

From: Janet Davis <jadjad@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 4:55 PM
To: Angela Chavez <achavez@smcgov.org>
Subject: Planning Commission Mtg 1/22/25 PLN2023-00336 Item 2

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OBJECTION

Just how hypocritical can this Planning Dept. get?

Recently the BOS approved a mammoth document purporting to protect heritage and significant trees because of the problems with developers destroying them. This was triggered in good part by the wholesale destruction that has been occurring in unincorporated Menlo Park for the last few years that has negatively impacted the entire neighborhood.

The owner is, according to Google, a corporate attorney at Box Inc. in Redwood City. Despite the plethora of highly competent arborists in the neighborhood who know the climate, the soil and the local environment, the owner patronized an Arborist located in Ione near Sacramento: many miles away in a totally different environment, who appears to operate out of their residence.

The latest ordinance emphasizes the critical need to keep significant trees, especially oaks, and requires that developers make every effort to design in a manner that does not require removal or significant trimming.

According to Google neither the "designer" nor the company for which she works, appear to have the benefit of architectural qualifications. The apparent lack of such expertise might account for their inability to design something that saves the tree.

From: [Christie McCoy](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: RE: PLN2023-00336 set for Hearing 1/22/25
Date: Sunday, January 19, 2025 9:10:07 PM

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Dear Planning Commission,

We are writing to urge you to **deny** the request to remove a healthy heritage oak tree located on the property at 830 Menlo Oaks Drive in the Menlo Oaks area of District 4 of San Mateo County.

While this tree (pictured on the attachment) was described on the permit as a “significant” tree, please be advised that this healthy Coast Live Oak tree is actually designated as a “heritage” tree and should not be removed.

A newly constructed house sits on the lot, and the tree does not interfere with the structure. The tree does lean toward the sun, and some pruning of the weight of the canopy could be very beneficial, but it definitely does not need to be removed.

We as a neighborhood cherish our oak trees; hence the name of our area, Menlo Oaks. We are trying to save as many of these beautiful old oak trees as possible. We don't want our area to be renamed Menlo Oak.

Please deny the permit to remove this tree.

Christie and Jim McCoy
360 Menlo Oaks Drive
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(650) 323-5607
christiemccoy19@yahoo.com



From: pandagolf@aol.com
To: [Planning Commission](#); [Christie McCoy](#); [John Danforth](#); [James Bird](#); [Anne Kortlander](#); [Dorothy Fadiman](#); [Mary Ann Carmack](#); [Heather Allen Descollonges](#); [Mark Leaver](#)
Subject: Re: PLN2023-00336 set for Hearing 1/22/25
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:15:40 AM

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I cannot attend the hearing as I am out of town on business, but I hope you will read this and think about it before you render any decision about the removal of the tree in question.

This tree creates no real problems for the homeowner and is deemed to be healthy. It fits the requirements for protection as stated in the current and proposed Significant Tree Ordinance.

For over 30 years, we in MOTA (Menlo Oaks Tree Advocacy) have seen the County rubber stamp the removal of hundreds of healthy trees, mostly because developers and new homeowners in Menlo Oaks do not care about trees. Trees are in the way of a new pool house or outdoor kitchen. They look too dangerous. For developers, it's more expedient and economical to remove trees before construction on a new home begins.

Arborists evaluate the trees and create narratives about the trees that generally go along with the wishes of homeowners or the developers--this, probably so that arborists can avoid liability should a branch fall and hurt someone.

Rarely does anyone from County Planning & Development, or anyone from the County, look at a tree that's the subject of a removal permit. They rely only on the arborist's report. The County arborist may look at a tree occasionally but has always sided with the homeowner and the developer--again, probably to avoid liability for the County.

The County's removal permit process is set up to remove trees, not save them.

By MOTA's count we've lost hundreds of trees during the last 30 years--by permit, disease, storm, drought or aging out. However, **most of the tree loss was because the County granted every tree removal permit requested in Menlo Oaks.** With more extreme weather, we will lose even more trees, and now developers are scooping up properties as people age out of our neighborhood. They know they can remove any tree in the way of their development plans.

I'd also like to point out that the County has failed to oversee its own plan to review the success of its tree replacement plan in Menlo Oaks. Yes, it authorizes replanting 2 trees for everyone removed in Menlo Oaks, but it does not follow up to see if that's been done or whether the small trees are being cared for by the property owners. Without some sort of a real replacement tree program, the County should not issue one more tree removal permit--at least not in Menlo Oaks.

We were promised this follow-up six or seven years ago, and a survey was started before COVID, but we never received the results of that incomplete survey, and MOTA's requests to find out more about whether this could be restarted have never, ever been answered.

This is no way to manage trees, which add value to properties and are a valuable County asset. The words in the current and newly proposed Significant Tree ordinance provide guidance to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, but the words ring hollow when the ordinance never protects trees or insures their replacement.

This tree must not be removed. It poses no danger. It's healthy. It conforms to the protections granted in the Significant Tree Ordinance, and the County can't insure those of us in Menlo Oaks that a tree replacement program is in place and will be monitored.

Judy Horst
Menlo Oaks Tree Advocacy (MOTA)