

From: Rita [<mailto:ritamitchell@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 11:08 AM
To: Thacher, Jill
Subject: Request to delay decision on tree removal, 529 Sixth Street

Dear Ms. Thacher and Historic District Commissioners,

I am writing as a long-time resident of the Old West Side Historic District, to express my concern with a request to remove a landmark walnut tree on the property of 529 Sixth Street. I understand that the request to remove the tree has to do with the family's concerns about the tree nut allergies of a child who resides at the home. I recognize the serious nature of such allergies, and want the child to have a long and healthy life. At the same time, I ask for the decision to be made in a way that supports our historic districts, public and environmental health, and the sense of community well-being that we all share.

The request for the tree removal has come to my attention just this week, as it is being presented to the HDC for a decision. I ask for a postponement of the HDC decision for the following reasons:

-The request to remove a landmark tree in a historic district is unusual and may set a precedent for future decisions. The tree in question has been a landmark feature of its neighborhood for a long time. The neighborhood and the tree deserve a discussion that is the result of more than a perfunctory decision on its life.

-Tree nut production will not be present until later in the calendar year. We have time for some additional discussion in order to come to a long-term decision that will support our community in an amicable manner, without immediate risk to the health of the child. Removal of the tree will have a long-term effect on all involved. Mitigation takes more time than is required by planting a young tree.

-Removal of the tree in question will not remove potential exposure to tree nuts, as the Old West Side has many nut-producing trees on both public and private property.

-The tree in question has been a part of Ann Arbor's urban forest for over 100 years, likely for at least the period of time since the house was built on the property. Providing comparable ecological services of cleaning air, absorbing rainwater, and providing sources of food for birds and other animals in the area may take a large number of replacement trees, and will take many years. In fact, it takes well over 40 years to replace a landmark tree.

-Ann Arbor has lost many trees, many of them of landmark status, through attrition and due to maintenance deferred within the last 10 years, because of loss of staffing and focus of attention on removal of ash trees. As a whole, the city needs its landmark trees, to support our history and our pride of name. We should not take lightly the loss of a landmark tree.

I have not met the neighbor who has made the request. I want to continue to enjoy a comfortable neighboring environment for all of us, and hope to be involved in a conversation with the

neighbor who is making the request, to exchange concerns and ideas, so that we may all have what we consider to be a good outcome of a decision.

I ask that you defer a decision on the request to remove the walnut tree at 529 Sixth Street that is before you tonight, and that you include my comments and request in the packet of materials for the Historic District Commission's review for the meeting tonight, February 11, 2016.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rita Mitchell

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