

Urban Forest Commission

16 February 2016

Members Present: Christine Penney, Mike Pennington, Janet Nelson, Jacob Shaw, Liz Johnson, Jim Lemmerman, Barbara Stark, Dale Sellner.

Call to Order: 6:05 PM

Approval of Minutes: Janet made a motion, seconded by Mike, to approve the minutes from January. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment on EAB Draft Management Plan: Dale began by presenting a brief overview of the management plan and the changes that have been incorporated so far. He stated that the plan is still an open document and changes can still be made.

Louise Levy of Levy Tree Care praised the plan as well written but would like assurance that the protected ash trees be distributed more or less evenly throughout the city. If an area of the city has very few or no mature ash trees that qualify for treatment she suggests that smaller trees be treated in that area. She also noted that the monetary cost cited in the plan for injection treatment of trees is low and that might mislead the public about the cost for private tree service treatment for trees on private property. In Superior residents have been given the option to pay for treatment of boulevard trees if the city decided to remove them and this has worked well. She wondered if this option would be available to Duluth residents. She also commented on the concept of value/capture opportunities for possible uses of the ash wood after trees have been cut down.

Dale reported that the city tree inventory has been found to be flawed and will have to be re-done before the distribution of ash trees across the city will be known. Residents will be allowed to treat boulevard trees if those trees don't meet the criteria for the city to treat them. The draft management plan concerns only boulevard trees but trees in city parks will be looked at and evaluated as to whether they create a safety hazard.

Rick Hanson of Rick's Tree Service urged caution as the city moves forward with a plan to inject mature ash trees. The insecticide and labor are costly and must continue every other year for the remainder of the tree's life. Injection/treatment costs must be weighed against the cost of removal and replacement costs. In the end it might be a losing battle as was experienced with Dutch Elm Disease years ago.

Dale responded that dealing with EAB either through treatment or tree removal/replacement will be expensive. The management plan attempts to address the fact that there is value in a mature healthy tree and the city should try to protect those trees. He also noted that if a resident has a healthy mature ash tree on their property this season will be the time to treat it in order to protect it from infestation by the EAB.

A suggestion was made that Duluth's college/university populations and the public in general need to be educated about the restrictions on moving wood for campfires or other purposes from an area with EAB to other parts of the state in order to stop or slow the spread of the insect.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM. Minutes respectfully submitted by Barbara Stark.