February 22, 2016 5:00PM
Public Hearing- Gypsy Moths- Minutes

Present: Council Members Omerza, A.Forsman, Kess, Debeltz, D.Forsman, and Mayor Novak

Purpose: The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is planning gypsy moth eradication treatment for Ely area in 2016. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and partner organizations are planning to tackle a gypsy moth infestation in Ely this spring. In anticipation of the treatments, the department is inviting people to learn about the effort at this open house.

Kimberly Thielen Cremers spoke on the non-native Gypsy Moth and the issues that it can cause. She spoke on the life stages of the Gypsy Moth and how it travels. The Gypsy Moth is one of the single most destructive tree pests in the U.S. defoliating on average of 880,000 acres annually. It is not uncommon to see complete defoliation in June during heavy outbreak years. Deciduous trees can and will re-leaf after a Gypsy Moth outbreak. Conifers do not have this ability causing tree mortality. Multiple years of Gypsy Moth defoliation can stress trees leaving them vulnerable to insects and disease, branch die back occurs and eventually the tree dies. The Gypsy Moth can feed on over 300 tree and shrub species, preferred species include oak, aspen, willow, and birch.

The Gypsy Moth can also be a human nuisance, the hairs on the caterpillar can provoke rashes and respiratory ailments, property values may drop due to the tree decline, and quarantines require costly inspections to mills, lumber companies, nurseries and movers.

One Gypsy Moth egg mass can equal 500 to 1000 caterpillars. The eggs are laid in a fuzzy, buff colored mass which are about a quarter in size. Eggs are laid during August and September and hatch the following spring. Egg masses may be laid on tree trunks and branches, on automobile wheel wells, on outdoor household articles or almost any convenient surface.

The Gypsy Moth has a very limited natural spread rate; populations will expand approximately 1¼ miles per year due to larval dispersal. The female moths cannot fly so the only means of natural spread is by larval dispersal. However, due to human activities, Gypsy Moths are transported from areas of infestation to areas of un-infestation several miles ahead of the advancing front. Human activity has increased the natural spread from 1 ¼ miles per year to approximately 15 miles per year. Adult Gypsy Moths will lay their eggs on virtually any type of outdoor household article, including campers, wheel wells, firewood, and nursery stock.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and partner organizations are proposing to tackle a gypsy moth infestation in the city of Ely this spring. The MDA has a monitoring program to watch for start-up infestations, and when an infestation is found, the department does aerial treatments to eradicate the infestation before it can spread. In 2015, the MDA found an isolated infestation within the City of Ely. The department is now developing a treatment plan for an affected area totaling approximately 565 acres. The northern edge of the boundary starts just north of the intersection of East Camp Street and 2nd Ave East and runs roughly parallel to East Madison Street. The western edge of

the block follows 2nd Ave East south to Lookout Ridge Road. The eastern edge starts at the intersection of North 14th Ave East and East Madison Street running 1.1 mile south. There is no state or federal lands within the proposed block. Residents within the boundaries will be notified with a bulletin mailed to the residents, pre-spray postcards, and a legal notice in the paper.

Btk-Bacillus thuringiensis is only toxic to caterpillars no other animals. Btk is a stomach poison affecting only caterpillars that eat treated leaves. Btk does not last long, 50% will break down in less than 4 hours due to UV light and it will only last for 7-10 days. Btk is widely used by organic farmers.

Mid-June is the target date for the application. Aircraft will apply the btk early morning in 2 treatments 7-10 days apart. The application will be done aerially with a low flying aircraft.

Residents have been notified with a bulletin that was mailed to their residence. Residents will also receive a pre-spray postcard in the mail and can call 1-888-545-6685 for updated information on when the spray is going to happen.

Several members from the community spoke about the positives and negatives of the treatment.

Adjourned at 6:32pm

Casey Velcheff
Deputy Clerk