

Sugar Hill Planning Board

August 3, 2022

Members: Mike Valentine, Margo Connors, Arthur Chase, Jim Keefe, David Thurston, Steve Monsein, Amy Venezia

Guests: Brian Salas (Eversource), Shayne Dion (Asplundh), Annie Guilliano

Vice Chairman David Thurston called the meeting to order at 5:30PM on Wednesday, August 3, 2022. On a motion made by Steve Monsein, seconded by Jim Keefe the minutes of the July meeting were moved to be accepted. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Eversource

Public Hearing Continued

Trimming and Removal of trees along Center District Road (Scenic Road)

Mike Valentine excused himself from the Board as his property is one in which the trimming/removal is taking place.

Brian Salas, Eversource and Shayne Dion, Asplundh were present tonight to discuss the proposal for trimming, removal and relocation of the power lines along Center District Road. The Board and audience were given a copy of the letter received from Charles Johnson in regards to this. Mr. Johnson met with Chairman Rob Hayward on July 21 at the site to take a look at and give his thoughts on this proposal, see attached letter. Mr. Salas explained that it was their intent to move a section of the powerline onto the road. He also noted that they would be removing the large pine tree as well as some poplars that were not originally noted and are not listed in Mr. Johnson's letter. Mr. Salas also spoke about the ash trees and he disagreed with Mr. Johnson's opinion that the ash borer is not this far north and did not pose a threat at this time. Mr. Salas explained that he has seen signs of the ash borer in this area and believes this is a problem and that these trees should be removed now before they become a larger issue. Mr. Salas also noted that the trees for removal have been marked with blue and white tape. Two of the land owners were in attendance tonight and were in agreement with the new proposal of what was to be trimmed and removed and placement of new poles along the road. Mr. Dion stated that he had spoken to other land owners and he had not heard that there were other concerns from them.

Vice Chairman Thurston closed the public hearing of the meeting so the Board could discuss. Steve shared his thoughts that he thought a plan of this proposal should be on file. It was noted that a plan had been previously presented by Chairman Hayward and it was thought that he had a revised plan also but was not in attendance tonight to either confirm or deny this. This will be confirmed with Mr. Hayward after tonight's meeting and a plan will be received at the Selectman's office if it has not already been shared with Mr. Hayward. After some discussion, Steve Monsein made a motion to approve the removal and trimming of marked

trees on Center District Road, and the addition of the large pine tree that is not currently marked, required for the relocation of the electrical line, seconded by Jim Keefe. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Old Business/New Business

Margo mentioned that she would like the Board to consider looking at the Master Plan in 2023 and hire Tara Bamford. This will need to be budgeted for in the Planning Board budget for next year. The Master Plan is coming up on its 10 year review and the Selectman are in favor of the Planning Board working with Ms. Bamford.

With no further business, on a motion made by Steve Monsein, seconded by Arthur Chase the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Amy Venezia

Secretary to the Planning Board

Charles P Johnson

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Town of Sugar Hill

To Whom it may concern:

A while ago I received a phone call from the town of Sugar Hill and was asked if I could provide my intuition on removing certain trees, Eversource had originally planned to cut, so that a powerline could be installed and not be hindered. On Thursday, July 21, st I met Robbie Haywood at 10:30 to review the trees. My thoughts on this were the following: I couldn't find a reason to remove any trees in general. The tree branches that were overhanging the road could be pruned sparingly but only on the roadside. It was agreed that some poplar trees would be cut on the lower end of the project, since this is a successional species, and they tend to eventually break or get windblown over. There are 3 Sugar maple trees > than or equal to 55 inches in circumference that are in a mortal spiral. I asked Brian Salas of Eversource to keep the trees intact as wildlife trees. It was finally agreed that 1 leader of each tree would be removed. There was discussion about the trees falling down and causing damage. The problem that I have with this is that these trees are likely well over 200 years of age and still standing. It is likely that they will eventually slowly crumble but none of us will live long enough to see this happen. There was a discussion about removing trees so that the sun would keep the road clear via sun melt and save the town money since the highway crew wouldn't need to use as much salt. I don't think this small stretch of road has much to do with burdening the highway budget by using too much salt. The final point made was that any ash trees should be removed due to the threat of Emerald Ash Borer. I indicated that the ash trees are not to be removed for this reason. With regard to this, I have chosen to separate the narrative to the next paragraph. I do understand that Eversource is likely paying Asplundh and that Eversource wants the most out of the tree company under the circumstances. However, I think everyone understands the situation regarding the Town of Sugar Hills' concerns.

With regard to Emerald Ash Borer, it is native to Eurasia and the larvae were likely inadvertently transported on cargo ships as well as other sources. It was first discovered in Southeastern Michigan in 2002. It is thought to spread by transporting firewood, that harbors the larvae, across areas. It is indicated to be found in New Hampshire, including Grafton County, but I'm not sure if it has reached as far as Sugar Hill yet. The adult borer enters the outside bark, the eggs are deposited in the area of the phloem tissue, which is what it feeds on. It is not easy to track down. The signs are defoliation and a hole in the bark that is a little smaller than a dime but cut off below so the hole appears as a semicircle. These pests are mainly spread by firewood transport. However, if they are around, they're not flying around in hordes looking for ash trees. The range of travel for Emerald Ash Borer is 1/2 – 1 mile. The infestations are more prevalent in ash trees around the suburban areas. Even though it is said that tree density doesn't matter, in that single trees are equally as vulnerable to attack as dense stands, I'm a bit skeptical about this generalization. The borer finds ash trees by picking up chemical components with its antennae. However, it is likely a bit more complicated in that there has to be a chemical-electrical threshold conveyed to the borer through its antennae that would signal a food source. In other words, a few trees off in a distance may not be enough to trigger that threshold. If however, Emerald Ash Borer is found to be in the area, the most effective treatment is tree injections using Imidacloprid. The treatment must be administered by a licensed pesticide applicator.

I wish to thank all of you for asking me for assistance with this matter.

Respectfully:

Charles P Johnson