

# STAFF REPORT

DATE: March 7, 2014

**RE: 1700 Washington Street ROW (permit application # 6792)**

FROM: Karen DeMaria, Urban Forestry Manager,  
City of Key West

An application was received for the removal of **(1) Strangler Fig tree**. A site inspection was done on February 20, 2014 and documented the following:

Tree Species: Strangler Fig (*Ficus aurea*)



Diameter: 56" dsh

Location: 20% (tree is located on top of 4 residential water lines and very close to the main water main for the road. Roots are also causing impacts to city road)

Species: 100% (on protected tree list)

Condition: 50% (fair, has been impacted by white fly and is denuded.)

Large canopy tree along roadway.)

Total Average Value = 56%

Value x Diameter = **31 replacement caliper inches**



Thespesia tree-no permit required for removal-ficus completely enveloping tree

Location of FKAA water lines





Water meters



Water line  
locators





FCAA recommends removal of the tree and wants to be on-site while tree is being removed due to possibility of water main break.

Property owner at 1417 Ashby is requesting the tree removal.

**Recommendations: Recommend approval of the removal of (1) Strangler Fig tree located in the City ROW at the 1700 Blk of Washington Street, to be replaced with 31 caliper inches of FL#1 native dicot or fruit trees.**

# Application

April 2014  
TC meeting  
TD



6792

## Tree Permit Application

Date: 3.6.14

Please Clearly Print All Information unless indicated otherwise.

Tree Address 1700 Washington St Row  
Cross/Corner Street 1417 Ashby St  
List Tree Name(s) and Quantity 1- Strangler Fig  
Species Type(s) check all that apply ( ) Palm ( ) Flowering ( ) Fruit ☒ Shade ( ) Unsure  
Reason(s) for Application:

☒ REMOVE ( ) Tree Health ☒ Safety ☒ Other/Explain below  
( ) TRANSPLANT ( ) New Location ( ) Same Property ( ) Other/Explain below  
( ) HEAVY MAINTENANCE ( ) Branch Removal ( ) Crown Cleaning/Thinning ( ) Crown Reduction

Additional Information and Explanation tree is growing over water lines to house -  
road to meter - PRAA + property request removal  
major white fly issues

Property Owner Name City of Key West  
Property Owner eMail Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Property Owner Mailing Address PO Box 1409  
Property Owner Mailing City Key West State FL Zip 33041  
Property Owner Phone Number (305) 809-3879  
Property Owner Signature TDZ

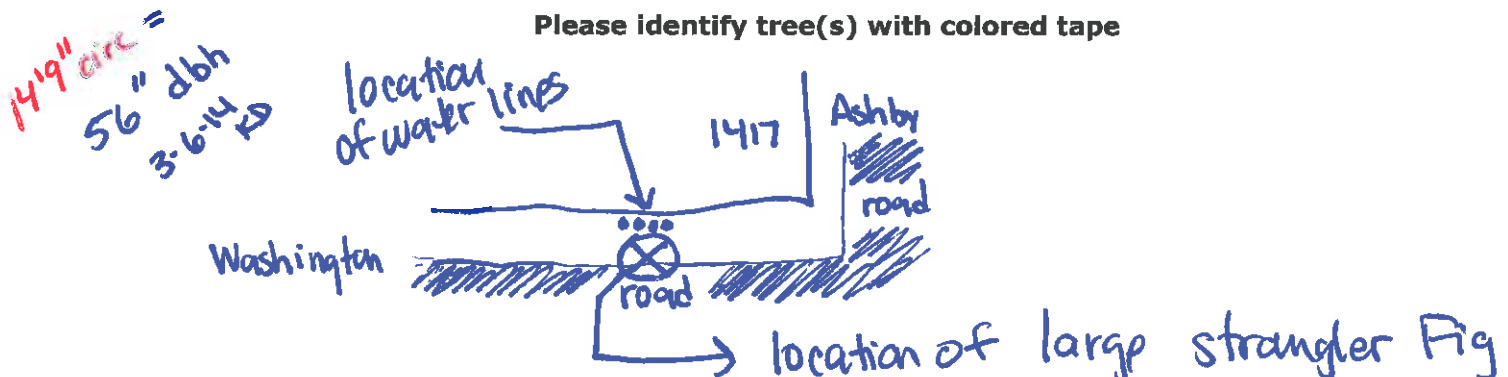
Representative Name Karen DeLania  
Representative eMail Address Urban Forestry  
Representative Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Representative Mailing City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Representative Phone Number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ X 3768

NOTE: A Tree Representation Authorization form must accompany this application if someone other than the owner will be representing the owner at a Tree Commission meeting or picking up an issued Tree Permit.

Tree Representation Authorization form attached ( )

<<<<< Sketch location of tree in this area including cross/corner Street >>>>>

Please identify tree(s) with colored tape



If this process requires blocking of a City right-of-way, a separate ROW Permit is required. Please contact 305-809-3740.



Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

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**Re: 1417 Ashby Street, Key West, FL re the strangler fig on Washington street ROW**

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Moyerman Ruth <rmoyerman@gmail.com>  
To: Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

Wed, Feb 26, 2014 at 10:25 AM

Dear Karen;

It was a pleasure meeting you and Bill Collins at the site, for our previously scheduled meeting of today (February 20) at 9:00 a.m. re the city owned strangler fig tree. This tree is in the right of way on the Washington St. side of my property at 1417 Ashby St. Thank you for the information that the host tree is a fig which is truly nearly strangled to death. I understand that it is not a protected tree.

As per our meeting, my recollection of our conversation is as follows.

You and Bill recognized immediately, and intend to address with the city and the Tree Commission at the April meeting, the fact that my four water mains (I have four ROGO's and rent this property) flow directly under the tree at an underground depth of no more than about eight inches. My water mains are now surrounded on at least three sides by these roots. Recently, (Bill recalls about five or so months ago), the Aqueduct Authority marked the street showing the path of the main lines to the meters for my house, making it official as to the location of the main water lines. The tree is so huge (over 280 inches in circumference) it is bumping up the asphalt road at the water main junction. In my opinion it is a matter of time until some vehicle runs over the growing hump and the roots crush the water line main junctions just beneath it.

I, myself, about two years ago, complained to the Aqueduct Authority about this issue. A gentleman came out then and told me that the tree over the water lines is, or was soon to be a problem. That time is now in Bill's opinion. I certainly concur as that tree has continued to grow apace.

We agreed that I would again contact the Aqueduct Authority by letter as soon as you supply a name of someone appropriate as a first step to seeking tree removal.

I appreciate that your first thought and hope was to save the tree-a feeling which I share. However, after Bill pointed out where the water lines actually flow, my belief that my property is in danger, has now been reinforced. It is my intention, by this email, to put the city on notice that a rupture causing loss of water would not only be a personal catastrophe, but an economic loss if water is interrupted to my tenants. If nothing is done and the unfortunate occurs, I will certainly sue the city for my losses.

The tree provides little canopy as it is constantly denuded by white fly and my direct neighbor across the street has expressed her unhappiness over the gigantic mess that has caused. The tree does not overhang anyone else's property other than mine and a portion of Washington St.

I will keep you informed as to the response of the Aqueduct Authority.

I acknowledge and very much appreciate your assistance and that of the city also. I appreciate your offer to try to find a power washer for cleaning the wide spread mess that white fly pestilence has caused to my house side, porch canopy, picket fence, etc.

Regards,  
Ruth Moyerman

On Feb 24, 2014, at 10:03 AM, Karen DeMaria wrote:





Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

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## Seeking Aqueduct Authority's cooperation to remove a tree which is a threat to water delivery

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Moyerman Ruth <rmoyerman@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 27, 2014 at 10:29 AM

To: mwalterson@fkaa.com, Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

Dear Ms. Walterson;

My name is Ruth Moyerman and I own 1417 Ashby St. Key West. At this property I have four water meters as I have four ROGO's. I am presently in residence in unit 1 at that address to re-rent some units and inspect the property.

My water is delivered from Washington St. Sometime in the not too distant past, the Authority's put four blue stripes on the asphalt street indicating the water lines branch to my property. The lines are on a spot where roots have bumped up the asphalt. One can reasonably speculate that the bump is because the roots are on top of your lines and continuing to grow.

From the location of those markings and the location of my meters (about six feet away) water must be being delivered to my property **entirely beneath a huge strangler fig wrapped around a very small Seaside Mahoe tree-all located in the right of way**. By huge I mean about 280 inches in diameter. I got in touch with the City of Key West about my concerns.

After inspection, the opinion of Bill Collins of the city and Karen DeMaria of the Tree Commission is that this tree's enormous roots are impacting water delivery. I certainly concur which is why I contacted them.

I am very, very concerned that this strangler fig roots (which encompass my meters visibly) has led to a high risk that the water lines will in fact, in the not too distant future, rupture. A visual inspection by Mr. Collins indicates that the water lines are only about eight inches below the surface. If this is verified, the tree is sitting directly on my water lines. I also believe it is likely, on this narrow street, that a vehicle will drive over the growing root caused hump in the road and damage, through mashing the roots, the main water line at its junction with the four lines to my house.

It is requested that the Aqueduct Authority be involved in this matter, as it is your lines.

Your name was suggested as the go-to person to have this matter looked into (or re-looked into). I am requesting that that be done immediately.

The above named city people, when here on the 26th, came reluctantly to the conclusion that it's likely time to have the city owned tree removed. The Authority's verification is vital. No one likes to cut down trees in this town-a view I share. But, I am alarmed enough to have put the City of Key West on notice of the potential economic harm to my property if I lose water in my tenant's units, etc. because of a water disruption caused by the city's tree. Confirmation of the facts and cooperation by your agency is requested.

The Authority's markings are guessed to be no more than about eight or so months old--so presumably this situation is already on your list of problems.

By this email, I am seeking cooperation from the Authority with the city via the Tree Commission in concluding that getting this tree removed is the likely best option. Ms. Karen DeMaria is copied on this email and she is the person to help get all the this together. You are invited to correspond with her directly. I would appreciate being copied.

Ms. DeMaria has put my case on the April 8th Tree Commission agenda. The Authority's input well in advance of that time would be most gratefully appreciated. It is expected that, if the Authority agrees with the other parties, the City will remove this tree--and make this imminent disaster disappear permanently before it happens.



Sincerely,

Ruth Moyerman, owner



Karen DeMaria &lt;kdemaria@keywestcity.com&gt;

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**FYI - the Aqueduct Authority**

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**Moyerman Ruth** <rmoyerman@gmail.com>  
To: Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

Fri, Feb 28, 2014 at 1:04 PM

Dear Ms. DeMaria;

Bobby Frederick, the customer service field operation person from the Aqueduct Authority viewed the tree today. His expertise and responsibility is from the meter to the house, whereas this problem is from the street to the meters. He will be in contact with Tony Campo to view the situation.

From his 25 years experience, he agrees however that there is an impaction, but since the ultimate liability for consequential damage would fall on the city since it is a city tree, it should be the city's call. Nonetheless, he stated that it's been his experience in two other similar situation, that it is best to take out the tree. He noted how large the limbs are, including overhanging the entire street as an indication that the roots are under the entire street--and probably my house and pool as well. He also said that when the stump is ground, the Authority would come if requested.

I asked how deep the water line was and he replied that it is probably from 12 to 24 inches, but that is a best guess. No one really knows. The Authority also does not know where exactly the line branches into the four meters, but is likely under the tree.

Regards,

Ruth Moyerman



Karen DeMaria &lt;kdemaria@keywestcity.com&gt;

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**Strangler Fig removal update**

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**Moyerman Ruth** <rmoyerman@gmail.com>  
To: Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

Tue, Mar 4, 2014 at 9:36 AM

Dear Ms. DeMaria;

I have heard nothing further from the Aqueduct Authority and don't know if the Tony Campo came by or not. If you think his input also would be helpful, it might be better if you contacted him directly. I don't have his phone number.

FYI, we tried washing the fence, but are not strong enough to do the job. Plus the black goo is also up too high to reach in many places on my house and canvas awning. I will have to pay to have it cleaned again. Of course, the fig is now leafing out again--so here we go with another round of white fly.

I am aware from the papers that the Tree Commission gets hell with every tree that comes down--always from uninformed people who are not directly impacted. I have been on a few Boards myself, so I know about public response.

However, if the City fails to take down this tree, the problem won't go away. It will need to continually treat the white fly and to continually trim the roots which surround my water meters and which stretch under my house--a fact you and Bill Collins verbally acknowledged when we three met. In other words, the City isn't going to save any money by failing to get a final resolution.

I will do anything else you think helpful in the matter. You told me you could present my case without my assistance and I count on you to do so. In summary, the tree is huge and growing, the white fly is perennial, making this tree a constant expense to the city. The City is on notice that it is responsible for any and all damages caused to my property or financial interests. Regarding public response, the tree overhang is only on mine and the city property. None of the neighbors are impacted. I am a corner property with only one Washington St. neighbor. That neighbor is a rental property and I have seen the out of state owner only once in five years. The neighbor across Washington St. is bothered by the mess of the continual falling leaves. The tree does not overhang either of those two properties. Finally, the Aqueduct Authority concurs that removal is the best solution, how be it Bobby Fredrick stated to me that it is the city's call since the Aqueduct believes it has no liability. (I don't agree, but that is neither here nor there at this point in time). Essentially his position was that when the tree breaks the water line, they'll come out then and deal with fixing it. That's a cavalier approach reflecting the belief that it's the City on the front line and not the Authority.

Cordially,

Ruth Moyerman





Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

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## Aqueduct Authority was here

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**Moyerman Ruth** <rmoyerman@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 4, 2014 at 11:21 AM

To: Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

Dear Ms. DeMaria;

Tony Decampo and his assistant Curtis were just here. He is adamant that the tree come out and wants the Authority to be here when it does.

He told me you can quote him. He is the person in charge of water from the street to the meters. They want the City to notify them when the tree is to be removed and they will have crew here to reroute the water so that no harm is caused if the city crew hits a line when grinding the roots. He actually sounded pretty alarmed about the situation.

His cell is 305-797-7413.

Cordially,

Ruth Moyerman



Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

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## 1417 Ashby St Stangler Fig on Washignton St

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**Tony Campo** <tcampo@fkaa.com>

Thu, Mar 6, 2014 at 9:08 PM

To: Karen DeMaria <kdemaria@keywestcity.com>

Yes, I met with the customer and the tree is located right on top of their service lines and very close to the water main. Actually when the tree is being removed we would like to have personnel on site just in case the roots from the tree cause the water main to break.

Tony Campo

**From:** Karen DeMaria [mailto:kdemaria@keywestcity.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 04, 2014 3:48 PM

**To:** Tony Campo

**Subject:** 1417 Ashby St Stangler Fig on Washignton St

[Quoted text hidden]