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856-2021

Communication

Requested Agenda Type

Communications

Request of Connie Schwendemann to address Council regarding City policies, procedures and protocols regarding street trees

Placed on File

A brief description of Communication: Request that the City review its policies, procedures and protocols regarding street trees in the City of Portland.

Agenda Items

856 Communications in [December 8, 2021 Council Agenda](#)

Placed on File

From: [Connie Schwendemann](#)
To: [Clerk General](#)
Subject: Re: Communications - December 8, 2021 Council meeting
Date: Monday, December 6, 2021 7:40:35 PM
Attachments: [Connie Schwendemann - Communication to PCC mtg 12-8-21.docx](#)
[ATT00001.htm](#)

Good Evening,

I appreciate your quick reply and information regarding the upcoming Portland City Council meeting as well as my Communication. The written copy of my Communication is attached.

Please let me know if there's anything else you require.

Best Regards,
Connie Schwendemann

Communication to the Portland City Council - Wednesday, December 8, 2021

I'm here today on behalf of property owners with street trees in Portland to ask you to reconsider your vote taken 3 years ago making individual property owners with trees on City parking strips responsible for tree removals. This is a reversal of a long history of street tree removal service by the City and is another example of decreased services with increased taxation.

We have two old trees that we've taken care of through ice storms, pruning, inoculation and, more recently, infrastructure repairs. A pruning of a large tree is a little more than \$1,000, and pruning is a recurring event. This month, our dead elm tree is being removed at a cost to us of \$13,750. It's been an expensive month to live in Portland. The trend is toward an unbundling of City services, with no end in sight.

We've arrived at a time when Portland's urban canopy has aged, and trees are dying, and the City has left property owners with street trees with the responsibility of paying the huge costs of tree removal. In addition, City policies don't give any incentive for people to want to plant new street trees, but this is a requirement. If you remodel your home, you have to plant a street tree, or face additional fees, fines, and liens on your property. The City controls this easement, it just doesn't want any responsibility with it.

There's no shortage of City personnel overseeing these policies. I couldn't find anywhere on the Urban Forestry website that says the property owners are responsible for planting, maintenance and removal of street trees. Transparency apparently isn't part of their process.

We all love our trees and their many benefits; however, trees are a big responsibility and can be a liability. They require tending, can disrupt power service, get into sewer lines, damage sidewalks and other infrastructure. Proper maintenance to keep trees healthy comes at a cost. Urban Forestry is suddenly interested now that our tree is dead. Issuing directives is what Urban Forestry means by "working with citizens."

The City doesn't classify its trees as capital, yet it likes to brag about its tree canopy of about 26% of Portland's land area and talks about the importance of trees to our City. If trees are truly valuable to the City, I respectfully remind the Council that actions speak louder than words. Please support citizens who are now on the hook to pay for the removal of our City's aging tree canopy.

This year the City has a surplus of funds. Could a small portion be allocated to remove dead street trees?

Surely, trees are a shared benefit and should be a shared responsibility.

Connie Schwendemann