

RESOLUTION FOR FINES TO BE LEVIED UPON UNLAWFUL TREE REMOVAL

Whereas, the urban canopy of our city is a living provider of air, health, shade, and habitat for humans, domestic animals and wildlife; and,

Whereas, trees reduce CO₂, eliminate dust in the atmosphere, dampen traffic noise, retain and filter water into the soil, provide shade that cools our neighborhoods, and beautify our streets; and,

Whereas, trees 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 we, the citizenry of this city, are the owners of the trees in the public right of way, which are to be maintained by the adjacent property owner and may not be removed without authorization from the City; and

Whereas, there have been an increasing number of instances in Venice and elsewhere of the removal of mature street trees without permit; i.e., illegally,

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) asks that Councilwoman Traci Park introduce legislation that would require that fines be imposed on adjacent property owners if, without proper permit, they remove or fail to maintain trees on their adjacent public right of way to the extent that such trees are destroyed; fines shall be levied against such property owner in an amount per tree valuation by the International Society of Arboriculture, as is done in many cities throughout the United States; and such property owners shall also be required to replace such trees with new trees, in the same size as the destroyed tree(s), or as close as feasibly possible, up to as large as 60" box trees; and if partial sidewalk removal/replacement is required to install the replacement tree, then the property owner shall be required to perform such partial removal of the sidewalk.

Be It Further Resolved that the VNC also requests that the councilmember introduce legislation for the city to establish a certification program for landscaping businesses that wish to conduct business in the city to require that they understand that trees in the public way may not be removed without permit, and to require that all trimming and/or removal of city trees must be done by a certified arborist or firm that employs a certified arborist; and the legislation to include a provision that any landscaping contractor that removes a tree without a permit and without a certified arborist having concluded that the tree was beyond saving through care and trimming, shall have their certification to work in the city be revoked. Further, no tree(s) may be removed without the notification of the city council office, the pertinent neighborhood council, and all the neighbors within a one block radius of when the certified arborist will inspect the tree in question.