



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:21-4234

Agenda Item Number: 14.

Agenda Date: 6/9/2021

In Control: Planning Commission

DEPARTMENT: Development Services

SUBJECT: TPV 21-070 Tree Preservation Variance for Elm Trails Subdivision

SUMMARY:

Request by Mr. Richard Mott, P.E. for approval of a tree preservation variance request from Unified Development Code Section 35-523 (h), “significant trees shall be preserved at eighty (80) percent and heritage trees at one hundred (100) percent preservation within both the 100-year floodplains and environmentally sensitive areas”, located north of the intersection of Elm Trail and Walzem Rd in San Antonio. Staff recommends Approval. (Mark Bird, City Arborist, (210) 207-0278, Mark.Bird@sanantonio.gov <<mailto:Mark.Bird@sanantonio.gov>>, Development Services Department)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project: BSA# APP-20-38800016

Council District: ETJ

Consultant: Travis Elseth, P.E. with KFW Engineers

Staff Coordinator: Mark Bird, City Arborist, (210) 207-0278

ANALYSIS:

The Development Services Department (DSD) has reviewed the information presented in Mr. Travis Elseth’s letter submitted June 1st, 2021. Please refer to the applicant’s letter and site plan for more information.

The Unified Development Code (UDC) - Article V, Section 35-523 (h), states that ‘Significant trees shall be preserved at eighty (80) percent preservation within both the 100-year floodplains and environmentally sensitive areas. Heritage trees shall be preserved at one hundred (100) percent preservation within both the 100-year floodplains and environmentally sensitive areas. Mitigation shall be prohibited in floodplains and environmentally sensitive areas except when a variance is granted by the planning commission’.

The applicant wishes to remove significant trees in excess of the minimum preservation requirements for environmentally sensitive areas. DSD staff does agree with the applicant’s request to go below the minimum preservation of significant trees in the floodplain buffer for the following reasons:

1. The proposed site must be embanked to properly drain runoff and meet UDC regulations for residential lots, and to comply with Atlas 14 floodplain delineation requirements. Extreme topography and the proposed delineated Atlas 14 floodplain water surface elevation are the causes for the necessary embankment to the site. The 3 mesquite trees within the buffer are being removed for the construction of a retaining wall to elevate lots above

the proposed delineation of the Atlas 14 floodplain as demonstrated on the tree preservation plan.

2. There are only 3 mesquite trees clustered together within the floodplain buffer, ranging from 11.5 to 14 inches. The limited number of trees located within the ESA area and their distribution on the property did not allow for preservation of the 3 trees.
3. Extreme grading practices became necessary for the Ultimate Development of the site, and even though mass grading is proposed in the floodplain buffer, the owner is not modifying the floodplain portion of the site.
4. To meet the mitigation of 29.2 inches for significant tree removal below minimum preservation requirements in the floodplain buffer, the applicant will plant a total of 96 trees on forty-eight (48) residential lots and upsize each tree from 1.5 to 2-inch caliper. The 48 inches of planted trees is 18.8 inches above the required mitigation of 29.2 inches.

DSD staff agrees with the applicants' request to mitigate for trees removed in excess of the preservation requirements for significant trees in the floodplain buffer. The Variance Request does meet the intent and spirit of the Tree Ordinance therefore, staff recommends approval.