MOTION REGARDING FINES TO BE LEVIED UPON TREE REMOVAL

Whereas trees reduce Carbon Dioxide in the environment, eliminate dust in the atmosphere, reduce traffic noise, retain water in the soil, provide shade which cools the planet, provide homes to the myriad birds and creatures essential to living and beautify our urban environment; and

Whereas these are particularly essential elements needed on our public right of ways; and

Whereas Venice has fewer trees than most other parts of Council District 11; and

Whereas trees on the public right of way are the property of the City, which are to be maintained by the adjacent property owner but which may not be removed without authorization from the City;

NOW THEREFORE The Venice Neighborhood Council proposes that the ordinance (citation here) that levies fines against property owners who remove or destroy street trees adjacent to their property, by them or those performing services for them, without a permit, or fail to maintain trees on their adjacent parkway, be amended to increase such fines; and

Fines shall reflect the purchase price of replacement trees in the open market or with contract suppliers to the City, as well as the labor to install such tree and to enlarge tree wells as needed to accommodate a nursery grown tree as close as possible to the size of the removed tree.

Funds collected shall be used to replace trees with like trees and maintenance of those trees for 10 years in order to make the public whole for the loss of a public asset. If excess funds remain, they shall be used for the planting and maintenance of trees throughout the neighborhood where the trees have been unlawfully removed. If infrastructure changes are required to accommodate the replacement trees such that the trees are as close as possible in maturity to the destroyed trees, then such property owner shall pay for such infrastructural alterations.