

Town of Isle La Motte

Tree Policy

I. Intent and Purpose

The purpose of this tree policy is to establish a procedure for addressing the threat of invasive plant pests, specifically the emerald ash borer (EAB), and to guide management and decisions regarding public trees within the Town of Isle La Motte.

II. Definitions

- Diameter at Breast Height (DBH): The diameter of a tree trunk measured at a height of four (4) feet six (6) inches from the finished grade at the base of the tree.
- Hazard Tree: Any tree, public or private, with visibly defined structural defects likely to cause failure of all or part of the tree, and be a danger to public safety.
- Plant Pest: Any living stage of: Insects, mites, nematodes, slugs, snails, protozoa, or any other invertebrate animals; bacteria, fungi, mycoplasma or other parasitic plants, weeds or reproductive parts; therefore viruses of any organisms similar to or allied with any of the foregoing; and any genetically modified organisms or biological control agents that may directly or indirectly injure or cause disease or damage to any beneficial organisms, plants, parts of plants, or plant products.
- Private Tree: Any tree whose pitch at ground level is in a location not owned or controlled by the Town along a public right-of-way.
- Public Notice: A notice submitted to The Islander, the newspaper that serves Isle La Motte.
- Public Right-of-Way: Standard right-of-way is three (3) rods or 49.5 feet; the right-of-way is measured as ~25 feet on either side of the center line of the road.
- Public Tree: Any tree that is six (6) inches in diameter at breast height and whose pith at ground level is within the Public right-of-way or Town-owned land.
- Residential Road: A Class 1, Class 2, or Class 3 road within the borders of the Town.

III. Jurisdiction/Authority

- Through its Tree warden, the Town has control of all Public Trees and has the authority to plant, maintain, protect, and remove such vegetation.

IV. Provisions for the Management of Public Trees

- The Town shall have the right to plant, prune, maintain, and remove Public Trees within the Town right-of-way and on Town-owned land, as may be necessary to insure public safety.

- A Public Notice will be posted annually to notify residents of major work to be performed along Residential Roads to reduce the ash component in preparation for the arrival of the emerald ash borer (EAB) at least two weeks prior to the start of each summer work session.

V. Control of Hazard Trees and Public Trees Infested with a Plant Pest along Residential Roads.

- The Town Tree warden or Selectboard may remove or cause to be removed any Public Tree or part thereof which is infested with or infected by a recognized Plant Pest or when it constitutes a hazard or public safety. Pursuant to 24 VSA §2509, no public hearing shall be required when a public Shade Tree is infested, infected or when it is a hazard to public safety. Such trees shall be considered a Hazardous Tree.
- The preemptive removal of Public Trees of the Ash (*Fraxinus*) species is necessary for safety reasons and to avoid potential costs to the Town when emerald ash borer (EAB) arrives in Isle La Motte, which will cause Ash mortality.

- The Town will begin a reduction of the ash component along Residential Roads within the public right-of-way and on Town-owned land over a ten (10) year period, starting in 2019, at approximately sixty-five (65) Public Trees of the Ash (*Fraxinus*) species per year.

- At the beginning of the ten (10) year ash reduction period detailed in the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Preparedness Plan, and prior to the removal of any Public Trees of the ash (*fraxinus*) species, one public hearing will be held.

Adopted this ___ day of April, 2019

Signatures:

Description of Town Hall Volunteer Committee Charge

Background

- Over the past years the amount of both secure and unsecured paper record storage available has decreased despite new safes having been installed and remodeling etc. done. While electronic storage has been used to produce backup of at least the land records, State statute/regulation still require paper documents.
- Recent infrared heat loss study indicates significant heating/cooling losses throughout the Town Hall building. It is supposed major insulation effort is required to bring losses down.
- The Town Hall building is not fully utilized with respect to the square footage available. The second floor, not handicap accessible, is used for mainly school storage.
- The Selectboard is concerned with having an appropriate facility in the long term (50-year projection)

Charge to Town Committee

1. Build an draft plan for presentation to the Selectboard which describes steps to take to determine the best solution to long term Town Hall facilities. Currently the Selectboard views three possible alternatives to achieve a solution:
 - a. Remediate the existing building
 - b. Replace the existing building
 - c. Using all or part of the existing school facilities if/when the facility becomes available
2. Upon acceptance of the draft plan to expand/formalize to include:
 - a. Estimates of time line for each alternative and each step within alternative
 - b. Estimates of cost for each alternative
 - c. Estimates of savings for each alternative
 - d. Possible vendors to be used to achieve each alternative solution
 - e. Alternatives to address each noted background issue and others as they arise
3. Keep the Selectboard apprised of progress in a timely manner (timely to be determined) of the draft and formalize plans
4. Present a completed plan to Selectboard
5. Help the Selectboard determine the best, if any, alternative
6. As appropriate, present alternative to voters

**RESPONSE OF THE TOWN HALL VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE
TO THE ISLE LA MOTTE SELECTBOARD CHARGE:**

1. The Selectboard charge to the Town Hall Volunteer Committee is to make recommendations to the Selectboard describing steps to determine the best solution to long term Town Hall facilities. Three options include:

- a. Remediation of the existing building
- b. Replacement of the existing building
- c. Use of all or part of the existing school facilities if/when the facility becomes available.

The Town Hall Committee will undertake a cost benefit analysis of each of the first two options and issue a report to the Selectboard regarding the information gained.

a. With regard to option a. the Town Hall Committee proposes to engage - at no cost to the town - a structural/service analysis funded by the Preservation Trust of Vermont and LMCO. Such an analysis will include expertise in structural engineering and an understanding of the nuances of working with older and historic buildings.

b. With regard to option b. the Town Committee will procure a professional analysis of its replacement cost.

c. With regard to option c - the Committee believes that an analysis with regard to solutions a and b will enable a more informed discussion/decision concerning the viability of option c. Along with that the Committee will also consider comparative costs with regard to operation and maintenance of the two facilities.

The Committee will present its findings to the Selectboard in written and oral reports.