

**SHADE TREE AND BEAUTIFICATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
January 16, 2025, 12:00 P.M.
MILLCREEK PARKS OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present:

St. George City Parks Division Deputy Director/City Urban Forester Ben Neumann
St. George City Arborist Clifton Christensen
Board Member Conn Wood
Board Member Bonnie Pendleton
Board Member Steve Kemp
Board Member Johnson Sorenson via Cell Phone
Applebee's Restaurant Representative Paul Star
Secretary Rachel Hurd
St. George Parks Manager Todd Steed
City of St. George Civil Attorney Daniel Baldwin
St. George Community Development Planner Brett Hamilton

Excused:

Board Member Gil Almquist

1. Discussion and consideration of tree(s) removal on location at 156 South River Road, St. George Utah, 84790 - Paul Star, Applebee's Restaurant

Ben Neumann welcomed everybody to the Shade Tree Advisory Board meeting on January 16, 2025 and said we had three items up for discussion on the agenda today. Ben Neumann said the first one is discussion and consideration of tree(s) removal on location at 156 South River Road in St. George and Paul Star from Applebee's was there representing. Ben Neumann said one thing before Paul Star goes, Ben Neumann wanted to go around the room and introduce ourselves and when we are speaking Rachel Hurd knows when she's typing the minutes we try to say our first names like, "this is Ben Neumann" and then you can say your comment. Ben Neumann introduced himself as working for the City of St. George and the Urban Forester for the City of St. George and the facilitator for this meeting. Next was Bonnie Pendleton, shade tree board member and has been for quite a while and has been in the green industry for 35 years and mostly concerned with keeping as much fluffy over the City as possible. Next was Paul Star, representing Applebees and he is an area manager out of Salt Lake and he has been with them for 27 years. Next was Todd Steed, parks department Parks Manager. Next was Rachel Hurd, the recorder. Next was Clifton Christensen, the City Arborist. Next was Daniel Baldwin, assistant City Attorney. Next was Conn Wood, Shade Tree board member. Next was Steve Kemp, City Council member and Shade Tree board member. Next was Tyler Kell, City of St. George power

superintendent. Next was Brett Hamilton, City of St. George Planning Division. Ben Neumann welcomed everyone and said that Paul Star was here with Applebee's and he turned the time over to him to discuss. Todd Steed asked Ben Neumann if we wanted to take John Sorenson off of the phone since he's sick now that we had Steve Kemp there. Ben Neumann asked John Sorenson if he wanted to hang on and he said he would just listen in

Paul Star said basically what they would like to do is cut down the four trees. He said two of them in the pictures that he sent Ben Neumann you can already see that they are diseased and already dying, the very two on the end and then the two front ones are getting diseased. Paul Star said in his opinion, in ten years they aren't going to be there anyhow and what they would like to do is cut them down, plant new trees, and relandscape it. Paul Star said they would also be willing to plant two trees for St. George City somewhere else if they would like them to, just for letting them cut them down. Paul Star said right now they have stuck about \$500,000 into that building over the last two years and that's including the sign out there so they have put a lot of money into it and they don't feel like they are 100% getting their return on it and a lot of it has to do with visibility. Paul Star said about 20 years ago roughly Applebee's came into the St. George area and landscaped that area, Susan Meyers, the lady that picked out the trees that they put there and when she picked them out she probably wasn't thinking about how they were going to look twenty years from now and because of that they are basically just asking us permission to cut down trees that they planted themselves.

Ben Neumann said one reason why he is here is because those trees are in a commercial setting and where they are located they are considered a street tree, so that's one reason why we're here. Ben Neumann said he took some of those pictures too and he tried to get pictures of far down River Road where you could possibly still see the sign and things. Ben Neumann said he believes it was four years ago these trees came to the Shade Tree board for the same thing and the recommendation was to just trim a branch or two from one of the raywood ash trees to make the sign a little more visible and he believes the City of St. George went and did that. Paul Star said his understanding is that it didn't help a lot on that and he does know that Gary was the one that came here originally and spoke with them and spoke with you guys and the tree committee that cuts down the trees also and Gary did tell Paul Star that they did cut a couple back and it didn't really seem to help. Ben Neumann said he probably could have looked back and seen the branch there but he didn't. Paul Star said unfortunately when Ben Neumann took his pictures it was a couple of weeks ago and that's why Paul Star wanted the pictures he originally took during the summer right there. Steve Kemp asked if it was the last picture and Paul Star said he believes so and you can see on that picture that the two are dying and the two of them should be cut down no matter what. Paul Star said the other two you can see are getting that other whatever that disease is in them and if you look at the trees across the street you can see whatever disease that their trees have, the trees across the street are getting it too, some type of bug but Paul Star isn't 100% sure what it is but definitely there's something causing the trees to go out. Ben Neumann and

Todd Steed said probably a sooty canker for ash trees. Paul Star said there's definitely something in them and they can see that. Paul Star said he honestly thinks that ten years from now they won't be there just because of that.

Bonnie Pendleton asked Ben Neumann if they were all ash or if any of them are bradford. Ben Neumann said he thinks they are all raywood ash. Paul Star said they are. Bonnie Pendleton said for some reason she thought maybe the ones on the side used to be bradford that are now gone. Ben Neumann said he thinks there is one bradford. Ben Neumann said kind of in the driveway strip. Bonnie Pendleton asked Paul Star how many years these trees have been in and Paul Star said they put them up roughly 20 years ago. Bonnie Pendleton said that's a good run for street trees, it's not the trees fault, it's what they've had to endure in their life. Paul Star said like he said they would be willing to go through landscape, but definitely make it look good and if the tree board is worried about shade trees they would be willing to also plant a couple trees somewhere else if they would like them to. Bonnie Pendleton said the trees that are on the property at this point are planted proportionally to the ordinance that states that the frontage of the property needs to have a shade tree every 30-40 feet so if the trees were removed trees would be put back 30-40 feet across the front end. Paul Star said yeah, he wasn't aware of that but if that's how we wanted them to do it. Paul Star said they probably would put in trees that are more like in the beginning of River Road, further down that aren't quite as high. Bonnie Pendleton said if it comes to that. Paul Star said they would put in what they want them to, they are willing to work with us and do what we want them to do. Bonnie Pendleton asked if they are still viable enough to prune. Ben Neumann said yeah. Steve Kemp said the one on the south end looks like it's in the worst shape. Paul Star said the two on the very south end are. Ben Neumann said the one on the south end is definitely the worst one. Ben Neumann asked Brett Hamilton if it was every 30 feet and Brett Hamilton said it's every 30 feet. Ben Neumann told Paul Star every 30 feet of frontage the landscape ordinance is they would have to put a tree in. Paul Star said they would do, that's not a problem and he's just hoping they will work with them a little bit on this because it's definitely not helping their business so they definitely want their front to look great, the area they have out there.

Ben Neumann said one of his concerns is that if he were awarded the removal, a shade tree variety is what they would expect. Paul Star said they would give them a plan before they did. Ben Neumann said his one worry is those trees are blocking his sign, in five years or ten years the trees are going to be blocking your sign. Ben Neumann said he feels like with those trees there, they could do some cosmetic pruning where on a new tree you plant it, you plant it in front of that sign and it's going to be good for a few years but then after that, your options are to top the tree or whatever and that's just not a practice that we do. Steve Kemp was looking at the overhead aerial on that and asked Paul Star if there was landscaping where they took out a bunch of turf or grass and put in some gravel and bushes around the trees at some point. Paul Star said the possibility does exist but he was not over this area at the time so his information on when

they planted the trees came from Gary but Paul Star does think they did something there. Steve Kemp asked Todd Steed if he could go to the county's website and pull up historical aerial from washco.utah.gov. Steve Kemp said if he remembers right this was all grass at one point and then some grass was taken out which is part of the City's goal to remove decorative lawn and the way they looked at it is if the only time someone walked on that lawn was pushing to mower, it probably needs to come out. Ben Neumann said kind of unusable turf and Steve Kemp said yeah if it doesn't serve a purpose. Steve Kemp asked Todd Steed to look up 2006 high res aerial and Paul Star said he knows there isn't any grass up on River Road. Todd Steed asked if it was going to be under maps and Steve Kemp asked if he was on the City's website and Todd Steed said he was on the County's website and then gave his laptop to Steve Kemp to look up the aerial view. Ben Neumann said there is lawn there now, a small section of grass and Bonnie Pendleton said on the south end of the property.

Todd Steed showed a picture of the current view from two or three years ago and said he is assuming that it all used to be grass and then they went in and did. Todd Steed said that picture was four months ago. Bonnie Pendleton said that could've accelerated the plant failing because a lot of the times when trees are planted in a grass area for the first years of its life it's getting watered along with the grass and the tree has a tendency to flush out and be quite lush and then the lawn is removed and a lot of the times not enough irrigation is put back around the tree and a lot of the times people will put an emitter to the trunk of the tree and that's all they do, they do not put drip rings around the tree to where it comes out to the edge of the canopy or even 4 or 5 feet away from the tree which tends to make the tree thin from the top down and a lot of times people think that it's a disease, well it's a manmade disease, we made that happen, we basically took all the nutrients from that tree, all that water so now it's starting to just deteriorate. Bonnie Pendleton said so sometimes pruning and putting water back those trees can flush back out again and there's no power lines, that's a bonus. Bonnie Pendleton said she sees down the road and she watches parking lots a lot and she watches where people park in parking lots a lot and people love to park in the shade especially in our seven months of summer and it makes a big difference and she knows for a fact that those would be decent trees to park underneath in the summer months. Steve Kemp showed Ben Neumann on Todd's laptop that there used to be grass up there too.

Steve Kemp said he is sympathetic to his plight because he likes the Oriental Chicken Salad. Everybody laughed and Bonnie Pendleton said it is the best one in town and Steve Kemp said he actually ate there this week. Steve Kemp said they have done a great job on the inside of their building with the upgrades and updating and Steve Kemp wonders what the solution here is that isn't just hack them all down, put all new ones in and ten years from now we're in the same place. Steve Kemp said this one on the end he thinks it might be worth taking a harder look at to see if we are dealing with that canker and the one next to it but the other two seem to be really and he knows those are the ones that are closer to the sign which is the challenge but it seems

like this one on the end is almost tall enough that you might be able to lift the canopy a little bit to where you can get your line of sight to your signage. Bonnie Pendleton said it looks like it's been lifted once. Ben Neumann said like he said, in 2020 they came to the shade tree board and that's what was recommended and like Ben Neumann said they had their tree crew go out and you can see there was a pretty big branch that was removed. Ben Neumann said it's hard to tell how much that branch was actually blocking or what it was doing but the evidence is there, a pretty good sized branch.

Paul Star said he knows when you're driving down River Road towards, you just can't see the sign or you just can't see them very well at all because of the blockage. Todd Steed said he travels quite a bit and he knows he never drives down the street looking for a sign to eat somewhere just with technology these days he looks at "food near me", clicks on it, and navigation takes him there. Todd Steed said if Paul Star needs his sign to be seen, his options are probably better off to lower the sign underneath the tree canopy than it is to cut trees down, plant new trees that we are going to have issues with in 20 years. Paul Star said to Todd Steed you're talking about you individually and asked if he had those statistics to back up what he is saying. Todd Steed said he doesn't have the statistics. Todd Steed said his recommendation would be it would be better to lower the sign, Applebee's isn't going anywhere, it would be better to lower the sign rather than cut trees down, plant new trees that are shade trees that are eventually going to put us in the same situation. Steve Kemp said landscape the whole area and from an economic perspective, if you could use the same signage and just drop it to a ten foot monument instead of it being a pole sign you might be the same dollars as doing all of this landscaping work. Bonnie Pendleton said she doesn't know if this is an option, but on the south end of the property there coming down River Road you're going to see that sign first thing, the sign isn't blocked coming down the right hand side of the road. Bonnie Pendleton said going north bound on the road it would be blocked from quite a ways back but is there a possibility they can have a lower sign on the south side. Steve Kemp said that's what he thought too, a small monument one on the entrance. Bonnie Pendleton said just even on a diagonal almost to where you've got them coming and going. Paul Star said he understands what they are saying and that sign there is a digital board and it's about 90,000-100,000 dollars and Bonnie Pendleton said she wasn't really thinking the exact same thing. Bonnie Pendleton said right there where that grass is, a monument sign, it wouldn't have to have all of the digital. Steve Kemp said it could just be a static monument sign. Bonnie Pendleton said it might look really nice and the colors would really pop and she thinks it would be more visible for Applebee's. Ben Neumann said if they did try a monument sign there for sight issues there could be a setback and Ben Neumann doesn't know what the sign ordinance is.

Bonnie Pendleton said they just don't have the sign people in there today and Brett Hamilton said he does signs too. Brett Hamilton said it talks about being on this commercial frontage on River Road it's allowed one free standing sign and you can have a second if you have more than

300 feet of frontage and Brett Hamilton doesn't believe Applebee's has more than 300 feet of frontage and Bonnie Pendleton said oh darn it, it was a thought. Brett Hamilton said as she was speaking he was looking it up to make sure. Steve Kemp asked if he pulled up a measurement to make sure and Brett Hamilton said he would pull it up and Bonnie Pendleton said it's gotta be close. Brett Hamilton said it has 200 feet of frontage and Bonnie Pendleton said shoot. Ben Neumann said just looking at picture three, their south facing side of the building is a pretty good billboard in and of itself, Ben Neumann had never really noticed that they have a pretty good wide open right there. Ben Neumann asked Conn Wood if he had any comments. Conn Wood said he drove over there today and he thinks that when he looked at it obviously it's winter and the leaves are down and off so sometimes when you go and look in the winter, you're like woah there's an issue but he agrees with Todd Steed. Conn Wood said he's old school but if he wants to go to a restaurant is he going to base it on a tree. Paul Star said you would be basing it on statistics then and doing research to find it, but you're not. Conn Wood said the aesthetic beauty of the trees he can't see anything wrong with the trees and if they need pruning, he would suggest they be pruned rather than removed and that's just his thoughts, like he said he drove over there today. Ben Neumann asked John Sorenson if he had any comments. John Sorenson said he would just mirror everything else that has been said. John Sorenson said he remembers talking about this in 2019, 2020 and talking about just trimming them in, trimming the trees so the line of sight would be better coming from the north side for that big sign they put in. John Sorenson said he likes the idea of once again, a nice trim on those trees and maintaining those trees and they'll be beautiful. Ben Neumann asked if anybody else had anything. Nobody said anything so Ben Neumann asked if somebody would like to make a motion

Steve Kemp said he had more discussion. Steve Kemp asked if we have a program for going out and looking at the amount of irrigation that areas like this have. Todd Steed said he doesn't know if we have a program in place but we definitely have people who can help with that. Steve Kemp says he knows they can come out and look at how many emitters, this many at this location, and like Bonnie Pendleton mentioned if when they took all that grass out all they did was drop one or two emitters right next to the trunk it would have the effect of shocking that tree and Steve Kemp is wondering if we couldn't send somebody out there to work with Applebee's to look at one of the things that would need to possibly help. Steve Kemp also likes the idea of lifting up those trees that get closer and that one on the end Steve Kemp thinks they need to look at to figure out if, those two on the end, whether or not they do have a disease. Steve Kemp said he agrees with Paul Star that if they have a canker in those trees it's just a matter of time and he knows at his office building he's got a lot of nice mulberries that are about 40 years old that shade their parking lot and a couple of them that the arborist just said "this ones probably got one of these types of diseases in it, but let's just milk it along as long as we can and keep the shade as long as we can and prune out the dead and see how long it lasts". Steve Kemp said that's been in a parking lot off the street because they want the shade from the trees and obviously this group's intentions is to find a way to maintain as many street trees as we can with the heat island and all

those other factors that come into play that push up our utility expenses and heat index in the valley as more and more development happens and we end up with more black asphalt and less greenery but at the same time trying to save water by getting rid of that decorative lawn. Steve Kemp said those are thoughts that I just have and he can boil it into a motion if we would like.

Adjourn:

Motion: Steve Kemp made a motion to deny Applebee's the removal of these trees with the following caveats: somebody from City of St. George Parks Divisions goes out and looks at the amount of irrigation the trees are getting, determines the level of disease that may or may not be in all four trees, take a look at how healthy they are and make recommendations to Applebee's about how they could lift the canopy on the north two trees to increase visibility of their sign

Second: Bonnie Pendleton seconded the motion

Ben Neumann opened the motion for discussion and Steve Kemp said he had discussion on his own motion.

Motion amendment: Steve Kemp made an amendment to the motion that if it is determined that the southern most tree is diseased and needs to be removed, that we consider approval of removal of that tree and replacement with a similar tree

Second: Conn Wood seconded the amendment to the motion

Ben Neumann opened the motion for discussion and asked if anybody had anything. Paul Star said unfortunately he thinks that this was decided before he even came down what they were going to do. Steve Kemp said he doesn't think it was, they haven't been talking to each other. Paul Star said he knows, but to a certain degree it was, that's the way he felt it was. Paul Star said maybe not from Steve Kemp in particular for sure, but as far as Ben Neumann goes he is the one he's been talking on the phone with about this and Ben Neumann didn't give him any indication that he strongly felt like the trees needed to stay and Paul Star honestly felt like he was coming down here with the opportunity of possibly having them removed. Steve Kemp said there is a possibility of having that tree removed and this tree being pruned up and the City staff coming out and providing their expertise to help you figure out how to prune these trees and diagnose them for possible disease. Ben Neumann said he has talked to Paul Star and the two trees on the south they did talk about and like he said he's not on the board, he's just the facilitator and he hasn't talked to anybody and Paul Star said he knows and understands but you're who they listen to.

Todd Steed said he would disagree. Ben Neumann doesn't have the ability to read the Shade Tree Boards' mind. Todd Steed said he's been to these meetings a lot of times and there's been trees that he thought for sure were staying that got taken out and trees he thought were getting taken out that stayed so he wouldn't point that finger. Bonnie Pendleton said one thing that they can help him with is if the littlest tree is taken out, they can help with suggestions on trees that would be a smaller sized tree that would be beneficial to put in that area, something that could handle the heat a little bit more. Bonnie Pendleton said we have a lot more trees now than when these trees were planted 20 years ago so there's some varieties now that are aesthetically pleasing and possibly even put a couple more along the landscape strip on the southside of the building that used to have a couple trees in it that maybe a couple trees could go back. Bonnie Pendleton said we would like to see Applebee's stay here, she has always frequented the place for many years and her youngest daughter used to work there and they also have to keep green. Bonnie Pendleton looks at a business that has greenery and well kept greenery as a well run business and Paul Star said he understands completely and the comment was made earlier that Applebee's isn't going anywhere just to put that out there and thank you for your time and he appreciates it. Daniel Baldwin said we have a motion on the table but we need to vote. Ben Neumann said as of right now the four trees are going to stay and somebody from Parks is going to go inspect or assess the irrigation and make any recommendations if we see fit, the furthest south tree when they are there and when they inspect it if it's in rough shape they can request removal for that tree and they can replace that one. Steve Kemp also wanted to talk about how the City can give more recommendations on pruning the northern two trees, that was part of his motion to increase visibility of the sign. Clifton Christensen said with it being a protected street tree an ISA certified arborist can help them mitigate the problems with that and they'll do a proper job for you, so just make sure you keep an eye on the ISA part of the arborists

Vote: Ben called for a vote, as follows:

Bonnie Pendleton - aye

Conn Wood - aye

John Sorenson - aye

Steve Kemp - aye

Gil Almquist - Not present

The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Paul Star said thank you and Steve Kemp said we want to help you where we can and Paul Star said he understands. Steve Kemp said at the end of the day when you talk about the best time to plant trees was 20 years ago, the next best time is today. Steve Kemp said we really want to help your business stay successful and Paul Star said unfortunately we are just paying the price for not knowing what we were planting 20 years ago.

2. Discussion and consideration of tree(s) removal on location at 275 South Valley View Drive, St. George, Utah, 84770 - Kent Rampton, Willow Run

Ben Neumann introduced the second item on the agenda as follows: discussion and consideration of tree(s) removal on location at 275 South Valley View Drive. Ben Neumann said with this one, Shane Moore, himself, the landscaper and the HOA President Kent Rampton met up on Tuesday and they came to a solution and this one has been considered so they are going to remove the pine trees and they are going to save the one blue atlas cedar there and the City is going to trim some of the dead out of it and clean it up a little bit but that is kind of it. Steve Kemp asked if it is an action item or determination. Daniel Baldwin said it's just informational and established for the public record. Steve Kemp asked if they decided to just take these out and is just demonstrating his ignorance here, but can the City make the determination to pull the trees unilaterally. Daniel Baldwin said that the ordinance is that the City forester has ultimate authority and this board is recommended to the forester. Steve Kemp said even if Willow Run said they didn't want their trees taken out, which obviously they do, the forester can still come in and take them out if he deemed necessary. Ben Neumann said that's never going to happen unless there's a hazard. Ben Neumann said we have had some where they have had public notices where they have said "this is a dead tree that's going to fall on your house or on the road" and we'll send a notice and if they don't do anything we can go in there and remove that tree. Steve Kemp said he just wants to understand the code. Daniel Baldwin said the ordinance only allows us to force a private property owner to remove a tree if it could potentially pose a hazard to public or private property. Steve Kemp said thank you, I appreciate that. Bonnie Pendleton asked if Willow Run is planning on relandscaping. Ben Neumann said they are going to plant 25 new trees, they are going to be low lying because of the powerlines and they felt like it was a good choice and those trees Ben Neumann met with Kent Rampton in August and September, Shade Tree was in October and he's seen more decline in them since then. Bonnie Pendleton was really worried about them in December, they were looking pretty piqued and they have been there a long time. Steve Kemp said the way they were topped and hacked out was pretty rough and Bonnie Pendleton said they are just doing their job and Steve Kemp I know they are just doing their job. Steve Kemp said the top of the tree got to a certain size and you can't let the power turn off. Bonnie Pendleton said that was such a beautiful development when it went in and inside the gates of that development is still really quite flush with plants so it'll be nice to kind of see that rejuvenated.

3. Consider approval of the minutes from the meeting held on October 17, 2024

Ben Neumann introduced the last item on the agenda as follows: consider approval of the minutes from the meeting held on October 17, 2024

Adjourn:

Motion: Steve Kemp made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on October 17, 2024

Vote: Ben Neumann called for a vote, as follows:

Bonnie Pendleton - aye

Conn Wood - aye

Steve Kemp - aye

John Sorenson - aye

Gil Almquist - Not present

The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Meeting Adjournment:

Motion: Bonnie Pendleton called a motion to end the meeting.

Second: Steve Kemp seconded the motion

Vote: Ben Neumann called for a vote, as follows:

Bonnie Pendleton - aye

Conn Wood - aye

Steve Kemp - aye

John Sorenson - aye

Gil Almquist - Not present

The vote was unanimous, and the meeting was adjourned

/s/Rachel Hurd

Rachel Hurd, Secretary