



REPORT TO VILLAGE BOARD

ITEM NAME:	Chapter 389 Oak Wilt
MEETING DATE:	July 13, 2026
PRESENTING COMMITTEE:	
COMMITTEE CONTACT:	Trustee Dan Lesniak
STAFF CONTACT:	Administrator James Davel
PREPARED BY:	Clerk Jennifer Poyer

ISSUE:

Trustee Dan Lesniak has asked the Village Board to discuss Chapter 389 of the Village Code (the Oak Wilt Ordinance) because the Village no longer has a contracted, officially designated tree inspector, a role the ordinance assumes exists and depends on to function.

OBJECTIVES:

Give the Board accurate background on oak wilt, the Village's ordinance, and the current status of the tree inspector role so trustees can decide how, if at all, to proceed.

Identify the practical gap between what Chapter 389 requires and the staffing currently in place to carry it out.

ISSUE BACKGROUND/PREVIOUS ACTIONS:

Oak wilt is a fungal disease (*Bretziella fagacearum*, formerly *Ceratocystis fagacearum*) that kills oak trees, spreading both underground through grafted root systems and above ground when sap-feeding beetles carry spores to fresh wounds. Trees in the red oak group (red, pin, and black oak) die the fastest and are most susceptible; white and bur oak are also affected. The Wisconsin DNR reports the disease is widespread in central and southern Wisconsin and kills thousands of oaks statewide each year.

In 2013, the Village contracted with Land Management Solutions, LLC, funded in part by a Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry grant, to inventory oak wilt in Kronenwetter. That survey found 578 trees actively dying and 1,236 already dead from the disease, concentrated most heavily on the west side of I-39, and led directly to creation of the Village's Urban Forestry Program.

The Village Board adopted the Oak Wilt Ordinance (Ord. No. 14-01) on January 28, 2014, and amended it in its entirety on December 13, 2016 (Ord. No. 16-25). It designates oak wilt infestations as public nuisances, restricts pruning/wounding of oaks from April 15 to August 15, regulates transport and disposal of infected wood, and requires an on-site inspection before construction on wooded lots.

The ordinance's inspection, enforcement, and notice provisions (§ 389-3 through § 389-7) all run through a "tree inspector" designated by the Village Board. Historically, this function was carried out by the Village's contracted urban forester, Land Management Solutions, LLC.

According to the Village's website, the Village has not had a contracted urban forester since January 1, 2022, and the associated Oak Wilt cost-share program (which reimbursed property owners 50%, up to \$350 per parcel, for professional management plans) has been suspended and remains on hold. This is the gap Trustee Lesniak's email identifies: the ordinance presumes an actively functioning tree inspector, but the Village currently has no one formally holding that designation.

PROPOSAL:

Trustee Lesniak is asking the Board to discuss the topic and provide direction on how it would like to proceed.

ADVANTAGES:

DISADVANTAGES:

ITEMIZE ALL ANTICIPATED COSTS (Direct or Indirect, Start-Up/One-Time, Capital, Ongoing & Annual, Debt Service, etc.)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

TIMING REQUIREMENTS/CONSTRAINTS:

FUNDING SOURCE(s) – Must include Account Number/Description/Budgeted Amt CFY/% Used

CFY/\$ Remaining CFY

Account Number:

Description:

Budgeted Amount:

Spent to Date:

Percentage Used:

Remaining:

ATTACHMENTS (describe briefly):

Chapter 389 of the Village Code (Oak Wilt Ordinance)