

Communication from Public

Name: Friends of Griffith Park
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Friends of Griffith Park

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June 4, 2024

Mayor Karen Bass
City of Los Angeles
City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

RE: CF 24-0548, 8461 West Grand View Drive Illegal Cutting of Protected Trees

Hon. Mayor Bass:

We applaud the City Council's unanimous approval of the Section 245 motion CF 24-0548 (Raman, May 14) to veto the troubling decision made by the Board of Public Works on May 6, 2024. The appeal case decision (BPW-2024-0168), did not uphold the Bureau of Street Services findings and determination that building permits be withheld for four years. Instead, the Board reduced the building permit moratorium penalty to a mere two years.

The recommended four years withholding of building permits in the Board Report is already extremely generous versus the allowed ten-year penalty per the Protected Tree Ordinance (LAMC Section 46.06).

Shortly after the enactment of the Protected Tree Ordinance in 2006, a precedent was set when several Southern California black walnuts were leveled on a Live Oak East (90068) hillside. The City Attorney promptly secured a conviction against the owner's agent. Later, Street Service's Board Report to the Board of Public Works recommended a 5-year building moratorium, based upon the owner's attorney's contention that she did not intend to break the law. However, former Councilmember Tom LaBonge and many residents argued in front of the Board of Public Works that the maximum allowed 10-year building penalty should be upheld. The Board decided, unanimously, to impose the full 10-year moratorium. The intent of violations against the Protected Tree Ordinance, both the 2006 version and the 2020 revised version, is punitive. Leniency only promotes the further loss of habitat and valuable trees into the future. It effectively reduces the City's remarkable biodiversity.

At a time of global climate crisis, making it easy on illegal actions by irresponsible property owners is counterintuitive. We hope the Board of Public Works will affirm a four year moratorium for building permits.

Sincerely,

Gerry Hans
President

About Friends of Griffith Park:

Friends of Griffith Park (FoGP) is a California non-profit 501(c) (3) dedicated to preserving and protecting Griffith Park's natural habitat, biodiversity, and historic features, for current and future generations. FoGP is committed to ensuring that Griffith Park, a public park and Los Angeles' largest Historic-Cultural Monument, remain open, natural, and free to all citizens of Los Angeles.