

**From:** Mark Shoup  
**To:** [PublicComment](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for Agenda item #12, meeting of June 9, 2010  
**Date:** Monday, June 8, 2020 10:35:41 PM

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Mr. Mayor, and members of the Town Council:

I speak today for the Joshua trees, who have no voice. I urge you to set aside staff's recommendation and please do not pass a resolution opposing the listing of the western Joshua tree as a threatened species. The Joshua tree is an iconic and towering symbol of the high desert. Probably more than anything else, dead or alive, the Joshua tree says "high desert" to the rest of the world and it would be awful to lose them.

All of you have lived in Apple Valley for decades. You all have seen what happens to strands of Joshua trees in our area when they are in the way of developers. I recall groves of ancient trees being mowed down for what became the Petsmart mall just north of the Mall of Victor Valley. I recall a large forest of Joshua trees removed near Sitting Bull Road when the Skyline Ranch tract was developed, which I think at the time was the largest intact grove of Joshua trees in the old Apple Valley Ranchos area.

Please do not be swayed by the staff report's alarmist tone. The report says that listing the Joshua tree would "essentially halt future development." That is patently untrue and the report contains no justification for that conclusion. If you drive around Apple Valley searching for Joshua trees, you will see that most undeveloped lots do not contain any.

Where the trees do exist, they can be incorporated into the projects in a positive Apple Valley way, rather than plowed over. Several homes in town have been built around existing Joshua trees as part of their presentation.

The staff report mentions that "the petition itself acknowledges that the western Joshua tree is not at imminent risk." That's true, because if the Joshua tree were at imminent risk, the petition would seek to add the Joshua tree to the endangered species list, not the threatened species list. The threatened list is exactly where the Joshua tree belongs. I really think all of us would rue the day when the last Joshua tree in Apple Valley is bulldozed over for a strip mall.

I have been where you are and I understand the pressures you face to develop the community. I support developing the community, as I think you all know. What I don't support is development at all costs, regardless of the consequences.

Please join me in speaking for the trees. Do not pass this resolution.

Thank you

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