

**RESOLUTION # \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF FERGUSON, CENTRE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM AND PROCESS TO EDUCATE AND MITIGATE OAK WILT INFESTATION**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Ferguson has identified instances of Oak Wilt on private properties, and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors desires to establish an educational program to assist property owners to identify oak wilt symptoms, measures to avoid the infestation of oak wilt fungus, and the Township's response measures to identified infestation of oak wilt.

**Section 1: Education and Outreach:**

- a. Staff will provide educational information in fall and spring newsletters on oak wilt identification and measures to prevent the spread of oak wilt. Notification may include publishing a separate newsletter once a year highlighting tree facts and disease issues in the township.
- b. Educate residents to prune oak trees only during the dormant period, which runs from November 1 through March 31. Pruning at any other time may attract beetles to the fresh wounds and possibly transfer the fungus.
- c. Educate tree trimmers not to use climbing spikes or spurs strapped to their boots when climbing a tree to prune it. Spiking opens fresh wounds in the bark that can attract beetles. The spikes or spurs themselves can also carry the fungus as climbers move from one tree to another.

For specific cases of oak wilt:

Notify the property owner of the affected tree immediately.

Prepare a press release for the media and web site within 2 days.

Notify the Board of Supervisors prior to or at the next regular meeting.

Hand deliver or send notices to property owners within 100 to 150 feet of the infected tree within 7 days.

Send notices to the greater neighborhood within 14 days.

**Section 2: Actions Steps (Identification, Prevention, Control) for future cases of Oak Wilt in the urbanized area of Ferguson Township:**

**Identification** – Suspected cases of oak wilt should be reported to the Township Arborist. In our area, oak wilt is identified by rapid leaf discoloration, with wilting often first visible in the upper portion of the tree occurring usually in late June and early July. Leaves fall rapidly and the tree can be defoliated in 3 weeks. The Township Arborist will confirm the oak wilt and likely take a sample of the tree for confirmatory laboratory analysis.

**Notification to Board of Supervisors** – Upon confirmation by the Township Arborist of Oak Wilt, the property owner and the Board of Supervisors will be notified.

**Prevention** – Once a tree becomes infected with oak wilt, there is no known cure. The development of new instances of oak wilt can be prevented by taking the following actions:

- a. Immediate work by Purchase Order – Staff will take immediate action by purchase order in an amount up to \$10,000 to abate the oak wilt on site. This action will likely involve the removal and proper disposal (no firewood to remain on site) of the diseased tree to prevent the development of spore mats and transfer of fungal spores to healthy trees, trenching around the tree to break root grafts, and injection of a fungicide into the base of oak trees immediately surrounding the diseased tree.

- b. Resident Notices and Authorization to Enter Agreements – The Arborist will consult with the Community Communication Coordinator (public relations specialist) to provide information updates to all residents via press releases and electronic media outlets. Residents with oak trees within a 100 to 150 foot radius, or other area as determined by the Township Arborist, of the infected tree will be provided authorization to enter forms which upon signature by the property owner will allow the township or its contractor to enter the property and treat the oak trees with a fungicide, with conditions (see attached form). If residents do not agree to the conditions or do not sign the form and a tree on their property develops oak wilt, the township will require the property owner to remove the tree at the cost of the property owner and if it is not removed and abated within 30 days, the Township will remove the tree and affect oak wilt abatement and bill the property owner for the cost of the removal and abatement.
- c. Authorization of Expenditures by BOS – The Public Works Director or Arborist will prepare a budget estimate for the cost of treatment of oak trees in the neighborhood, present the estimate to the Board of Supervisors who may decide to allocate additional funds (budget amendment or utilization of a savings account) for contract services.
- d. Contract Work by Bidding – The Public Works Director or Arborist will prepare and let a contract for treatment services. Once awarded, the contractor will treat oak trees within a 100 to 150-foot radius, or other area as determined by the Township Arborist, of the infected tree. Should more than one tree be infected, the Township Arborist will determine the limits of treatment. Other municipalities may piggyback on the contract. The contract may include hourly rates for additional oak wilt abatement services, such as tree removal, disposal, and trenching, if required.

**Control** – Oak wilt can be controlled by avoiding injury to healthy trees, education and outreach, ordinance enactment and enforcement, and monitoring.

Since beetles are attracted to injuries and can transport fungal spores to freshly wounded (cut or pruned) trees during certain conditions and times of the year, limit pruning oak trees to the dormant season.

Continue education and outreach efforts identified above.

Identify oak wilt cases early and take immediate abatement measures such as tree removal, trenching, proper disposal, and injections.

Monitor the results of the treatment and control program.

**RESOLVED** THIS 17<sup>TH</sup> Day of October, 2016

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Steve Miller, Chairman

[ S E A L ]

ATTEST:

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Mark A. Kunkle, Secretary