

Ash Tree Update – Twilight Board – August 17, 2015

Our intent is to remove every Ash tree at Twilight which could create a hazard if it fell, whether infected or not, unless the cottager preferred to treat tree(s) on their leasehold at their own expense.

Cottagers are requested to either permit or deny access to the Board designated tree cutter via an e mail to both Nathan Hommel and Alex Sade. Indicate if you prefer to have all Ash trees removed from your property or just the Red X and Pink Ribbon trees (high hazard risk). Cottagers will be charged directly for blue ribbon trees (lower hazard risk) added to the cutting program. If you choose to retain Ash trees on your leasehold, you are strongly encouraged to have them treated immediately. Untreated Ash trees will quickly become infected and will ultimately come down. Please respond no later than September 4, 2015. A non-response is equivalent to denying access for tree cutting.

Nathan – twilightc1@aol.com; Alex – alex.sade1@gmail.com

We are still soliciting bids for Ash Tree removal. However, the Board believes that it has enough information to initiate an action plan. The longer we wait to take action, the more expensive tree removal will be and the more dangerous the Ash tree problem will become. Sick and dead ash trees are brittle and their branches tend to fall during the course of the disease. Brittle trees are difficult and expensive to remove.

The Board has concluded that the best way to approach the Ash tree problem is to pool our resources and approach this as "we are all in it together". We believe this approach will reduce the aggregate cost to cottagers, minimize cottager versus cottager disputes over responsibility, expedite action and provides the safest overall approach. We plan to take down Ash Trees this fall and estimate that the Park-wide cost will be in the range of \$200k - \$250k, or \$2,225 - \$2,800 per cottage. We can defer a portion of this cost for several years through various borrowing mechanisms.

Our plan is to have a Special Assessment for the cost of the Ash tree removal and treatment plan. **All cottagers will be required to participate in the Assessment regardless of their participation in the Park-wide tree removal program.** The Assessment assumes a total cost to the Park of \$2,500 per cottage, or \$225,000.

The Special Assessment:

Assessment 1 - \$750.00 – Due Date September 15, 2015

Assessment 2 - \$750.00 – Due Date May 15, 2016

Assessment 3 - \$500.00 – Due Date May 15, 2017

Assessment 4 - \$500.00 – Due Date May 15, 2018

There will be a \$175.00 discount for Cottagers that pay the entire Assessment in 1 payment by September 15, 2015. Assessments 3 and 4 will be adjusted to account for the actual program cost.

While Cottagers will have the option to pay over time, the Park will have to pay for the Ash tree program upfront. We plan to borrow \$150,000 from our bank or interested cottagers and may augment that with a borrowing against our operating account, if needed.

The Plan:

We will designate a winning bidder for tree removal in the next several weeks. We will take down most of the Ash trees that are on Park controlled land. Design and Review will work with the Board to determine if some of the trees on Park land are aesthetically important and warrant treatment instead of take down.

For cottagers who choose to participate in the tree removal program, the cutters will take down all Red X and Pink ribbon trees (high hazard risk) on their leasehold that can safely be reached, unless the cottager indicates that they are going to or are already treating the trees. If you are making the election to exclude certain trees, please let Nathan know which trees should be exempted. Tree removal cost for red and pink marked Ash trees on cottager property will be covered by the Park program. We will also remove blue ribbon trees (lower hazard risk) on cottager property if the cottager requests to have them removed. However, cottagers will be charged for the cost of the blue ribbon trees added to the program, at the Park's discounted rate.

The Board expects to have about 350 trees taken down in this program. Invariably, there will be some mistakes made in the removal process although these can be minimized with clear communication amongst all of us.

Tree Treatment:

Cottagers can choose to have the Ash trees on their property treated instead of taken down. Tree treatment cost and scheduling will be the responsibility of the cottager. The Park will not cover treatment costs. Vern Rist of Healthy Trees is available for Ash tree treatment and is already working directly with several cottagers. Vern is a plant pathologist from Saugerties and has been treating Ash trees for the past 5 years. Vern claims he has had considerable success treating Ash trees, losing only 2 trees of the 1,000 he has treated. Ash tree treatment has been used for close to 10 years in Chicago and in Michigan, the epicenter of the initial infestation of the ash borer beetle. There are several chemicals available all of which have proven toxic to the beetle with minimal indicated risk to humans. The toxin is injected into the tree and is not applied by topical spray or by soil injection. Tree treatment is effective for 2 – 3 years, although the first re-application should probably happen in 2 years. To be effective, the injection has to be made during the active period of the tree so that it is absorbed throughout the tree. The active period for the tree is early May until early November. If cottagers are going to treat trees this year, they should notify Vern no later than mid-September to ensure timely treatment. The ash borer is an aggressive pest. Untreated trees that look fine today may well be significantly infected by next spring.

The cost for tree treatment will be about \$9 per inch per tree. The average Ash tree in the Park is 16 – 20 inches, with an expected treatment cost of about \$170 per tree per treatment. If you plan on

treating trees, please commit yourself to ongoing tree treatment. While treatment appears to be successful, it will only continue to be so if the trees are treated on schedule. Further information on tree treatment can be obtained online or from Vern Rist. The Board makes no claim on the ultimate efficacy of tree treatment.

Contact information, Vern Rist, Healthy Trees LLC vrisk@hvc.rr.com 845 246 1859

Tree Cutting:

We are still soliciting bids for the trees but we expect that the average cost per tree taken down will be about \$600 - \$650 per tree. The actual cost will depend on tree width, ease of access and health of the tree. Sick trees are more expensive to remove.

After trees are taken down, if accessible, they will be removed over a period of time, with potential use and sale to third parties as fire wood. However, given the ash borer containment procedures, it is very difficult to move the logs across county or state lines. Tree removal after they are cut down will not be an immediate priority but will be addressed as time and labor permits. The easier the tree is to access the more quickly it can be moved.

Hemlocks:

This tree program is focused on Ash trees. However, we will use this opportunity to remove a few dead Hemlocks on Park property. We may, on a limited basis, be able to offer Hemlock removal for cottagers although the cottager will need to pay for the incremental cost of the Hemlock cut down.

Tree marking legend:

425 Ash trees have been marked during the tree survey. We missed a few in this process and they need to be identified to ensure that we take the most effective action possible. Cottagers are responsible for identifying missed Ash trees. If you think a tree has been missed in the survey, please contact Nathan. However, we request that you not engage Nathan simply to do another survey or review of your property.

Red X = visibly infested tree with removal as the recommended course of action.

Pink Ribbon = not visibly infested and a candidate for tree treatment. Pink trees were deemed to be a hazard if they became infected in the future and lost heavy branches or fell. These trees are considered a clear risk to electrical, roads and physical structures.

Blue Ribbon = not visibly infested and a candidate for tree treatment. Blue trees were deemed a lower hazard risk. However, the designation was a judgment call by the tree marker. Cottagers need to make their own determination on risk. The blue ribbon versus pink ribbon is a tool but not a substitute for your own observation.

We have not attempted a full counting of the number of trees on cottager leaseholds compared to Park controlled land. However, as a rule of thumb, we estimate that the split is about 80% - 85% cottager

property with the remainder in Park controlled land. We note that many of the trees in question are located along the roads and while technically on cottager leaseholds, are the concern of the entire Park.

Closing Words:

The Board does not take lightly implementing a Special Assessment and admittedly, we are taking a very proactive course of action in dealing with the Ash tree situation. We believe these steps are warranted given the rapid decline of the Ash trees and the danger that these sick and dying trees represent. We looked at several options, consulted with tree experts and even discussed alternatives with our Park lawyer. We landed on this solution based on the closeness of homes and the fact that many hazard trees are hazardous to property, electrical and roads that often are different than the leaseholds they are located on. We searched for a solution that offered the widest possibility of cottager tree cutting participation while minimizing the amount of cottager to cottager complaints and frustration for non-action by neighbors. We looked for the most economical solution, we believe that is bulk removal, and for the most effective way to defer some of this expense burden.

Communication will be critical during the next several months. Step one is to let us know quickly if you are participating or not in the tree removal process. Please do not make us track you down for a response. The next step is to make a determination about which trees you are treating. Nathan will give those trees a special designation. Step 3 is to follow up and communicate clearly with Nathan as this process evolves. Likewise, the Board promises to keep all cottagers informed as this situation progresses.

This process will not be perfect. We will miss some trees that should have been taken down and we will take down some trees that probably were not high risk. Ultimately, the responsibility for diligent tree maintenance and care is the responsibility of all of us.

This plan for Ash trees should not be viewed as precedent for the action steps for future tree issues. Cottagers should work with their neighbors and make their own assessment of what they need to do now and in the future with regards to other sick and hazardous trees on their property.

Please make your Special assessment payment of \$750.00 per cottage by September 15, 2015. This payment is owed regardless of your decision on participation in the tree cutting program. While we are borrowing a significant cost of tree removal, we aren't borrowing the full cost. We need to receive your payment so that we can contract and then pay for the services once they are completed. Please indicate on the check that you send to Mary Douglass that it is for the Special Assessment.

Tree cutting should begin mid-October.

