

**Veldran, Lisa**

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**From:** Ahrens, David  
**Sent:** Monday, October 20, 2014 10:42 AM  
**To:** All Alders  
**Subject:** FYI: Urban forestry special charge update

Response to questions in regard to Forestry Charge

David Ahrens  
Alder, 15th District  
contact me:  
[district15@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district15@cityofmadison.com)  
608-334-1156  
Sign-Up for City Email at: <https://my.cityofmadison.com/>

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**From:** Clear, Mark  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 18, 2014 3:59 PM  
**To:** Ahrens, David  
**Cc:** Allen, Heather; Mayor; Viste, Doran; Schmiedicke, David; Eddy, Marla; Knepp, Eric  
**Subject:** RE: Urban forestry special charge update

David,

I'm happy to provide a response to your questions. Note that I am not copying any other Alders to avoid an open meetings issue, but I have kept all of the staff on this thread.

1. \$527k is the amount of expected revenue that the mayor put into the executive budget, so that's the number from which I worked backwards for the examples in my memo. In my opinion there's nothing magic about that number. I would support a higher portion of the forestry program being shifted from the levy to the special charge. Nothing we will do on Tuesday would determine the actual amount; that will happen when the council sets the rate in "step 4" as described in my memo.
2. The proposed ordinance charges the City Forester with developing a policy to be adopted by the council. In practice, I expect several staff as well as any interested council members will participate in developing the draft (step 2 in the memo). This is a similar method to policies on various types of special assessments, which are developed by the City Engineer or Traffic Engineer and then approved by the council. Note that there has been no change to this in the substitute; the only difference between V1 and V2 was the addition of the sunset clause.
3. The Alt. Rev. work group did not set out to find funding for EAB or for forestry specifically. We settled on this proposal in part because we found it to be one of the very few services that is permitted under statute to be funded this way, and because it is one of the most rapidly rising service costs across city operations.

I hope this helps clarify. Enjoy the rest of your weekend and I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday.

Mark C.

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**From:** Ahrens, David  
**Sent:** Friday, October 17, 2014 4:54 PM  
**To:** Clear, Mark; All Alders  
**Cc:** Allen, Heather; Mayor; Viste, Doran; Schmiedicke, David; Eddy, Marla; Knepp, Eric  
**Subject:** RE: Urban forestry special charge update

All Alders, et. al:

A few questions in regard to this revised proposal:

First, based on the August 2014 report on Forestry Fees, I estimated the additional costs for EAB for 2015 at \$1.5M with an additional increase in the Forestry Program of \$200K for a total cost of \$5.9M (the 2014 budget for Forestry is \$4.2 M) . As such, the proposed "charge" of \$527,000 covers about one-tenth of the departmental cost. Why not the entire budget? Or one-fifth?

Second, in the previous iteration of the proposal, the method of apportioning the fees would have been decided by the Council. In this sub, this tax policy is decided by the City Forester. What precedent and rationale is there for delegating to City staff determination of tax policy or fees?

Third, is the question raised by other Council members but which remained unanswered: While there is urgency and importance to the threat of EAB, why is the EAB or Forestry Program considered to be fiscally vulnerable? That is, why is there a belief that this need will not be addressed while other programs or many of the new initiatives will be adequately funded?

No doubt others will have questions and I trust answers.

Have a good weekend, all!

David

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Alder, 15th District  
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Sign-Up for City Email at: <https://my.cityofmadison.com/>

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**From:** Clear, Mark  
**Sent:** Friday, October 17, 2014 3:18 PM  
**To:** All Alders

**Cc:** Allen, Heather; Mayor; Viste, Doran; Schmiedicke, David; Eddy, Marla; Knepp, Eric

**Subject:** Urban forestry special charge update

Dear Colleagues,

When you receive the Council agenda tomorrow, you will see an item for reconsideration of the urban forestry special charge (Legistar 35038). I asked Ald. King to make this motion, which he is eligible to do as he was absent at the Oct. 7 meeting.

I'm not usually a fan of reconsideration unless circumstances have changed. In this case, several things have changed that merit our revisiting this issue.

First, we've all had some time to review and receive briefings on the Mayor's budget, which had been released just hours before our last meeting.

Second is the information in the attached memo. Many of you expressed concerns about the uncertainty of implementation, so I worked with staff over the past week to provide a more fleshed-out plan for the preferred apportionment option of linear street frontage. (An actual implementation plan, ready for council review and approval, will take probably a couple of months, so could not be prepared in time for our meeting. And obviously we don't want to commit the staff time to preparing such a plan unless we know it will move forward.)

Third is that the level of public awareness and concern over EAB has increased, even in just the past week, probably in response to the Mayor's budget. At Parks Commission this week we had several speakers on EAB, pleading for more to be done to preserve trees in parks, even though the topic was not on the agenda. Though the purpose of this legislation is not EAB-specific, the significant demand for resources caused by EAB can't be uncoupled from this proposal.

I very much appreciate your willingness to review these materials and revisit the issue on Tuesday.

Mark C.