

**OSSEO CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
April 1, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Duane Poppe called the work session of the Osseo City Council to order at 6:01 p.m. on Monday, April 1, 2024.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Councilmembers Juliana Hultstrom, Ashlee Mueller (*arrived at 6:03 p.m.*), Alicia Vickerman, and Mayor Duane Poppe.

Members absent: Councilmember Mark Schulz.

Staff present: City Administrator Riley Grams and Public Works Director Nick Waldbillig.

3. AGENDA

Council agreed to discuss the work session items.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. DISCUSS CITY ASH TREE REMOVAL

Waldbillig stated the City of Osseo's tree inventory has 120 ash trees identified in public right of way (ROW) and park land that needed to be evaluated for EAB as it was discovered in the surrounding areas. Staff researched reputable contractors and recommended partnering with Rainbow Treecare in April 2023 to perform an ash tree evaluation of the City's trees. The study showed that around 60 trees could be treated and potentially be saved with Rainbow's EAB Prevention Program. This work will need to be performed annually to ensure the best rate of survival. The Council approved the request to partner with Rainbow Tree Company and treat 60 trees out of the 2023 parks Capital Improvement Project budget. Staff estimates 20 of the 60 trees affected by EAB can be removed in-house by Public Works. Public Works will remove the trees and haul them to a local disposal site, but the stump will need to be removed by a third party as we do not have the equipment for this work. Staff commented on the proposed cost to have the trees removed. It was noted the City Council will need to decide how to proceed with the remaining Ash trees affected by EAB. He explained the City could partner with WSB and pursue grants to assist with the expense. It was noted the Council would also need to consider how to address restoration and replanting in the boulevard areas. He supported the Council pursuing some type of tiered approach for the tree removal in order to not exhaust Staff resources.

Vickerman questioned if any of the EAB trees have been treated. Waldbillig stated the City has 120 ash trees. He noted 60 trees have been treated and 60 trees diseased trees have to be removed.

Hultstrom requested Staff speak with the State in order to have them address the EAB trees on State land.

Vickerman inquired if the trees could be prioritized for removal. Waldbillig stated he could speak to Rainbow to see how quick they could get to town to remove the trees.

Poppe asked if the City had to work with Rainbow Treecare. Waldbillig explained the City has worked with Rainbow in the past. He commented on how Public Works staff would be able to take down a portion of the trees, which would assist in reducing the overall expense of the EAB tree removal.

Hultstrom stated Rainbow Treecare would be charging the City less than \$1,000 per tree for the tree removal which she believed was a good price. She indicated she was highly inclined to have this project completed in steps following Option 3. She also supported Staff pursuing grants in order to assist with the expense of this project. Waldbillig indicated he could work with WSB and Hennepin County on grant opportunities.

Hultstrom asked if the City worked with WSB would Rainbow still come in and complete the work. Waldbillig reported WSB would assist the City with the grant opportunities. He explained the City would have to wait to cut the EAB trees down until the grants were pursued.

Grams indicated the City has a history of working with residents to replace boulevard trees, as this was done in the 6th Avenue East street improvement project. He explained residents were given the option to replace the boulevard trees that were lost during construction.

Poppe supported the City working with residents to have their EAB trees in the boulevard replaced. He asked if the City had money in the park fund available for this project. Grams stated funds were set aside for a future tree removal project.

Hultstrom recommended the tree inventory be further reviewed to ensure the State was responsible for removing their own trees. She supported the City moving forward with the project, working with WSB on Option 3.

Poppe asked if WSB's forestry team would then coordinate the project. Waldbillig stated he was uncertain but could come back to the Council with an answer.

Vickerman reported the more work the City does in-house, the more cost there would be to the City. She inquired if Staff had an idea on what the in-house costs would be. Waldbillig commented he did not, other than time Staff would spend removing the trees and the expense for topsoil. He anticipated Staff could take down a few trees a day.

Vickerman stated there were other projects the Public Works Staff had to prioritize and she questioned if this was the type of project the Public Works Department should be taking on this summer.

Poppe asked if the Public Works department could handle Option 3. Waldbillig stated he believed this was the most effective option.

Mueller questioned if there would be a fee charged by WSB. Waldbillig indicated he would have to discuss the grant opportunities and project management services further with WSB. Grams anticipated WSB would assist Staff with grant opportunities free of charge, but noted the City would have to pay WSB if the City wanted them to oversee the tree removal project.

Poppe encouraged Staff to consider who would be responsible for water the trees and seed replacement. Grams anticipated this would be the City's responsibility.

Vickerman stated she believed Option 3 was a good starting point for this project. She wanted to see the City taking action to address EAB.

Poppe explained after viewing the Hennepin County website, it appears there were no further grant opportunities in 2024. He stated the City may have to remove trees in 2024 and do the replanting in 2025. He commented further on the grants that were awarded to neighboring communities.

Grams stated the City may want to hold off one year on this project in order to receive grant funding from the County. He suggested Staff speak to Hennepin County and WSB to get feedback on if the project could wait one year and Staff would report back to the Council at a future meeting.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Guenther
Minute Maker Secretarial