

The Friday Letter: February 26, 2016

Forest Theater:

There have been a few inquiries regarding the status of trees due to the Forest Theater project. Mike Branson reported that several trees were removed that were part of the approved design and plans at the beginning of the construction. He authorized the removal of two pines earlier this month along the north side of the theater structure. Branson had authorized some root cutting to allow construction of the ADA pathway from the parking area to the theater level. One tree tilted over onto the theater during the wind event on Jan. 31-Feb. 1. The adjacent pine, which needed more root pruning for the ADA grade, was considered to have a high risk of failure and was also removed per Mike Branson. To his knowledge there has been no unauthorized tree removal. He did mention a couple of trees on the property died and are still on site but these trees were not construction related. He also assured that tree protection will be monitored twice a week by the forestry staff until the end of the project.

PG&E:

On Friday, February 26, 2016, special counsel for the City submitted Carmel's legal brief to the California Public Utilities Commission. Carmel asked that the Commission fine PG&E millions of dollars for its shoddy recordkeeping practices which caused a welding crew to perform work at the corner of 3rd Avenue and Guadalupe Street with an incorrect map on March 3, 2014. The crew welded into a "live" gas distribution line which contained an unmapped plastic pipe inside, which contributed to a nearby home exploding and putting the community on edge. The brief was submitted after a 3-day trial in late January before the CPUC, where Carmel's attorney's worked alongside attorneys for the CPUC's Safety & Enforcement Division in presenting evidence that PG&E violated state and federal law as a result of its recordkeeping practices relating to the Carmel home explosion. Carmel's brief submitted today laid out the legal arguments supporting PG&E violations and asked the Commission to order fines and remedies against the company, including an order that PG&E executive pay and bonuses should be linked to meeting safety goals. The Commission should issue its proposed order within the next couple months.

Police Department:

Bomb Squad Call-Out: Bomb or Flashlight, What's your opinion?

On 02-24-16, at about 0747 hours, a suspicious device was located by staff inside the Il Fornaio restaurant. As a precautionary measure the building was evacuated and the Monterey County Sheriff Bomb squad arrived and rendered the scene safe. The device was determined the next day to be a homemade flashlight accidentally left by the night cleaning crew. Please see the attached photo of the makeshift flashlight made from a halogen light casing. Investigators reached out to the owner of the cleaning company to explain the importance not to mention the cost of leaving such device unattended. I thought sharing this may enlighten some of you as to the type of situations the police come across and why we do what we do to maintain safety in our community. For more information, the Pine cone reported this incident in this week's Pine Cone.



Photo taken of device found police found at the scene of a suspicious package on Wednesday.