



Town of Watertown
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Minutes
Tree Hearing
December 13, 2016

Chris Hayward opened the hearing at 11:30 am and made a brief introduction of the format of the meeting.

1) **Community Education and Information.**

Hayward made a presentation using a series of educational slides which included current US Drought Monitor Review Information, potentially hazardous invasive species as well as caring for and maintaining town trees, including recently planted ones.

- a. **US Drought Monitor Review:** Hayward explained that this region is roughly 8 ½ inches below normal rain fall since this past September. He also said that while we have recently received a decent amount of precipitation, it has yet to impact the level of this drought in any significant way.

Hayward explained that while there has not been any ban on water use issued by the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) as yet, he cautioned that that public should be intelligent about using water until the levels are back up again. He urged members of the public to consider ways to conserve indoors and to be mindful about winter activities such as creating back yard ice skating rinks which use large amounts of water.

Hayward said that he is hopeful that this winter season will bring some decent precipitation. He also cautioned that if it is not received, by springtime we could be seeing some effects of a prolonged drought season.

- b. **Winter Moth:** An illustration of both a male and a female Winter Moths was shown. Hayward explained that this species is prone to appear during the late November, Thanksgiving Season during their usual mating season. He explained that females are likely to be seen sitting on the trunks of trees while waiting for males to arrive to mate.

The offspring of the Winter Moth are pale green larvae and feed on the leaves of many trees and shrubs from mid-April until mid-June.

Hayward recommended Home Depot where they carry brands of sprays which are non-toxic to humans and animals and safe to use in the event of larvae appearing on a tree.

- c. **Gypsy Moth:** Hayward said that the Gypsy Moth has been making a new resurgence. This is the first one since the 1980's. A slide was shown and Hayward explained that some males had been spotted in Watertown over the last summer.

He recommended the use of Horticultural oil as protection which is likely to be found locally at Home Depot.

- d. **Asian Long Horned Beetle:** A slide of the Asian Long Horned Beetle was shown. Hayward explained that the only way to deal with this insect is complete eradication of the tree.

He explained that this is not something that is a threat in Watertown at this time.

- e. **Emerald Ash Borer:** A slide of the Emerald Ash Borer was shown. None have been spotted in Watertown but sightings have occurred in nearby Newton.

Hayward said this species only infests Ash trees, of which there are few publically owned in Watertown.

- f. **Maintaining and caring for trees in the first year of planting:** Hayward presented a slide of the proper vs. improper way to mulch a tree.

Hayward explained that when a tree is over-mulched a secondary root system sets up beneath the mulch. This poses a health hazard to the tree by enclosing the trunk in unnecessary layers of solid and liquid elements.

He stressed the importance of proper mulching and watering to ensure that the trees stabilize and root down into the earth for a healthy start to a long life.

Residents are urged to contact Hayward with any suspicions of spotting the invasive species discussed at the meeting, or with any other questions or concerns that anyone would like to discuss with him.

2) **Public Hearing on 28 Berkeley Street- 35" Norway Maple**

This item was put on for a tree hearing at the request of the resident. The tree has been showing signs of steady decline while pushing up the concrete of the sidewalk. The resident feels that his property is now at risk of being damaged due to this tree.

Hayward discussed root trimming as a remedy to alleviate the sidewalk issue here, but explained that in this case, root trimming could result in the tree being blown over in strong enough gusts of wind.

Hayward showed a slide of the tree beside a pear tree that was planted by the town in 2008. He pointed out how the pear tree continues to grow and develop in ways that are compatible with the area.

Hayward recommended the 35" Norway maple be removed. The resident said he agreed with Hayward. There were no other objections received in the Tree Warden office regarding this tree. The tree will be removed and at some point a new tree will be planted that is suitable for this location.

3) Public Hearing on 30 Pequossette Street- 35" Silver Maple

This tree was added on the list as a request by the resident who claims that the tree is losing branches on a frequent basis.

Hayward showed a photograph of the tree which appeared to have very brittle leaders. Hayward explained that Silver Maples tend to become brittle over time and that he would never plant a silver maple in a residential city street for that reason. He said as a species, they are more compatible in the corners of parks or beside a river for safety reasons.

There was no opposition, written or otherwise to the removal of this tree.

Hayward recommended removal of the tree and said that he did not intend to plant a new one. He explained that this would allow the birch tree, now in front of the home a chance to grow out and spread in the way that it wanted to.

Tree Hearing Adjourned.