

Minutes of 9/7 Coral Tree meeting

Teri Redman Kahn made introductions. A Fact sheet-San Vicente Coral Trees was handed out and the following panel members were introduced: Lisa Smith, Registered Consulting Arborist and Brentwood resident
Hector Banuelos, LA Urban Forestry Supervisor
Peter Provenzale, Santa Monica Manager, Pruning
Wister Dorta, Santa Monica Manager, Planting

The San Vicente median is owned by the City of LA. While the City provides minimal water and bi-monthly mowing, there is no money for maintenance or tree trimming.

Nancy Freedman is responsible for the Coral Tree Fund which is an endowment. The interest from this fund pays for annual tree trimming and the purchase and maintenance of new trees. New trees are planted when older ones die off.

There is no Business Improvement District in the Brentwood business corridor and this is a problem. All of the decision-making is being done by non-professionals. Unlike other areas of the City and Santa Monica, we do not have a master plan or long-range vision for this area.

Challenges-

-Gophers from the east (VA Property) eat the roots of newly planted trees. This issue needs to be resolved before any new planting can take place. Since July the City has been trapping them and trying to keep the numbers manageable. This is probably an issue that will be with us going forward. The gophers are also now moving west and evidence of their activity can be seen west of Bundy.

-Aging trees are 60 years old. Like old people, they have a tougher time fighting off diseases as they age. Oak root fungus is a serious problem for our older trees as they were over-watered decades ago.

-Climate Change has created additional stress such as drought, more insect activity, etc. The trees west of Bundy are doing better than those to the east. This may be due to warmer, drier climate, foot traffic on the tree roots, pollution due to car traffic. Although this is one stand of trees, the stresses east and west of Bundy must be acknowledged in any plans going forward.

-It is difficult to source good Coral Tree specimens.

Lisa presented a power point that gave an overview of the situation. Here are some highlights:

The trees were installed in 1960's and first generation trees are fading out. Single stem coral trees are the best but hard to find good quality trees. Examples of various coral tree issues were shown. Some had oak root fungus, some were asymmetrical, etc. The Environmental team conducts an inventory of the trees every few years. It is attached. As of July 2017 we had 122 trees. We have lost @7 since then. All trees marked #1 are either going or gone.

The Santa Monica Managers spoke.

SM has 166 corals-1/3 young1/3 mature1/3 over matured which they prune every 12-18 months. SM installed an underground bubbler system on SVB to see if the Corals would do better. They are not.

They are monitoring insect infestation and have a stem borer. We do not have this borer.

An experimental planting on Olympic between 11th & 14th was discussed.

A mix of native trees in a staggered pattern will be completed this year.

Each median will have a different tree to see how they thrive.

Audience Participation. Approx 20 in attendance

A survey was made available:

A. Continue to replant new Coral Trees?

B. Replace fallen Corals with a hardier species of tree?

C. Plant a few medians in the business district with alternative designs, pavers,public art etc.?

The discussion was lively and contentious.

Teri Redman Kahn
Environmental Alternate
Brentwood Community Council