

From: Cherry, Brian K
Sent: 6/3/2010 2:04:23 PM
To: Brown Carol (cab@cpuc.ca.gov) (cab@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: FW: Update regarding TJ Martin and Jeffrey Fontana Parks

Carol - this is a letter sent to residents by the local Council member.

From: Office of Councilmember Nancy Pyle [mailto:District10@sanjoseca.gov]
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 5:47 PM
To: tj-martin-jeffrey-fontana-parks@googlegroups.com
Cc: jeanne@timesmediainc.com; H [Redacted]
Subject: Update regarding TJ Martin and Jeffrey Fontana Parks

Dear resident,

On Monday, April 5th representatives of TJ Martin and Jeffrey Fontana Parks met with representatives of PG&E, the City of San Jose Parks Department and me to discuss PG&E's tree removal plans for the areas under their high voltage transmission lines. I feel we took a big step forward in reaching a workable solution to the conflict between trees and high voltage transmission lines in the parks.

TJ Martin and Jeffrey Fontana Parks were created as a part of an agreement between PG&E and the City of San Jose that provided the utility with a right of way for their high-voltage transmission lines while providing Almaden Valley residents with parks. As a part of this agreement, the City of San Jose agreed not to plant any trees that could grow higher than 15 feet underneath the lines. PG&E retained rights to prohibit any trees taller than 15 feet in the parks because the trees could pose a threat to the safety and reliability of the power lines. These lines carry 230 Kilovolts of power and serve customers across the western half of the United States, so PG&E has stringent safety regulations that are not applicable to smaller, power distribution lines.

In December of 2009, concerned that some existing trees were causing a safety hazard for their power lines PG&E announced a proposal to remove 62 trees in 2010 and 78 trees in 2011. Needless to say, this was of grave concern to the neighboring residents.

PG&E held two community meetings where they realized that their original plans were not acceptable to the community. As your representative, I worked with residents, the Parks Department and PG&E to find a different solution.

At the meeting on Monday, April 5th, PG&E agreed to implement a multi-year plan that preserves most of the large Oak trees in the parks, removes only 14 trees and allows for the trimming of four trees in June 2010. Please visit the following links for a map of the trees scheduled for removal. <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/district10/TJ-Fontana2map.PDF> <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/district10/TJ-Fontana1.PDF>

PG&E has identified these trees as a threat to the lines during the hot summer months. PG&E also committed to funding and working with the community to develop a replanting plan to plant compatible trees in appropriate areas of the parks.

I am very pleased that PG&E adjusted their plans to minimize the number of trees that are removed from the parks this year and for their financial contribution to the tree replanting efforts. This revised plan would not have been developed if park users and neighbors had not spoken up about their concerns with the tree removals. I am grateful for the input given by the community on this issue.

Unfortunately, many of the trees PG&E originally identified still need to be removed in future years, but PG&E has committed to pruning most of the older oak trees instead of removing them. PG&E has also agreed to conduct annual assessments of the parks' trees and remove only those that are absolutely necessary.

Protecting bird habitats in the park during and after the removals is essential and I am grateful for the Audubon Society's offer to assist PG&E in protecting nesting birds. PG&E has also agreed to hire a biologist to survey the parks immediately before the tree removals to prevent nest disturbances.

In the fall of 2010, PG&E will conduct another assessment of the parks to identify trees that pose a hazard to the lines in 2011. TJ Martin and Jeffrey Fontana Park neighbors will be contacted at that time to review any proposed tree removals for 2011 after the fall parks survey.

In the coming months, I look forward to working with the TJ Martin and Jeffrey Fontana Park Restoration Subgroup to create beautiful parks that are compatible with the high voltage transmission lines for many years to come. The Restoration Subgroup will present a proposal for near-term replanting efforts to the community as a whole later this spring. If you have any questions about the Restoration Subgroup, please contact Pat Pizzo by email ppizzo@email.sjsu.edu.

Many thanks for everyone for their work on this issue.

All the best,

Councilmember Nancy Pyle