

HEREFORD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

August 31, 2022

Those in attendance were the Planning Commission Board Members Curt Kuhns, Chairman, Albert Ciccarone, Vice-Chairman, Karla Dexter, Kimberley Poley, Committee member, Elwood Harper, Committee member, Louisa Masemore, Secretary, Jennifer Van Dyke, Engineer, Brett Marks, resident, Keith Masemore, resident, Cliff Kirschner, resident, and Matt Ferdock, resident.

Before the meeting started, Ms. Masemore swore in Ms. Poley and Mr. Harper.

The meeting started at 7:02 PM

Ms. Dexter Made a motion to approve the Minutes from the May 25th meeting, Mr. Ciccarone seconded. Motion Passed.

Ms. Dexter made a motion for the retroactive approval of the Bryon and Mary Young Subdivision Planning Module and Authorization of the Chairman to sign the planning module, Mr. Ciccarone seconded. Motion Passed.

Ms. Dexter opened the floor for the discussion on the Ash tree problem.

Mr. Ciccarone Started the meeting stating that he was troubled with how the whole situation unfolded in a negative way. He informed the commission that the ash tree bore quarantine is no longer in effect, as the damage is too widespread. The Spotted Lanternfly quarantine is still in effect. However, the white ash, even when treated yearly and sprayed, the trees will eventually die from the ash bore. Mr. Ciccarone mentioned that treating and spraying is effective for keeping the trees alive until you are able to bring them down. The cost per tree per year is approx. \$80/year, and there are three methods: Pressure Injection, Hand Spray and Soil Injection. These methods are effective until oct. and so treatment would have to wait until after winter and after flowering in spring as the spray is lethal for bees. He also said that ash and maple look the same during winter. Young trees will also be reinfected even after all the old ones are dead.

The commissioners discussed felling the trees and selling the downed logs. When you are doing the work yourself, instead of hiring out, the trees can be worth a couple hundred dollars per load of wood, however it is not cost effective when you hire someone else to do it.

Ms. Dexter Commented about a citizen run email string that she was a part of, where the members were sorting through ideas for the township and the community to work together on the tree problem. Mr. Ciccarone mentioned that he was also a part of the email string. The email group seems to be thinking of suggesting a volunteer Tree Commission be created by the township to help the resident who need the trees taken down. The main worry seemed to be liability, for both residents and the township. Mr. Ferdock mentioned several of residents on the email chain, including sharing equal time and equipment for the help of getting the trees down, retaining a volunteer arborist on the commission to help in judging which trees needed to come down and the possibility of getting some form of insurance through the township similarly to firefighters. Ms. Masemore mentioned that the firemen's insurance is expensive because of how dangerous the job is and that there are only a couple of companies who are willing to field that insurance as it is. Mr. Masemore and Mr. Marks added that the insurance was a special workmen's comp. program only for firefighters.

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The discussion continued with trying to see how and if that would work and there could at least be a committee or commission created to have discussions on this issue to hopefully resolve it, and possibly help with volunteering for the taking down of trees. The discussion had during the meeting seemed to indicate that the liability would be a major roadblock to creating any volunteer organization to help take down the trees, but the planning Commissioners still felt it would be a good thing to ask the solicitor to investigate. Mr. Kerchner asked how the power Companies and other townships were handling it. Mr. Ciccarone said that the power companies let the trees fall. Ms. Dexter said the other Townships have not really taken an active role in their tree issues.

Ms. Poley suggested that we ask the Environmental Advisory Committee to do what they could to inform the public on the danger and what they could do themselves to alleviate the problem and to inform them of their own liability even if they do not know at the time of the tree falling, as well as the other Planning Commissioners spreading word themselves as they could as well.

Some of the commissioners volunteered to help their neighbors with their trees and possibly more if there was a group created to help bring down the trees. Ms. Van Dyke confirmed she would ask the solicitor to investigate the specifics of what a tree commission is for and how it could be utilized to alleviate the tree situation, and Ms. Masemore confirmed that she would ask if the EAC would look into informing the public. Mr. Kerchner mentioned that he talked with the county commissioner and the state representative who had not offered any advice and were unaware of the problem. Ms. Dexter mentioned that the township was looking into several different ways to get the trees down, including grants and bonds, and certain grants would only allow for certain kinds of usage.

The discussion continued for a time, and it was agreed to table it, and Ms. Dexter said she was glad to be a part of a community that cared for its members as much as this one.

Mr. Kuhns made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Ciccarone seconded.

Meeting ended at 8:31 PM