

Town of Williston
7900 Williston Road
Williston, VT 05495
1763
Public Works
(802) 878-1239

TOWN OF WILLISTON

MEMORANDUM

TO: Erik Wells, Town Manager
FROM: Bruce K. Hoar, Director of Public Works
CC: Lisa Schaeffler, Assistant Director
Kim Richburg, Administrative Assistant

DATE: October 28, 2020

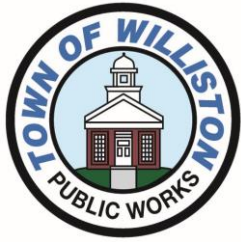
RE: Emerald Ash Borer

Last week we were notified by ANR that the Emerald Ash Borer has been found in Richmond. This puts Williston in the area of possible infestation.

As you know we have been proactive in trying to deal with this issue. To date we have removed 164 Ash trees located in the ROW. We would have been on schedule to have removed 200 if not for being shut down for part of last winter. According to the inventory that was completed in 2014 we have 476 +/- Ash Trees in our ROW. This leaves over 312 in our ROW. We have been able to remove these trees using our own forces to date. Now that there is a chance of the trees becoming infested, we will need to accelerate removal of the trees. Once the trees start showing signs of infestation, they become dangerous for our crew to remove. Once we must start hiring for the removal of these trees the cost accelerates quickly.

The cost for removal of one tree by the Williston Highway Department is around \$250 for employee time and equipment, and the cost for replanting is around \$430 for a combined cost of \$680. We have a good handle on these costs from our work over the last 5 years. If we are looking at the cost for removal and replacement of the existing 312 trees using this same method, we are looking at \$212,160 by today's numbers. The cost for just removal, once again by our crew, is around \$78,000. This number would have to be increased by a few thousand dollars because of special considerations that may need to happen because of possible issue with the EAB. This cost would not be out of one year's budget because we would not be able to spend all our time just removing trees. Also, we may not get to all of them before they do start to show signs of being impacted by the EAB. We remove the trees as time allows during the winter months. This presents its own challenges during regular seasons but given the current pandemic there could be even more challenges.

The new Tree Warden Statutes go into effect November 1st, 2020. Under these new statutes we do not have to hold a public hearing for the removal of any shade street



Town of Williston
7900 Williston Road
Williston, VT 05495
1763
Public Works
(802) 878-1239

TOWN OF WILLISTON

MEMORANDUM

trees. The new statute states that a hearing only needs to be held if there are objections once removals have been posted in two public locations. However, there is also a new provision in the statute below which covers the issue with the EAB:

§ 2509. CUTTING SHADE TREES; NOTICE AND HEARING

This subsection shall not apply to the cutting or removal of a shade tree or trees that:

- (1) are infested with or infected by, or at risk to become infested with or infected by, a tree pest and are located in an infestation area designated by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation;
- (2) are a hazard to public safety; or
- (3) must be removed for the municipality to comply with State or federal law or permitting requirements.

We have also applied for a grant to continue the removal and replacement of these trees as we have been doing in the past.

It is the recommendation of PW to start to remove these trees while using our own forces. There are a few logistics to still figure out but nothing that is insurmountable. The biggest issue is the fact that we will be removing trees without having the funding available to replace them in the short term. Certainly, these trees all need to be replaced as they serve a lot of different functions to the community and environment. It is important to note that except for the Harvest Lane loop there will not be any other residential neighborhood that would see removal of all its trees.