

# Agenda Report



**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, July 9, 2024

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR MERRIAM  
BUILDING OFFICIAL DE SANTE  
SENIOR CODE OFFICER VARGAS

**SUBJECT:** RESOLUTION APPROVING CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$144,827 WITH KOALA TREE CARE (DBA CLEAN TEAM ASSOCIATES) FOR ON-CALL NUISANCE ABATEMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES AND APPROPRIATING \$124,827 FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO ABATE A NUISANCE AT APN:014-021-01

---

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving the contract with Koala Tree Care (DBA Clean Team Associates) to conduct the clearance and cleanup of the public nuisance on the vacant private property at APN 014-021-01, as directed by City Council on April 9, 2024.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On March 26, 2024, the Building Official reported to the City Council the existence of a Nuisance at parcel (014-021-01). Although staff have sent letters, notices, and citations for lack of maintenance, there has been no significant progress achieved by the owner of record. The Building Official's report identified the following items making this property a Nuisance.

- ☐ This property is unsecured, allowing for un-housed people to erect tent like structures throughout the parcel.
- ☐ The property has accumulated significant amounts of abandoned personal property, furniture, trash, and debris creating a blighting factor for the surrounding area.
- ☐ The vegetation has become overgrown which has the potential to create a fire hazard in the dry season.

During the meeting on March 26, 2024, the City Council declared the property a “Nuisance” and directed the Building Official to abate the Nuisance (Resolution No. 44-24 (CM)). A public hearing was also set for April 9, 2024, to hear any comments or objections to the proposed nuisance abatement by the City.

On April 9, 2024, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 59-24 (CM), directing the Building Official to abate the public nuisance at parcel 014-021-01 without delay.

## **DISCUSSION:**

After the April 9, 2024 meeting, staff issued an informal RFP to consultants to clean up the public nuisance. The City received two proposals in the amount of \$125,000 and \$160,000. Both proposals were in amounts much greater than staff anticipated, which requires additional appropriation from the General Fund to move forward.

Staff has had additional conversations with the property owner’s representative, Mr. Karam Singh, about development options for the property and have attempted again to persuade Mr. Singh to clear the encampment on his own, as he has stated that cleanup costs for him would be much less than the costs quoted to the City. However, until now, Mr. Singh has not committed to cleaning up the encampment until he has more certainty about the development potential of the property.

The property is zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential), and is a remainder from the Compton Terrace neighborhood. The property abuts Corralitos Creek as well as commercial agricultural property within the County on the other side of the creek. Development of the parcel is significantly constrained by both the 200-foot agricultural buffer and the 50-foot buffer from the creek (WMC 7-6.152: Riparian Corridor).

Mr. Singh is currently working with a consultant to complete a biotic assessment of the property to determine the appropriate development setback from the creek. Depending on the results of the biotic study, City staff have committed to working with Mr. Singh to identify an appropriate development option for the property.

While staff appreciates that Mr. Singh has been receptive to cleaning up the property, the City has been directed to abate the nuisance on his property. Without a clear commitment from Mr. Singh to clean up the property on his own, staff intends to follow Council’s direction to move forward with the abatement.

After reviewing both proposals, staff recommends that the City Council approve the contract with Koala Tree Care dba Clean Team Associates (Consultant) due to their extensive experience abating homeless encampments in sensitive habitat areas in the City of Santa Cruz and the cost of their proposal.

To proceed with the contract, the Council must also approve an appropriation of \$124,827 from the General Fund. \$20,000 will be paid for by previously budgeted funds in the Relocation Revolving Fund (0215-390-6510). The cost to abate the nuisance will ultimately be charged to the property owner.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The abatement of the public nuisance reflects the City Council's strategic plan goals of public safety and community engagement and well-being, as the encampment has created a hazard to public health, the environment, and the safety of the community.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Approval of the contract with the Consultant will require appropriating \$124,827 from the General Fund to pay for the encampment cleanup.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION:**

City Council could choose to defer this item to the August 28, 2024, Council meeting to provide Mr. Singh time to realistically evaluate the development potential of his property and conduct the abatement himself.

City Council could alternatively choose to cancel the cleanup of this public nuisance and direct staff to bring back a request to rescind the abatement order from the April 9, 2024, Council meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):**

1. City Council Staff report from April 9, 2024.
2. City RFP and Koala Tree Care