

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Bunya bunya tree
Date: Monday, May 20, 2024 2:43:54 PM

Public comment on appeal to city council to remove Bunya Bunya tree at Barlow and Hyw 12

Background

The estimated age of this tree is 140 years. It is drought tolerant, native to Australia, with an average life span of 600 years. It is now scarce in Australia and protected. Cones are the size of pineapples and are only produced every 3 years. Communities (i.e. Santa Rosa) successfully mitigate risk by pruning immature cones & roping off area under tree during periods when mature cone's drop.

Why is this tree significant to Sebastopol?

Historic both in age, uniqueness and botanical legacy, this tree is a Sebastopol ambassador. It is reported to be one of 3 **bunya bunya planted** by Luther Burbank in Sebastopol. Burbank's botanic achievements are integral to Sebastopol's history and this tree is now one of 2 bunya bunya remaining in our city.

What about risks?

The risks of cones are only every 3 years and drop directly under tree. The branches are no more risk than sharp cones from pine trees. A **bunya bunya** tree in Santa Rosa next to the Salvation Army housing complex bordering a sidewalk was spared from removal by their Planning Commission in 2023. This tree was also reported to have been planted by Luther Burbank. The immature cones are proactively pruned and an area is roped off during selected years to reduce risks.

Considerations

In the Design & Tree Review Board on 2/27/24 it was noted the city approved plan for the Barlow development included a condition that the historically significant bunya bunya would not be cut down. The "risks" were known to property owner as they agreed to city approved development plan for the Barlow. The property owner recently petitioned to remove the tree to expand an existing pub patio and include a children's area. The Design and Tree Review Board conducted a considerable review (over the span of 3 meetings) and declined the petition to remove this 140 year old tree.

Does building a children's area in a pub next to highway 12 make sense? Cut down a tree, so kids can frolic next to a major roadway with idling cars?

Recommendation

Deny appeal to remove this historic **bunya bunya tree.**

Owner could consider pruning immature cones every 3 years and if needed roping off area under tree during mature cone periods.

Adding a plaque near the tree outlining its historic significance would be a nice addition to highlight the Burbank's history in Sebastopol.

Respectfully,
Michelle Kelly

