

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
November 5, 2008

City Commission Work Session

Mayor Stebbins presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Dona Stebbins, John Rosenbaum, Bill Bronson and Bill Beecher. Also present were the Assistant City Manager, Directors of Fiscal Services, Park and Recreation, Planning and Public Works, the City Attorney, Fire Chief, Police Chief, and the City Clerk.

1. PINE BEETLE INFESTATION

Park and Recreation Director Marty Basta introduced Kevin Wanner, Assistant Professor, Entomology MSU; Wade Crouch, Cascade County; and Todd Seymanski, Acting City Forester. Pine beetles are the size of a piece of rice and are at epidemic levels. The first sign a tree has been infested is pitch tubes on the outside of the bark. The beetles bore into the trees and feed on the inner bark, which kills the tree. There is no treatment for trees already infested. Mr. Wanner discussed repellants, such as chemical applications and the use of pheromones. The first step is discovery. Forestry staff has identified 50 infested trees in City parks and 36 have been removed. There have been 80-100 reports from the public reporting infestation on private properties. Mr. Basta discussed the Action Plan of education, control, prevention and funding. The total costs for inspection/notification, tree removal and disposal, and prevention efforts were estimated at \$118,500. Mr. Crouch reported that the County has a detect and prevent program. This is a statewide problem. Great Falls has a good chance of controlling the infestation because there is not a national forest close to Great Falls. The City Commission gave its approval to proceed with the Action Plan.

Dutch Elm disease is in its twenty-first season. Mr. Seymanski provided an overview of Dutch Elm disease in Great Falls from 2002 through 2008 and reported that it continues to decrease.

2. POLICE DEPARTMENT ONLINE REPORTING

Chief Grove reported that Officer Cory Reeves and Web Developer Rachel Arms volunteered to design an on-line crime reporting venue to offer easy access for the community. Officer Reeves explained the crime must have been committed within the City of Great Falls within the past six months. The public can now access the City's website and report non-emergency and misdemeanor crimes with no evidence on-line. He explained the process from reporting, assigning a crime report number, review and follow up. Ms. Arms went through each page of a test incident report form.

The City Commission congratulated Officer Reeves and Ms. Arms. This will free up some time to patrol hot spots and is maximum use of minimal resources.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Stebbins adjourned the work session of November 5, 2008, at 6:25p.m.