

**MINUTES
REEDLEY STREETSCAPE MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 18, 2000**

The agenda for the Streetscape Maintenance Committee Meeting of January 18, 2000, was duly posted in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

A regular meeting of the Streetscape Maintenance Committee was held on January 18, 2000, in the Reedley City hall Conference Room. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m.

Members Present: Jan Minami and Richard Bedoian.

Members Absent: Dale Melville.

Staff Present: Jeff Viau, Public Works Superintendent; Andrew Benelli, City Engineer; Michael Olmos, Community Development Director; Stephen Hollister, City Manager; and Kay Pierce, Administrative Assistant.

Others Present: Council Member Marge Gobby; Art Bergthold; Sandra Cox and Steve Loeffler of Loeffler Landscape Maintenance.

C. Minami moved, C. Bedoian seconded to approve the minutes from the meeting of November 16, 1999. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORT ON MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY

A. Steve Loeffler of Loeffler Landscape Maintenance reported that Purviance Tree Service has been notified of the Committee's request to remove the Magnolia trees on "G" Street between 11th and 12th Street, but he is has a very busy schedule. Steve could not give a projected date for the tree removal. Public Works Superintendent Jeff Viau stated that he would get in contact with Gerald Purviance and see if he could remove the magnolia trees before the end of February. Steve Loeffler suggested that the two magnolia trees on 10th Street in front of the Reedley Museum be removed at the same time. Richard Bedoian suggested removing the three magnolia trees on 12th Street near the El Monte Café, because they are lifting the sidewalk posing a trip hazard.

Steve Loeffler stated there are eight magnolias between 11th and 12th Street. If the three on 12th Street are added and the two in front of the Museum, that would be a total of 13 magnolias to be removed this time. At \$45 per tree, that would be a total of \$585 to Purviance Tree Service to remove the magnolias. Jeff Viau will contact Purviance to set up a time frame to remove these magnolias and will then get in touch with Loeffler Landscape to coordinate.

Mike Olmos asked Steve Loeffler the cost per tree of removing the roots of the magnolias before he is able to replant. Steve Loeffler stated that he charged \$125 per tree on the first phase with the magnolias were removed between 10th and 11th. However, because it was

so difficult to remove the magnolia roots and stumps and more labor was involved than he originally anticipated, he feels that \$200 per tree would be fair. He explained that Gerald Purviance could only grind the stumps down 14-inches, and then Steve has to come back in with a jack hammer that he rents, to remove the remainder of the stump and rootball. City crews will be in charge of replanting the Strawberry trees so no additional charge will be received from Loeffler Landscape. Mike Olmos stated that the streetscape budget is in good shape as far as expenses go so far this year. However, with the additional expense of the removal of 13 magnolia trees at \$200 per tree, the Committee will have to keep a close eye on future expenses.

Steve Loeffler added that the irrigation water for the planters is shut off at this time. The crepe myrtles are being pruned around the trunk area only so there is no double branching. He would like to open up the magnolias that are on 10th Street by Pioneer Equipment. He stated that he has been asked if any magnolias are going to be left in the streetscape area and he has suggested to leave a grouping of three on one of the side streets if that is possible. Jan Minimi replied that it would be alright to open the magnolias up, but no topping. Steve stated that the magnolias that are on 10th Street by Washington Mutual Bank are in very good shape.

OLD BUSINESS - None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion regarding Hazard Elimination Grant to Replace 11th/G Street Signal. Community Development Director Olmos gave the Committee some background on this item. Back in 1998, Caltrans advised the City that there was available funding for projects for hazard elimination and safety which is called the HES program. The City submitted two projects one of which was replacement of traffic signals at 11th and "G" Streets and intersection improvements. This project was not approved for funding in 1998. Because of controversy on the project, it was not submitted for the 1999 HES funding cycle. However, Caltrans rolled this project over and approved funding project in 1999. City Staff is once again asking the Streetscape Committee their feelings on new traffic signals at this intersection. Mike Olmos went on to state that the reason this intersection was submitted to Caltrans is because it is one of the highest accident frequency intersections in the City. The plan is to install an historical type of pole system with a mast arm that goes across 11th Street. One of this current issues is that the existing smaller lights are not as visible as the larger lights with the mast arm would be. This item will be discussed with the City Council at their next regular meeting on January 25, 2000.

City Manager Stephen Hollister added that when this item came to the City Council to try experimenting with the stop signs at this intersection, it was clear that the Council did not want stop signs at this intersection and preferred the traffic signals. It is only a matter of do we want to keep the existing signals, or upgrade them to the historical poles with the mast arm.

City Engineer Benelli added that the grant of \$144,000 and City match of \$16,000 (\$160,000 total) is more than enough to do these signals and minimal landscaping around

the traffic signal with intersection improvements. Because the existing poles are not very visible, it wouldn't be very safe to do any type of bulb-out with the existing signals because they are difficult to see as is, and would be even more difficult to see if the curb was moved more towards the center of the roadway.

Jan Minami asked if the costs from two years ago are still realistic. Andrew Benelli replied that this is true. He added that the existing two lights do meet the minimum Caltrans standards, but many intersections have three lights with one overhead light, but some have four, one on the approach side. If you live in Reedley and are familiar with this intersection, the existing lights are fine. However, if someone from out of town drives through, they could possibly miss these lights because they are hard to see.

Jan Minami asked if the new historical lights poles would be coordinated with those lights that will be installed in the new Rail Trail? Andrew Benelli replied that they could because the company that is manufacturing the lights for the Rail Trail also manufacture signal equipment. He would like to shop around to see if he likes what they have to offer, but they could definitely blend in with the Rail Trail lighting. Jan Minami then asked what would be involved with the light replacement. Andrew Benelli stated that the existing curb and gutter would have to be removed and replaced due to the signal wiring. It could be decided whether to move the curb and gutter out farther, or leave it as is. There have been no design plans made for the project to date. It is a good project and would benefit safety downtown. Jan Minami asked if the new trees that are being planted, that are more full, would be a problem with the new mast arms? Andrew Benelli replied that the installation of a mast arm would be safer and he would recommend them.

Andrew Benelli stated that Caltrans would need to have the funds committed by the City by 2001. The Committee decided to table this item until their special meeting of January 25, 2000.

B. A request was received from Art Bergthold, owner of the Opera House, to remove the strawberry trees that have been planted along their business on 10th Street and replace the two strawberry trees located on either side of the entrance to the building with a more decorative tree and one that will not block nor damage the tour buses that stop and unload passengers in front of the Opera House.

Mr. Bergthold gave some background on the Opera House and the landscaping stating that in September, 1977, he requested that the City allow him to plant trees along the frontage of his building. He was requested to draw up plans and submit them for approval. The City approved his request and he was allowed to plant trees with the condition that he supply water to this section of sidewalk on 10th Street between "G" Street and the alley. The second condition was that he guarantee the trees be maintained and replaced if a tree dies, at his cost. He stated that for the next ten years, someone in his family cleaned the sidewalks off along his building. After several years, he asked the City to pay to have electricity installed to the planter wells, but this was rejected, so Mr. Bergthold paid to have the electricity installed. The reason for the electricity was to put lights in the trees during the holidays and to have electricity available during Fiesta.

When the City installed the streetscape trees, his original trees were taller than the buildings. The City asked Mr. Bergthold if the City could replace his existing trees with the Strawberry trees that are now in place. The Strawberry trees have been in place for four years and he stated they are causing some problems for him. The first problem is that fruit that falls from the trees needs to be swept almost everyday or it is tracked onto his carpeting. The second major problem is that they are going to start getting tour buses for the Blossom Trail and the Strawberry trees are difficult to trim so that the limbs don't get in the way. The bus operators are complaining that the tree limbs are scratching those expensive buses.

Mr. Bergthold is requesting that the two Strawberry trees on either side of his entrance be replaced with topiary trees similar to those at Buttonwillow Nursery. (These trees are Italian Cypress.) The remaining three Strawberry trees can be replaced with whatever is acceptable in the streetscape district. Mr. Bergthold stated that the two topiary trees he is looking at cost over \$200 a piece and he would be willing to pay for the cost of both trees which is in excess of the normal cost of replacing the trees.

Mr. Bergthold added that there are two large magnolia trees that are in front of the Museum and the bus drivers, which includes school buses, also complain to him because they often park in front of the Museum and it is difficult to park in front of the Museum because of the size of the two magnolias.

Mr. Bergthold went on to state that when the original trees were removed and the Strawberry trees were replanted, the electricity was grounded out. Public Works Electrician, Steve Linzmeier, fixed this problem. Since then, someone has turned over the refuse container which is located on 10th and "G" and the container broke the electrical connection. He would ask that the City also repair this broken connection which is located in the planter closest to 10th and "G".

Mr. Bergthold added that he speaks to a large number of tourists every year and receives constant comments on how nice the downtown area looks with the blooming crepe myrtles and other plantings.

Mike Olmos told Mr. Bergthold that the City crew will fix the electrical problem at 10th and "G" in the planter area. Mike Olmos added that when Strawberry trees located in the streetscape district are removed, they will be replanted in City parks or traffic islands. Steve Loeffler of Loeffler Landscape Maintenance suggested removing and replanting the Strawberry trees before the end of February. He can coordinate the removal of the Strawberry trees with Public Works Superintendent, Jeff Viau, so that the trees can be either planted right away, or held for a short period of time until a decision is made on where to plant them. Steve recommended removing all the Strawberry trees at the Opera House this year because, if we wait until next year, they might be too large to remove for replanting. Jan Minami stated that with the 13 magnolias that are to be removed, this would be a total of 18 trees that have to be dealt with. She asked Steve Loeffler if this would be difficult to handle. Steve replied that if the block of magnolias between 11th and 12th are removed first, he could then come back and replace those magnolias on 12th

Street and 10th Street as a second phase. Gerald Purviance could cut all the magnolias down at one time, but the irrigation lines are on two separate systems.

Steve Loeffler also commented on the topiary trees mentioned by Mr. Bergthold stating that the trees in question at Buttonwillow Nursery are called Italian Cypress. To keep them detailed in the spiral requires high maintenance. He suggested getting two different types of trees that Mr. Bergthold might like. Mr. Bergthold responded that Mrs. Bergthold selected the Italian Cypress. Steve Loeffler recommended another tree that could be used called an Irish Yew which also grows in a cylindrical column and can be detailed to spiral. He added that the Irish Yew grows at one third the rate of the Italian Cypress and if they want a large tree, it would have to be purchased large to begin with. Mr. Bergthold replied that he would prefer the slower growing tree. With the new signs that he has, a large tree would hide the signs. He is open to suggestions as to what type of tree to use on either side of his entrance where the new awning is located.

Jan Minami stated that there are two issues to be discussed. The first issue is that this would be setting a precedent because the Streetscape Committee has followed the advice from Tree Fresno on their recommendations for downtown trees. The second issue is that of maintenance on the trees.

Steve Loeffler stated that the Italian Cypress trees are known for moderate to high maintenance. Jan Minami added this would not be part of the regular maintenance contract. Steve Loeffler continued by stating that the Irish Yew could be worked into the scheduled maintenance that is already in existence for the downtown streetscape. He stated that with Italian Cypress, they will grow to 15 feet, but the tops keep growing and they have to be topped off. If they are not trimmed, a fine plastic webbing net must be used to wrap the tree so that the limbs to go out. It's a beautiful tree, but very high maintenance.

City Manager Steve Hollister asked if crepe myrtle trees would work along this section? Steve Loeffler replied that they would work as well as the Chinese Pistache with the Hackberry used on the Pioneer Equipment side of the street.

Art Berthold added that the only two trees that are critical from the bus point of view are the two on either side of the entrance to the Opera House. He stated that they could wait until next year to remove the remaining three strawberry trees. Mr. Bergthold stated that his request is a special circumstance because the Opera House is the only location in town where buses stop to load and unload tourists.

City Manager Steve Hollister asked Public Works Superintendent Jeff Viau when he could work in the tree removal. Jeff replied that his crew could remove the trees in a couple of weeks.

It was decided that this request will be tabled until a special Streetscape meeting could be held which would include all Streetscape members. It was decided to hold another special meeting on Tuesday, January 25, 2000, at 8:00 a.m.

CITIZEN REMARKS - None.

COMMITTEE / STAFF COMMENTS / REPORTS - None.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

Richard Bedoian, Chairman
Streetscape Maintenance Committee

ATTEST:

Michael Olmos, Secretary