

**Council Meeting Date: Regular City Council Meeting May 11, 2022**

**Agenda Item Cover Sheet**

**Agenda Item Subject/Title:**

Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on the Creation of an Oak Wilt Information Page with an Annual Website Banner for the Months When Trimming Oaks is Prohibited and Require that City Staff Post Signs Stating this Ban at Entrances and Other Appropriate Public Lands During the Restricted Trimming Months.

**Agenda Item Summary:**

Oak Wilt is a serious concern for all of Central Texas. Woodcreek already has documented and confirmed cases of Oak Wilt. While the fungal spores can spread via roots, there are two other ways it can pass from tree to tree and these both entail making cuts to live wood. The first being, beetles transferring it to fresh cuts on live wood and the other being contaminated tools used on healthy trees. Due to high fungal production in late winter and early spring, combined with increased bug populations, the Texas A&M Forrest Service recommends that there be NO pruning of any species of oak tree from February through June to reduce the risk of spread. The City of Woodcreek has smartly adopted an ordinance to back this recommendation. Further resident education and public messaging will only serve to bolster the efforts to protect the city's collective tree inventory. Additionally, the Texas A&M Forrest Service estimates that documented Oak Wilt can reduce a properties value by 15-20%. With that in mind, adherence to this policy and increased awareness on the topic serves to protect residents' best interests and the value of their assets.

**Financial Impact:**

Time spent by staff to post the page one time and the banner each year and the cost of the production of signs if none exist already plus their placement each year.

**Recommendations:**

Recommend that Council move to approve the creation of an Oak Wilt page on the city website; that the annual posting of the website banner occur from February through June; and that the City create and post signs at the entrances, the Triangle, City Hall, and other appropriate public lands to alert residents to this ban on oak trimming each year during the specified months.

**Submitted by:** Councilmember Debra Hines