



Request for City Council Committee Action

Date: August 17, 2009

To: The Honorable Scott Benson, Chairperson
Health, Education and Environment Committee

Subject: Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee – Annual Report

Recommendation:

- Staff direction to prepare recommendations for the adoption or amendment of city ordinances to allow for mitigation of emerald ash borer and to amend Chapter 347 of Minneapolis code of ordinances to require a tree-servicing license for individuals or companies that inject pesticides in trees. Report back to the Health, Energy & Environment Committee on or before November 2, 2009.
- The Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee report back to the Health, Energy & Environment Committee with final recommendations on Streetscape Guidelines following review and referral by the Transportation and Public Works Committee, no later than November 2, 2009.
- Identify a City point-person for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in its communications with the City of Minneapolis regarding emerald ash borer mitigation efforts and initiatives and impacts on privately owned trees within the city.

Previous Directives:

- February 27, 2004 -- City Council adopted the City of Minneapolis Urban Forest Policy
- April 16, 2004 -- City Council designated Lorrie Stromme as the City Council representative on the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission
- July 20, 2007 -- City Council received and filed the annual report of the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission and adopted the following three staff directions:
 - (a) Refer issue of Streetscape Standards to the Transportation & Public Works and Zoning & Planning Committees for review;
 - (b) Request that the Tree Advisory Committee return to the Health, Energy & Environment Committee within 90 days with final recommendations on Streetscape Standards;
 - (c) Direct the Sustainability Manager to coordinate activities on behalf of the Health, Energy & Environment Committee with those departments.

Department Information

Prepared by: Lorrie Stromme, 1st Ward Aide, 612-673-2201

Approved by: Paul Ostrow, 1st Ward City Council Member, 612-673-2201

Presenter in Committee: John Uban, Chair of Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee

Community Impact

- City Goals: Enriched environment
- 2009 Sustainability Report: Tree Canopy
- Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan: Natural Ecology
- Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth: Environment/Urban Tree Canopy

Supporting Information

The City Council adopted the Minneapolis Urban Forest Policy on February 27, 2004.

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board formed the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission (MTAC) on March 17, 2004. MTAC includes representatives from the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, designees by both the Minneapolis City Council and the Mayor, citizen representatives, an arborist from the Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee, a developer, and a representative from Minneapolis Public Works. MTAC began meeting in October 2004.

MTAC's initial goals are to:

1. Coordinate issues related to trees across city jurisdictions;
2. Coordinate fiscal resources and explore new ways to acquire funds to increase support for urban forest establishment and management; and
3. Evaluate issues related to trees and report annually to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and City Council.

The focus of MTAC's annual report this year is mitigation of emerald ash borer (EAB), an invasive insect pest which threatens 200,000 ash trees in Minneapolis – or 20% of the city's entire tree canopy. EAB has been found on the western border of St. Paul in the St. Anthony neighborhood. In an effort to control EAB, both Hennepin County and Ramsey County are included in a state-imposed quarantine area, from which ash wood cannot be moved.

Current city ordinances declare elm trees affected by Dutch elm disease to be a public nuisance and describe the process for abating the nuisance, including the right to enter private property to inspect affected trees and to require property owners to remove affected trees. There are no equivalent ordinances to address emerald ash borer. Likewise, Code section 160.255 prohibits the sale, storage, and transportation of elm wood. It should be amended to include ash wood.

One method to control EAB is to inject ash trees with an insecticide. Chapter 347 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances governs the licensing of tree-servicing companies – cutting, felling, grinding, chipping, trimming, removing, or hauling trees in Minneapolis. However, the ordinance does not require a license to inject or apply pesticides to trees. Already, several companies are advertising their services to inject ash trees with protective insecticides. MTAC is recommending that these companies doing business in Minneapolis be required to have a tree-servicing license.