

Communication from Public

Name: Aaron Thomas
Date Submitted: 11/23/2019 02:35 PM
Council File No: 19-1134
Comments for Public Posting: Please see the attached letter from the Community Forest Advisory Committee regarding the appeal of a tree removal permit for 11472 W. Laurelcrest Dr. (council file 19-1134). Thank you.

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November 18, 2019

Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File 19-1134; 11472 West Laurelcrest Drive/Tree Removal
Permit/Appeal

Dear Honorable Chairman and Committee Members:

The City's Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC), constituted of representatives from each Council District and the Mayor's Office is the principal advisory agency in the City with the goal to promote "[a] healthy, safe, and enduring Los Angeles community forest ecosystem for the enjoyment and well-being of all."

On October 7, 2019 we sent a letter requesting a stay of the tree removals pending CFAC review and discussion of the project at our November 7th meeting. Following that review and discussion CFAC unanimously passed the following motion: "To send a letter to support the appeal of the Tree Removal Permit (BPW-2019-0508) at 11472 West Laurelcrest Drive."

It is our understanding that the project site is densely forested oak/walnut woodland and has been identified by Cooper Ecological Services as a nesting bird refuge. As an ecologically sensitive site potentially significant adverse impacts may result from its development.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires for such a proposed project with significant adverse impacts that an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) be prepared and circulated for public comment. Chairman James is correct to recognize the limits of Categorical Exemptions. They are designed for projects that clearly fall within a defined, specific type of activity that has been carefully analyzed and found not to have an individual or cumulative significant impact on the environment. For the Board to find that this project is exempt from CEQA, it would need to determine that there is not a "reasonable possibility" that the project would have a significant adverse impact on the environment. We are confident that the record submitted to Council makes it impossible to reach that conclusion. Once the project is found to be subject to analysis under CEQA, then proper analysis can be done, and mitigations can be put into place for the potentially significant impacts that would occur.

Based on the environmental sensitivity of this unique natural resource and CFAC's concern about the cumulative impacts of tree removals on our hillside native habitat we support the appeal of the Tree Removal Permit (BPW 2019-0508) at 11472 West Laurelcrest Drive.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Thomas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Aaron Thomas

Chair, Community Forest Advisory Committee