

## City Tree Board Reminds Residents of Tree and Shrub Ordinance

May 16, 2019

The City of Carrington tree board committee has been meeting to address the expected arrival of emerald ash borer (EAB). The majority of trees in our city are ash trees and this insect is expected to kill all of them.

The Tree Board would like to familiarize you with the Tree and Shrub Ordinance, number 197, chapter 7, which covers the planting, removal, trimming and care of public trees within the city limits. Please contact city hall with any questions and to obtain a copy of the ordinance.

There are private and public trees in the city. *Private trees* belong to the property owner and include all trees inside the sidewalk or the normal location of the sidewalk. *Public trees* are all the trees growing in the public right-of-way, in public places or in parks. For most streets, trees that grow within 13 feet of the street curb are public trees; for a few streets, that area includes trees within 20 feet of the curb. Trees in the public right-of-way are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. This means that the trees in the space between where the normal sidewalk would be and the street curb *belong to the city but are the responsibility of the property owner.*

The responsibilities of the property owner and the public toward public trees are: Care for the trees (including planting, watering, pruning, removal and stump removal) and don't harm the trees (no: damage, ropes, nails, advertising, or harmful substances applied). Also, get permission from the public works director if you plant or remove a tree in the right-of-way or for things requiring digging within 12 feet of

a tree, like trenches or new driveways. The ordinance has siting requirements for new boulevard trees; please contact city hall and read the ordinance for details.

The responsibility of the City for public trees is primarily for identifying public safety hazards and protection of property. The public works director and tree board determines when a tree is a 'public nuisance' or in violation of the ordinance. They can enter private property to make this determination and if there is a violation of the ordinance, a written notification will be delivered to the property owner. There is a process outlined in the ordinance for appeal if property owners disagree. If the appeal is denied or if a tree is a public nuisance or in imminent danger to life or property, the City auditor may authorize abatement at the city's expense and have the costs assessed against the property.

Future articles will provide information on efforts to update the city tree inventory, begin removal of poor-quality public trees and plans to replant these trees with your help. A healthy city forest is a benefit for everyone who lives in Carrington.

City tree board members: Jennifer Gast, City auditor; Jason Wolsky, public works director; Greg Edland, council member; Dionn Schaaf; Doug Schroeder and Kathy Wiederholt. A list of licensed tree removal companies can be obtained at City Hall.