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Hamid Nouri
13231 NE 40th St.
Bellevue, WA
98005

Re: Response to Review of Tree Retention Plan by Tina Cohen, Northwest Arborvitae.

Hamid:

This response to the Review of Tree Retention Plan (Review) dated October 9, 2015 is provided to address issues presented for the upcoming hearing of the Nouri Short Plat of 7502 NE 132nd St. in Redmond as prior commitments prevent me from attending the hearing. This response addresses items 1, 2 and 3 of the Review.

1. This item addresses trees 3, 4 and 5, all large Douglas firs that have been topped resulting in regrowth from the cut surfaces. The re-growth is large in size and the connections between the new stems are tight and tend to be weak. In the Review, it states that the trees have recovered from the topping and have multiple tops, that this is not the ideal structure as topping is never an appropriate treatment. I agree that Douglas firs are resilient, that these have “recovered” and that topping is never an appropriate treatment for the very reason that it leaves a large wound (that may or may not heal) and most often leads to the development of regrowth, which is not the same as the original trunk in that it (the re-growth) is not the trunk but a connection to it. As a result, the connections to the trunk are not as stable as a single trunk. The connections between re-growth leads to the development of included bark. As the re-growth stems enlarge, the included bark puts pressure on the connection. This can lead to failure of one or more stems, even in the absence of winds. I’m sure in her years of experience, Ms. Cohen has witnessed situations where such a failure has occurred. The Review states that there was no damage from the August 29, 2015 windstorm. Most of the trees I saw that failed as a result of that storm were deciduous trees that were fully leafed-out, presenting considerable resistance the winds, and not evergreen trees.

The Review asserts that the conditions of these trees do not warrant an exempt status, that trees #3 and 4 should be classified as Landmark requiring an exception letter to permit their removal and replaced at a 3:1 ratio, and that tree #5 should be classified as significant and replaced at a 1:1 ratio if removed. I have assessed many trees on development projects in the City of Redmond and have classified many, both significant and landmark, that were topped as significant. Not once has that classification of exempt status been denied by the City of Redmond Staff. These trees were classified as exempt due to the potential for damage caused by the failure of the re-growth stems, posing a hazard for any structures below them.

The Review states that tree #11, which is to be retained, is significant because it is 30” and not landmark because it is not *greater than* 30”. This tree should be re-classified as significant.

2. This item addresses trees #15 and 17, both bittercherry trees that have cavities in their trunks and are not viable for the long term and therefore should be deleted from the total number of trees. Although the trees do possess decay cavities, the decay cavity size is within the range of acceptability. Additionally, at their small sizes (8" diameter), these trees don't pose a significant hazard because in the event of failure, they would cause very little damage if any. At present, they are healthy (aside from the compartmentalized decay cavities). These trees also didn't fail in the August 29 windstorm when many other deciduous trees not affected by decay did fail.
3. This item addresses the impacts to tree #14 and recommends that it be removed. At the time of my initial assessment, the specific impacts adjacent to this tree were not planned. Due to the revision and the impacts associated, I concur that this tree should be removed.
4. The Review provides a revised summary of tree retention table, based upon the reclassification of trees #3, 4, 5, 15, 17 and the removal of tree #14. If these reclassifications are enforced, the project will still retain the minimum required of 35% of the combined significant and landmark trees and the replacement number will increase from 10 to 18. This will require exemption requests approved for the removal of trees #3 and 4. If these exemption requests are required, I recommend that they are approved due to the conditions of these trees and the hazards they pose.

In review, I stand by my classification of trees #3, 4 and 5 to be exempt due to their conditions and therefore allowed to be removed without exemption request approval or replacement, and by the classification of trees #15 and #17 as significant, not warranting removal. I agree with the removal of tree #14 due to impacts. With these revisions, the project meets the required retention percentage and will be required to plant 11 replacement trees.

Cordially,



Tony Shoffner
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