion is that this strategy be thorough and responsive enough to be able to state when/where trees will be planted (or re-planted), and how the city will compensate for trees lost in the removal process (rather than removals just continuing to whittle the canopy away).

I was invited to the council's planning and funding meeting, which I understand takes place on Dec. 7 at 4pm. I've got this in my calendar. In the meantime, I'd be glad to talk about these ideas in more detail and depth to whomever's interested.

Thanks Gordon! Josh
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