

Communication from Public

Name: Friederika Poulos

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 09:30 AM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT: I wish to support Councilmember Raman's 245 motion regarding the Board of Public Works decision of essentially no penalty to a property owner for violating the Protected Tree Ordinance. This error in judgment does not and will not deter the daily flagrant violations of this important ordinance. We need all City departments to make consistent decisions that will conserve and preserve all green space in all our City Districts. Thank you for your consideration.

Communication from Public

Name: Adele Slaughter
Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 09:35 AM
Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly support Nithya Raman of CD4 and this motion--which is, essentially, a "flag on the play." Thanks to Krekorian and Lee for signing on to this motion Charter Section 245, that the Council assert jurisdiction over the May 6, 2024 Board of Public Works actions on Case: BPW-2024-0168 and that it go to the Board of Public Works for further review. It is imperative that we actually protect our Protected Trees, hence the ordinance. The PTO must be enforced. If we cannot support Urban Forestry in their efforts to protect our tree canopy, why would they make any efforts to conserve and protect trees? This will go a long way to educating, not only the public, but also our city officials about how critical our existing tree canopy is to the health and well-being of our city. I am sure that the City Attorney and UFD will appreciate this support since when the BPW waffled, they recommended at the minimum a 4 year suspension which was a reduction of the initial recommendation of a 7 year penalty. Cutting down (without permits) endangered Black Walnuts and other native protected species must have significant repercussions.

Communication from Public

Name: Margot Griswold, Ph.D.

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 09:03 AM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: I urge support for Councilmember Ramen's motion number 24-0548. The violation cited and the Board of Public Works's lax enforcement of City requirements for wildlife necessitate a reexamination of the violation. It is important that the Council assert its jurisdiction in this case to overrule the Board of Public Works' decision that drastically reduced the penalty available against the property owner of 8461 W. Grand View Drive for the intentional removal of protected trees AFTER HAVING been notified of their presence. That notification was recorded on video and is available to the Council to view. The property owner in question (the subject/benefactor of the Board President's efforts to reduce any penalty because he is foreign born) is far from an unsophisticated individual. a) He admitted tracking the progress of the Wildlife Ordinance and stated that he decided to move forward with the tree clearing to avoid compliance with the measure. b) He hired a design/landscape architect whose renderings map all the trees (that were) on the property and subsequently hired two different firms (at different times) to destroy and remove the protected trees. c) He has taken extremely aggressive measures against members of the community who reported the protected tree violation by having cease and desist letters sent to them. (I am not familiar with such an action being taken in previous matters where citizens reported illegal behavior. It is akin to taking action against a whistle-blower and has resulted in at least one concerned citizen needing to consult with an attorney.) I attended and testified at the first hearing on this matter held by the Board of Public Works and was truly horrified at the position adopted by the Board's President. Despite the proof of intent presented, the Commission President led the meeting discussion and attempted to excuse the behavior of the property owner first claiming that she was taking into account the fact that he is foreign born, and that she did not know if the contractors hired by the property owner gave the owner proper information. She was, in essence saying that the City cannot enforce against the breaking of the law under existing LAMC if the owner (who hired the contractor) received incorrect information from a contractor. (And, no one knows the nature of communication between the owner and his contractor.) It does not matter. The Board ignored the recommendations of staff to seek

the maximum penalty available of 7 years and even to a compromise suggestion discussed of 4 years. Instead the President seemed wed to a 2-year penalty which has resulted in virtually no penalty whatsoever given the Communication from Public coupled with the timeframe of the administrative process for the project and the administrative process for the project coupled with the fact that the clock started running when the city was first notified of the issue. The penalty assessed by the Board of Public Works, if it stands, will expire on July 6, 2025. The message that such a ruling sends runs contrary to the intent of the City's Protected Tree Ordinance and compromises the City's interest in fighting climate change and in protecting its tree canopy. The current decision fails to send a message that the City cares about enforcement of adopted policy and is not serious about protecting the environment. It sends a message to lawbreakers that the consequences for bad behavior are negotiable and need not have negative impacts that would deter future bad behavior. In addition to concerns related to the President's efforts, this incident has also revealed the need to fine tune the Protected Tree Ordinance. One approach to strengthen the measure would be to have sellers /owners of properties declare under penalty of perjury the existence of any protected trees on their property and the number of such trees at the time of sale. (It is currently too easy for those reporting to put down a zero and I understand are sometimes advised by their realtors to do so.) Again, I urge support for Councilmember Ramen's motion.

Communication from Public

Name: RAND SAGERS

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 09:40 AM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: I FULLY support Nithya Raman's 245 motion regarding The Board of Public Works decision to reduce the penalty for violation of the Protected Tree Ordinance. It is PROFOUNDLY disappointing that it has come to this. The Board of Public works SHOULD UNDERSTAND that It has been proven REPEATEDLY that tree cover and wildlife is essential to the well being of a community and the health of the citizens of Los Angeles. I commend Nithya Raman, thank her for her vision and for understanding the NECESSITY of ENFORCING The Protected Tree Ordinance. Thank you for your service. Rand Sagers

Communication from Public

Name: Gerry Hans

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 09:44 AM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: SUPPORT: I strongly support the Council using Section 245 to pilot a reconsideration of the Public Works Commission decision. Shortly after the enactment of the Protected Tree Ordinance in 2006, several Southern California black walnuts were leveled on a hillside in my neighborhood. The City Attorney promptly secured a conviction against the owner's agent. Later, Staff's Board Report to Public Works Commission recommended a 5-year building moratorium, based upon the owner's attorney's contention that she did not – necessarily- have intention to break the law. However, Councilmember Tom LaBonge and many residents argued in front of the Public Works Commission that the maximum allowed 10-year building penalty be upheld. The Commission was convinced and unanimously imposed the 10-year moratorium. The intent of violations against the Protected Tree Ordinance, the 2006 version and the 2020 version, is punitive. Leniency only promotes the loss of more valuable tree into the future. And reduces the City's remarkable biodiversity.

Communication from Public

Name: Lionel Mares

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 09:46 AM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: As a former Tree Ambassador for TreePeople, I strongly urge you support city council-member Raman's motion. I am waiting to urge you to SUPPORT councilmember Nithya Raman's motion (see: Council File No. 24-0548). The owner improperly and illegally cut down protected trees which is a violation of the protected tree ordinance. The owner should face the maximum penalty for damages to the city property. The trees are protected under the Wildlife Ordinance Zone. Trees, especially native trees such as CA Walnuts, are essential to wildlife and native habitat. They are a vital resource to our ecosystem. It is important that the Los Angeles City Council protect native trees, and biodiversity. Please, consider supporting Councilwoman Raman's motion, tomorrow, May 14, 2024 - Los Angeles City Council meeting. Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter.

Communication from Public

Name: Kay Hartman

Date Submitted: 05/13/2024 10:07 PM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: I am strongly opposed to the results of the appeal decision issued by the Board of Public Works. I think a two year penalty is insufficient for someone who knowingly destroys our native flora. I urge the City Council to uphold the generous decision made by the Bureau of Street Services.

Communication from Public

Name: Gregg Sherkin

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 11:17 AM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: I live in council district 2 and strongly support the motion to veto the reduced penalty on illegal protected tree removal at 8641 West Grand View Drive. Our protected trees are a precious resource and we have to preserve them. I urge you to vote to approve the motion. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: James Mills

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 11:35 AM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: Please suport Councilmember Raman's 245 motion regarding the cutting of protected trees at 8461 W. Grand View Drive. This is about as clear a case of flagrant flouting of the Protected Tree Ordinance as you're going to see. People who build multimillion-dollar homes have people on their side informing them of the rules. The guy who cut the trees almost certainly knew full well what he was doing, and even if he didn't at first, when he was caught doing it, he was informed in no uncertain terms — and his tree-cutting service even backed out at that point. Then he came back later with new people to finish the job. We have it on video. What is the point of a penalty if it can be so easily reduced with a couple of appeals? Lessening the penalty in a clear-cut case like this, will definitely invite the same from others. Two years is nothing. You'll see people cutting the trees first, then using the two-year wait to get the rest of their ducks in a row with regards to design and other permits, then just starting building! Seven years is a penalty that might actually deter future offenders. Four years might be OK too. Two years is nothing, espeically since the clock started last year, so it's only 14 months. Thank you for your time.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 11:39 AM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: This case is a blatant violation of the Protected Tree Ordinance and the penalty should not be lessened. Simply ... You don't start cutting a bunch of trees without knowing the law. And once informed of it, you don't come back a week later with a new crew to finish the cutting. And you don't then have your lawyer send a threatening email to all the neighbors claiming defamation of character. I ask you to please defend the integrity of the Ordinance. Diluting penalties undermines its purpose, allowing illegal tree destruction to continue. Strict enforcement is crucial to preserving our green spaces for future generations.

Communication from Public

Name: Cindy Cleghorn

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 09:58 AM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: It is important that the Council assert its jurisdiction in this case to overrule the Board of Public Works' decision that drastically reduced the penalty available against the property owner of 8461 W. Grand View Drive for the intentional removal of protected trees AFTER HAVING been notified of their presence. What is the point of having City ordinances that are not enforced ? There is no excuse. The Board ignored the recommendations of staff to seek the maximum penalty available of 7 years and even to a compromise suggestion discussed of 4 years. I listened to the meetings and was upset to hear the BPW president encourage only a 2-year penalty has resulted in virtually no penalty whatsoever given the timeframe of the administrative process for the project coupled with the fact that the clock started running when the city was first notified of the issue.

Communication from Public

Name: PPCC

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 12:15 PM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: PPCC supports CF 24-0548 to assert the jurisdiction of City Council over the enforcement of laws, as they are enforced by city agencies tasked with upholding them. In this case, at issue is the intentional removal of protected trees without a permit. The Palisades community is similarly affected, at times, by bad actors who remove or prune trees without permit and there seems to be little recourse as these laws are difficult to enforce. We do not wish to see a precedent where when enforced, the penalties are waved of or casually reduced without just cause. In the case of the incident in CD4, The Bureau of Street Services (the enforcement body of the city for tree removals) determined there was a violation of LAMC Section 46.00 and requested that the Department of Building and Safety withhold issuance of building permits for four years as a penalty for the unlawful removal of protected tree(s). On appeal, the Board of Public Works reduced the moratorium on future building permits, down to two years. Councilmember Raman seeks to assert City Council's jurisdiction over the Board of Public Works' decision and conduct further review. We support this.

Communication from Public

Name: Travis Longcore

Date Submitted: 05/14/2024 12:04 PM

Council File No: 24-0548

Comments for Public Posting: I support the 245 motion to reject the 2 year penalty for illegal removal of protected trees. Everyone who understands hillside development knows that this is not a penalty at all because it will take 2 years to get the permits to develop the property (a process that does not appear to have started). With the 2 year penalty the owner will not have to plant replacement trees and will be able to develop the property without any delay from having violated the law flagrantly. The BPW decision should be reversed and an appropriate penalty assessed.