

10 November, 2009

Beebe Longstreet, Chair
Park & Recreation Commission
City of Santa Barbara

Dear Chair Longstreet and Members of the Commission:

In response to inquiries from individuals interested in serving on the Street Tree Advisory Committee, members of the committee discussed the matter of required City residency at our November 5th meeting. We are concerned that the residency restriction results in both a smaller pool of potential members and missed opportunities to take advantage of a wider breadth of knowledge in the community.

Given the Committee's responsibility for advising your Commission on matters of our urban forest, and the faith that you presumably have in our judgment regarding these issues, we believe that our group should be composed of individuals with knowledge of and expertise in arboriculture and related areas.

Our committee is currently composed of a mix of three landscape designers, a horticulturist, and a certified arborist. We believe this combination provides a well balanced discussion regarding removal requests, street tree designations, and revisions to the Street Tree Master Plan. We feel that, in order to be assured of recruiting the best possible applicants to fill future vacancies, your Commission should be able to seek interested individuals from beyond the city limits.

We do not believe there is any justification for restricting appointments to City residents, as there appears to be no correlation between residency and competence. An interested expert, who cares, and is willing to volunteer her or his time to helping us achieve our goal of maintaining a healthy, diverse urban forest, should not be denied the chance, regardless of residency.

Four of our five committee members (one was absent) voted unanimously to send this letter requesting that you amend the city residency requirement for Street Tree Advisory Committee appointments to encompass all of Santa Barbara County, without delay.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carol Bornstein, Chair
Street Tree Advisory Committee