

---

**From:** Emilia Balke <@language-web.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 4:17 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Fwd: Agoura Hills Oak Trees Ordinance  
**Attachments:** IMG\_20200825\_143423.jpg; IMG\_20200825\_130116.jpg

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

[Allow sender](#) | [Block sender](#)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Emilia Balke** <[@language-web.net](mailto:@language-web.net)>

Date: Tue, Aug 25, 2020 at 4:01 PM

Subject: Agoura Hills Oak Trees Ordinance

To: <[northrup@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us](mailto:northrup@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us)>, <[dlopez@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us](mailto:dlopez@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us)>, <[Canstead@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us](mailto:Canstead@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us)>, <[northrup@agourahillscity.org](mailto:northrup@agourahillscity.org)>, <[dlopez@agourahillscity.org](mailto:dlopez@agourahillscity.org)>, <[Canstead@agourahillscity.org](mailto:Canstead@agourahillscity.org)>, <[comments@agourahillscity.org](mailto:comments@agourahillscity.org)>

Cc: <[ibuckleyweber@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us](mailto:ibuckleyweber@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us)>, <[dweber@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us](mailto:dweber@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us)>, <[ibuckleyweber@agourahillscity.org](mailto:ibuckleyweber@agourahillscity.org)>, <[dweber@agourahillscity.org](mailto:dweber@agourahillscity.org)>, Debbie <[dbbih@yahoo.com](mailto:dbbih@yahoo.com)>

Dear Agoura Hills City Council Members,

I am a homeowner residing at 29267 Quail Run Dr. in Agoura Hills. I am writing on my behalf and the behalf of my neighbor Debbie Hawk. Our houses border with the green belt behind Quail Run Drive in the Hill Rise Development. I moved to Agoura Hills in 1996, while my neighbor Debbie Hawk is the original owner of her home. In 1998 I had a beautiful view of the green belt and the hill beyond. Over the following 25 years, several oak trees grew behind my home. My neighbor and I are not sure if someone planted the oak trees, or they were "volunteers." If someone planted them, they did that without regard to the consequences to the adjacent properties.

Oaks are beautiful trees and wonderful in proper settings, but they are not suitable garden trees for small residential lots. The oaks on the common area adjacent to our property have grown very tall. They are too close together and keep producing offshoots. This is an unhealthy setting for the trees and an unsightly and messy jungle in our backyards. What is more, these trees are still very young, only 20-25 years old. A mature oak tree trunk can reach up to 6 feet in diameter, and the branches can spread all across our tiny back yards to the roofs of our homes, making it impossible to grow fruit and vegetables which I grow and would like to continue growing.

The tree branches block our view and the breeze and keep the air in our yards extremely hot. The thick brush also harbors several large squirrel nests and dozens of squirrels. I am unable to protect my fruit from the squirrels with the netting that I have installed. This netting works when there is no access to my fruit trees from the oak tree branches crossing the top branches of my fruit trees. Only keeping the oak branches at least two feet away from my property line at all times will ensure the protection of my fruit with the netting.

While taking these pictures today, I had a squirrel that frightened me because it almost attacked me. It made very loud noises, came down very close to me, and took a threatening pose on a low branch between me and the

steps leading from the green belt up to my yard. I was almost discouraged from taking the steps and had to take a long stick to scare it so that I could walk up to my house, but even at the threat of the stick, it moved only a couple of branches away and maintained the threatening pose from there. I am afraid that this squirrel and possibly other squirrels, too, may have rabies. I feel that a specialist should come to assess the situation. If the squirrels have rabies, before long, one of the people walking in the park may be bitten and infected.

And finally, one of the worst consequences of the infringing branches is that as the trees grow larger, they negatively impact our property value, which is unfair to us. This applies to many homeowners in Agoura Hills.

Our homeowners' association has had the trees trimmed to the extent that is allowed under the oak tree ordinance regulations. I have spent numerous hours requesting that the HOA and city inspectors come to look at the trees and have written lengthy explanations. This last time, we asked for the trimming in the spring of 2019, waited for the HOA contractor to come to do the work until January or February of 2020 and when no actual trimming (only shaving of small twigs) was done, and I wrote a complaint to the HOA, we had to wait until last Thursday, August 20, 2020, for the city oak tree consultant Mr. Ainsworth to come to look at the trees. He said that he could not authorize additional trimming because of the current regulations in the city ordinance and suggested that only the City Council has the authority to issue a permit for removal of large branches or to amend the ordinance.

The presence of branches of protected oak trees over our back yards significantly lowers our properties' values. The City of Agoura Hills Ordinance protecting the Oak Trees is unfair to many homeowners in Agoura Hills and should be amended.

This issue must be resolved now during the dormant season of the oak trees. Now is the time to trim the oaks. The tree branches have grown out of proportion, and their tops are so heavy that they have bent some of the trees and make them grow to the side instead of up. Many branches cross, and some are dangerously hanging over areas where children play. One of the oak trees is on my property line. I request permission to have this tree removed since there is no way to protect my property value from its growing branches and widening trunk. We request a permit to cut all the branches infringing on our property back to the tree trunks regardless of how thick they are and to thin the entire canopies. We request a permit to cut the branches of the canopies all the way around closer to the tree trunks and away from our property lines with a safe margin providing for about four years of growth, which is the average interval of time between the trimmings that the HOA performs. We request a permit for the HOA to top the trees substantially to prevent them from growing tall and maintain them in a way that does not allow growing of wide-spread branches and thick canopies. We request that the Ordinance be changed to require the HOA to maintain a distance of at least 2 feet between our property line and any branch of any oak tree on the common area from the ground to the sky.

This trimming will allow the trees to rebalance themselves. It is good for the health and aesthetic appeal of the trees, and it is the only way to ensure reasonable and efficient use of our property and prevent financial damages to us as homeowners.

I noticed that the closed City Council Meeting on August 26 is canceled due to a lack of issues to discuss. As you can see, this issue is very urgent because the dormant season of the oak trees is short. We request that you consider discussing this issue at your meeting on August 26. We further ask that you give the Hill Rise Association a permit to complete the trimming as specified above and amend the Ordinance protecting the oak trees with a clause that protects the homeowners' right to enjoy their back yards and their view, and ensures that the values of their homes are not adversely affected by oak trees growing on adjacent common areas. The regulation should require that all infringing branches be cut back and maintained at a distance of at least 2 feet away from our property line from the ground to the sky at all times.

I am sharing with you pictures of the oak trees from my house.


Please confirm receipt of this email and let me know if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Emilia Balke

cc Debbie Hawk

Emilia Balke, MA, MBA  
Translator / Interpreter / Voiceover Actor  
Bulgarian • English • German • Macedonian • Russian

 P.O. Box 122 Agoura Hills CA 91376 Tel/Fax: (818) 735-0565 [www.language-web.net](http://www.language-web.net)  
<http://www.proz.com/translator/3281>      <https://www.linkedin.com/in/emiliabalke>





---

**From:** Jason Aiken <...i@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 10:01 PM  
**To:** Kimberly Rodrigues  
**Subject:** eruv violates the separation of church and state

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

[Allow sender](#) | [Block sender](#)

Hi,  
I am sorry about the late edit. Please delete my previous email.

My comment for tomorrow's meeting:

I am for the separation of church and state. I don't think that cities should permit religious construction on public property. Therefore, I am against the eruv that is permitted on public property here in Agoura Hills.

I don't want to enter a special religious zone to go to my house. I do not want to cross a religious boundary to walk to the grocery store.

The eruv creates a private domain. My house is now in a private domain. I want to live in the public domain. If I sell my house, I will have to disclose to the buyers that the house is inside a city permitted religious structure.

Allowing a religious boundary on public property leads to segregation. People, like me, who want public property to be a secular space will move out. They will be replaced by people who want to live under a less secular government, a government that permits a religious boundary on public property.

This has been a difficult position to voice.

When I submitted a letter to the Acorn (our local paper) on the subject, they did not print it. Instead, they altered it, making it longer, then printed it with my name attached. They used words that I would never use. In addition, my letter stated the correct time and date for an Agoura Hills City Council meeting. The Acorn changed the date in my letter to the day after the meeting.

On NextDoor, I learned that it is not possible to post my opinion that a city approved eruv on public property is a violation of the separation of church and state without receiving a lot of negative reaction and name-calling. I have deactivated my NextDoor account.

Thank you for reading. This may be the only forum for my opinion.

Thank you

Jason Aiken