

**Minutes of the Norwich Conservation Commission (NCC) –
Special Meeting of the
Emerald Ash Borer Management Subcommittee (EABMS)**

**Norwich Historical Society
3/27/2025, 7:00-8:30 pm**

EABMS members present: Chris Rimmer, Doug Hardy, Matt Hall, Alex Gottlieb, Peg Merrens, David Hubbard, Dave Hobson, Steve Long

Others present: Toni Luff, Michael Boucher

Attending by Zoom: Jonathan Frishtick

The meeting began with introductions and an overview of the current status of EAB management in Norwich, which is mainly that the EAB Response Fund currently has ~\$11,000, to be augmented on July 1 by \$100,000 that town voters approved in the FY26 budget via a warrant article. To date, only one infested ash tree has been removed at 17 Elm Street, by Longto Tree Services from Bradford (11 February). The removal efficiently done with no impacts to the site, and the tree was entirely removed off site. The Longto quote of \$800 was much lower than the other three received, and there was a suggestion that this may have been a “winter bid” and that future bids for similar ash removals may be higher.

The bulk of the meeting involved discussion of plans for upcoming townwide removals, plans for inoculation of ash trees on town property via a forthcoming private challenge grant, and thoughts for additional community outreach.

Specific topics of discussion included:

- Should we continue the Vermont Municipal Tree Inventory (VTMI) in 2025? We inventoried nearly 700 ash trees in 2024, but there are many roads in town that were not thoroughly covered. Consensus was that additional inventorying is justified but should focus on only those trees with the town ROW that are deemed to pose a risk to public safety, in terms of the likelihood that they may fall across roads and/or utility wires if not proactively removed. A designated weekend, perhaps in early June, with teams of volunteers working together on specific sections of roadways, would be an efficient way to advance the inventory. Chris Rimmer will contact Adam MacCullough of Vermont Community and Urban Forestry Program to seek his advice on this and other EAB management matters, as well as to update him on our efforts in Norwich.
- We have limited detailed traffic volume data for Norwich’s town-owned roads, but consensus is that Beaver Meadow, New Boston, and Union Village road are high priority for inventorying and removals, due to relatively high volume and speeds of vehicular traffic. Turnpike Road should also be a priority, especially because of traffic to and from Gile Mountain.

continued next page

EABMS minutes, 27 March 2025 (cont.)

- Placement and disposition of woody debris after removals: there are a number of questions that must be resolved about what to do with trees after cutting. Can they be dropped on a private individual's property, with the landowner being responsible for dealing with them? Is explicit landowner approval needed in order to drop individual trees on private property? We need clarification from the town on this issue, so Chris or Doug will inquire with Brennan Duffy for an update from legal counsel. We have previously discussed (and have a draft of) a landowner consent/acknowledgement form.
- The question of leaving roadside trees on site after cutting vs. removing/moving them was discussed. There may be sites where drainage, steep slopes and other factors preclude leaving a tree beside the road, even if sectioned and chipped. Trees that are downslope from a roadway may be more easily left on site after cutting, though we need to clarify regulations about proximity to brooks.
- When we get to the point of issuing RFPs, it was recommended that we be explicit about disposition of wood after cutting. For example, can firewood be made available to community members, and if so, can its availability be communicated proactively? One question on our consent form is whether the landowner wants to keep the wood. It was emphasized that leaving wood on site will save money and allow the removal of more trees with the funds we have available.
- For inoculation of trees on town properties (Foley Park, Huntley Meadows, Norwich Transfer and Recycling Center), the Stetson family has offered a challenge grant of \$1500 towards this expense, with a 1:1 match of private funds required. The Vermont Center for Ecocostudies (VCE) will act as fiscal agent for these funds, since the Stetsons must direct their grant to a non-profit. We discussed optimal timing for inoculation, and several of us will revisit these properties to confirm which trees we feel are highest priority to inoculate.
- The Norwich Conservation Commission P.O. display board would be a good venue to do additional public outreach on EAB and management options. We will also post regular messages to the Norwich listserv during the months ahead.