

**Public Comments**  
**Agenda Item 7 –**  
**Tree Removal Permit Fee**

Written Comments Received After 12pm on 09/11/2023



*September 11, 2023*  
*City Council Meeting*

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**From:** Coffey, Sarah  
**Sent:** Monday, September 11, 2023 2:47 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** FW: \$1000 fee

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**From:** Boles, Christine <CBoles@pacificagov.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 11, 2023 2:46 PM  
**To:** La, Emily <ELa@pacificagov.gov>; Coffey, Sarah <scoffey@pacificagov.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: \$1000 fee

Forwarding this email from Paul Totah about trees for the record.

**Christine Boles**

Councilmember, City of Pacifica

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**From:** Paul Totah [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 21, 2023 9:02 AM  
**To:** Bigstycyk, Tygarjas <[tbigstycyk@pacificagov.gov](mailto:tbigstycyk@pacificagov.gov)>; Boles, Christine <[CBoles@pacificagov.gov](mailto:CBoles@pacificagov.gov)>; Bier, Mary <[mbier@pacificagov.gov](mailto:mbier@pacificagov.gov)>; Vaterlaus, Sue <[svaterlaus@pacificagov.gov](mailto:svaterlaus@pacificagov.gov)>; Beckmeyer, Sue <[sbeckmeyer@pacificagov.gov](mailto:sbeckmeyer@pacificagov.gov)>  
**Subject:** \$1000 fee

**[CAUTION: External Email]**

Dear Members of the City Council,

You recently received a reply from Lisa Peterson to our previous email about the \$1000 fee for a tree permit. It is possible that a citizen could be fined the value of a tree, but this scenario is very unlikely.

Code enforcement did not penalize those who violated the past tree ordinance due to a loophole in the municipal code. Has code enforcement ever levied penalties against citizens and companies that violated the new tree ordinance? If so, how many times and what were the consequences? Code enforcement only responds to complaints, and many citizens have no idea about the process to complain. There are already illegal tree removals, and they will only increase with this new fee.

The increase of illegal tree removals could create dangerous situations, such as flooding. It would make it very difficult for neighbors to request tree appeals, and illegal removals would lower the number of replacement trees planted thus reducing the city's canopy.

Pacifica has been paying for the cost of reviewing tree permits for more than 40 years. This investment shows a commitment to the tree ordinance and all trees in our urban forest. This fee is not a cost of the new ordinance but a new way to pay for a task the city has been doing for years.

Other cities have much lower tree permit fees. Here are two examples:

### [SSF](#)

The non-refundable fee for a tree removal/pruning permit is **\$112.35 per tree**. A \$350 refundable "planting deposit" is also required for each tree removal. Refunds are made after all replanting conditions are met. No arborist report is required, but one is recommended; permit applications are reviewed by Zachary Kust, the maintenance supervisor, who is a licensed arborist and a full-time employee of SSF; **there is no charge for his review of the certified arborist report**. Citizens are given four months to replant, and the number of trees depends on size and species of tree (1, 2 or 3 / 1 bigger or two smaller; this is something Zach decides).

### [San Bruno](#)

Pruning Permit Fee - \$70

Tree Removal Permit Fee - **\$105**

Private Tree Replacement In Lieu Fee - \$415 (per tree removed)

Private Tree Replacement Refundable Deposit - \$415 (per tree removed) (this amount is refunded after the the city receives proof that the replacement trees have been planted)

**San Bruno does require an arborist report but it doesn't charge for review**; the person reviewing the arborist report for San Bruno is Dan Venezia, Parks Services Manager; he is not a certified arborist. The city also has a replanting requirement of 2 24-inch trees or 1 36-inch box tree per tree removed.

The purpose of Pacifica's tree ordinance is to protect all trees in urban forest, not just city trees. We urge the city to show a commitment to the tree ordinance by including the cost of an arborist in the upcoming budget. We sent an example of a reasonable contract with an arborist in a previous email (e.g. Pacific Grove). If the city is not willing to do this, then we hope that Pacifica will at least pay for the cost of reviewing tree permits.

Many thanks for your time and consideration.

All of us at Tree City Pacifica

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**From:** Susan Miller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 11, 2023 5:28 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Tree permit

**Expires:** Saturday, March 9, 2024 12:00 AM

**[CAUTION: External Email]**

Council members,

I would like to echo Gail Benton Shoemaker and Paul Totah in requesting that the \$1000 fee for tree permit is an undue burden on the public. I agree that around \$150 seems fair

Please consider lowering the tree permit fee.

Susan Miller

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