



MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

DATE: June 2, 2015
CONSENT \$\$
ITEM #: 3

AGENDA ITEM: Authorize Contracting of Non-Oak Hazardous Tree Removal at Sunfish Lake Park

SUBMITTED BY: Dean A. Zuleger, City Administrator

THROUGH: Lake Elmo Park Commission

REVIEWED BY: Lake Elmo Park Commission

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Introduction of Item City Administrator
- Report/Presentation.....City Administrator
- Questions from Council to Staff..... Mayor Facilitates
- Public Input, if Appropriate Mayor Facilitates
- Call for Motion Mayor & City Council
- Discussion..... Mayor & City Council
- Action on Motion..... Mayor Facilitates

POLICY RECOMMENDER: Lake Elmo Parks Commission (6-1 Vote, Ames Dissent)
May 2015 Parks Commission Meeting

FISCAL IMPACT: \$8,000 (One Time)

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: Removal of hazardous non-oak trees impacting the use of Sunfish Lake Park. The recommended motion for this action is as follows:

“Move to expend up to \$8,000 for the removal of non-oak species of trees deemed hazardous to the public at Sunfish Lake Park and to obtain an additional quote to remove the fallen trees from the public areas.”

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY: Sunfish Lake Park is the flagship park in the Lake Elmo Park System, with much of the park use regulated by the MN Land Trust. The park serves primarily as a mature oak savannah nature preserve that is highlighted by diverse eco-systems and a variety of mature tree stands which compete with an aggressive spread of buckthorn.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: In 2013, a season of severe storms greatly impacted the forest canopy of Sunfish Lake Park. Many trees have been left leaning toward recreational trails, tops of trees have been severed and hanging in other branches, and coupled with age / decay have impacted over 700 trees that need attention. In 2014-15, the Lake Elmo Park Commission retained forester Steve Kunde to provide an analysis of the forest's condition and how best it might be managed in the future. During this examination, in concert with DPW Bouthilet and several members of the Park Commission, it was determined that there were many trees that needed attention to protect the welfare of those using the park recreationally. DPW Bouthilet and staff marked obvious trees and created an RFP for the falling of hazardous trees and brought the low quote of \$8,000 by CAMCO back to the Park Commission. The Park Commission voted 6-1 to accept the quote with Commissioner Ames voting in the dissent.

During the discussion of the quote it was noted by Kunde that in the removal of hazardous trees that oak trees be left alone as to not propagate oak wilt during this time of year. Kunde will be coming back with a more comprehensive harvest plan in the near future that will include recommendations for removal, canopy management, grant opportunities and invasive species control – for now the matter is public safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (SWOT):

Strengths: Removal of hazardous trees protects the safety of those using the park.

Weakness: Hazardous oak trees will have to be dealt with at a later date.

Opportunities: The removal of trees will allow for additional perspectives / techniques on the management of the forest as a whole.

Threats: Non-removal could result in injury to recreational users of the Sunfish Lake Park trail system

RECOMMENDATION:

“Move to expend up to \$8,000 for the removal of non-oak species of trees deemed hazardous to the public at Sunfish Lake Park and to obtain an additional quote to remove the fallen trees from the public areas.”