



PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY

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Ron Grall, Director
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 12, 2016

TO: Mayor, Shawn Reilly
City Administrator, Kevin Lahner
Finance Director, Rich Abbott
Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director, Ron Grall

FROM: Pete Traczek
Parks, Recreation & Forestry Operations Manager
Dave Rauterberg
Forestry Supervisor

RE: Trunks for Trees Program Initiative

The Forestry Division of the City of Waukesha Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department would like to initiate a program to sell tree logs removed from city streets and parks for revenue to support additional tree planting. We would like to call this our "Trunks for Trees" program. Our goal of selling this bi-product of our dead/dying trees removed during normal operations would be to generate approximately \$1,000.00 – \$2,000.00 in additional revenue by selling these logs to area wood processors or firewood distributors.

In the past, most of the wood that was too big to grind up in a chipper, was set along the curb for residents to salvage for firewood. We provided a service to the community and reduced our handling of this material while saving valuable time. As the volume of trunks has escalated in the past few years, beginning with the storm of 2014, and now the EAB outbreak, we have accumulated a significant stockpile of dead trunks in our yard. Disposal of this material would be a very costly endeavor.

Most tree care companies in Southeast Wisconsin are hauling logs to one of the nearby firewood/mulch processing plants or distributors as a way to simply dispose of this material at no cost. Others often pay considerable fees (\$350 – \$400/dumpster) for having this material hauled away. We believe this material has the potential to generate revenue to support our replacement tree efforts. We would like to model our program after the City of West Bend who created a bidding system, in which companies bid on various lots of wood with the highest bidder taking all. This revenue went into an account to pay for additional trees lost from Emerald Ash Borer.

In the coming years, we expect to be removing hundreds of Ash trees that will not be treated against EAB. While the non-assessed tree planting budget has gained substantial ground in the last three years, we are still trailing behind replacing dead trees by upwards of one year. The additional revenue from this "trunks for trees" program could help offset that burden. Our goal for this program would be to generate \$1- 2,000.00 in revenue the first year. This would allow us to purchase only 13 additional trees at a current cost of \$150.00/ tree on average, but we believe this program will grow. We are requesting approval to initiate the program and the additional revenue to our non-assessed tree account specifically for replacing additional trees lost through EAB.

Trunks for Trees Initiative - Part II

Steps we have taken thus far as part of our Urban Forestry Internship Project

- Developed a fillable survey for potential bidders to complete regarding interest in a firewood sales program
- Mailed this survey out to over 32 perspective bidders
- We have received 12 completed surveys with only 5 responders indicating a willingness to pay for and bid on the log material but need the wood delivered their site.
- Bidding proposals have been prepared and are under review with the city attorney
- Bids would take place once or twice a year depending on tree removals with proceeds from the sale to go toward purchasing new trees once money is received
- Dates to meet with perspective bidders to visit the site have not yet been determined.

Other Initiatives taken

- Working with the Waukesha School District we have donated wood logs to the shop program as a free wood source for students to create wood furniture and products
- Initiated contact with the Habitat for Humanity Program to offer wood logs as donated materials to be used in construction of new homes. This program is also currently working in the West Bend Area.
- We continue to provide small amounts of firewood to residents that request it for trees in the front of their homes and when it reduces handling time.

Finally, this initiative is our attempt to turn the burden of disposal of this wood product into an opportunity for the citizens of this community to continue to enjoy an urban forest canopy long after this invasive pest has moved through our community.

Thank you for the opportunity.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact me at 524-3710 or email at ptraczek@ci.waukesha.wi.us.