

## Town of East Haddam – Department of Public Works



Public Works Garage  
7 Hood Lane  
East Haddam, CT 06423

Mailing:  
POB 385  
Moodus, CT 06469

Office: 860-873-5023  
Fax: 860-873-6014  
Email: [publicworks@easthaddam.org](mailto:publicworks@easthaddam.org)

**August 5, 2024**

### **PUBLIC HEARING DECISION**

#### **Trees Marked/Tagged on Bone Mill Road, Old Town Street, and Hemlock Valley Road**

**A public hearing was held on Wednesday, July 31, 2024; at 2pm at the intersection of Bone Mill Road and Shelter Rock.**

**Officials Present:** Michele M. Velez, Tree Warden/Director of Public Works; Erik Dill, Selectman; Tanya Bourgoin, Selectman; Gary Metz, Public Works Road Foreman

**Others:** See attached Sign in Sheet

#### **Overview:**

The Trees were posted on May 30, 2024, due to the repeated calls regarding limbs and trees falling on these roads over the past 18 months. After a visual inspection of the trees as the Town's Tree Warden a certified arborist was hired who determined the trees were a concern to public safety. Trees were tagged and marked based on their current health conditions, serious decline in health, dead trees, and trees which may be too close to the road that are of concern to the public safety. I, as the appointed Town Tree Warden, inspect all trees prior to removal. Any trees that are of concern I speak with the operator and arborists directly to discuss pruning options. I also mark other trees that I deem unsafe during this process the arborist may not have taken into consideration. I read the criteria to the attendees about what is used when deciding to prune or remove a tree as well as the number of calls received each year regarding unsafe trees and included the Eversource scorecard which shows that in 2023 89% of the power outages in town were related to trees falling. Copies of these are attached to the minutes and this decision.

#### **Discussion and General Comments:**

Attendees of the hearing noted concerns regarding the number of trees planning to be removed and the environmental factors that are of concern when removing trees concerning climate change, habitat and other environmental issues specifically regarding erosion. Others spoke about the safety of these unhealthy dying trees, that continue to fall in roads and take out power. Each attendee had an opportunity to speak about their concern regarding removal of the trees or not removing and keeping trees. A reflection of this can be found in the minutes of the hearing. As stated during the hearing an opportunity to meet with the Tree Warden had been available prior to the hearing and there were several attendees who reached out to discuss trees of concern in their neighborhood. Let it be noted that the Tree Warden makes every effort to meet and discuss all trees regarding removal or health decline upon receiving notice. It is the responsibility of the resident to reach out to the Tree Warden to set times and dates regarding the trees in question. The Town also recognizes the methods of communication could be made easier for residents living on the roads to ensure they are aware of the process and what is happening in their neighborhoods. The Town will make every effort to consider these recommendations for large tree removal projects in the future.

**Conclusion:**

A public hearing was held to provide transparency around the removal or pruning of trees and to give residents the opportunity to learn more about the specifics and voice their concerns. The approximately 200 trees along Bone Mill Road, Old Town Street and Hemlock Valley Road that were tagged for removal or pruning are located on the Towns Easement or over the road into the town easement. The Town is responsible for the Trees which are of concern and pose a liability to the community. The trees will be marked with paint and the road with P's to show pruning of tree prior to removal. A schedule for removal will be posted on the town's website. It is not the town's policy to remove trees in good condition, however, if a tree poses a public safety concern because of its proximity to the road a decision of removal may be warranted. The town understands and appreciates all the benefits trees provide, but public safety and the ability to safely travel on Bone Mill Road, Old Town Street or Hemlock Valley will take precedence over the trees in this case. The trees must be removed or pruned to ensure the safety of the community and provide young tree growth with the opportunity to thrive.

**According to the sec. 23-59, "Any party aggrieved by this decision may, within ten days, appeal therefrom to the superior court for the judicial district".**

Michele M. Velez  
Director of Public Works/Tree Warden  
Town of East Haddam  
[pwadmin@easthaddam.org](mailto:pwadmin@easthaddam.org)  
860-873-5023

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4/8/24

### Town of East Haddam Tree Removal and Pruning Standards

There are several signs that a tree is getting weak and may fall including but not limited to dead wood, cracks, decay, cankers, root problems, poor form, and weak branch unions with the trunk.

Identifying trees early to correct the problems with Pruning would be the priority however some trees are not able to be saved by pruning and need to be taken down to reduce liability.

The town will make every effort to preserve the natural beauty of its tree-lined roadsides and recreation areas by detecting and correcting situations involving hazardous trees when applicable within the constraints of the department's resources.

Any questions regarding the town's standards should be directed to the Town's appointed Tree Warden, Michele Velez.

**Town of East Haddam**  
**Town Easement Tree Removal Criteria**

**Criteria for the town to remove trees from Roadside easement or town owned property**

1. Vertical cracking
2. Seams
3. Dead Branch Stubs
4. Large Branch stubs which will fall from weight
5. Damage to main trunk
6. Fungal Disease
  - a. Wilting, falling or discoloration of leaves or needles
  - b. Depressions in wood
  - c. Scabs in the fruit
  - d. Bleeding cankers
  - e. Stunted growth
7. Dying or Dead
  - a. No leaves or buds during grow season
  - b. Significant lean
  - c. Dead branches
  - d. Evergreens will have thinning canopy, needle drop and browning at needle tip.
  - e. Tree exhibits disease or insect symptoms
8. Significant lean or new lean
9. Hazardous location
  - a. Power lines
  - b. Close to structure
  - c. Blocking view of road or oncoming traffic
10. In way of sight lines
11. Invasive species
12. Insect damage
13. Root rot
14. Girdling roots
15. Y or V crotch
16. Abnormal Bark Peeling
17. Visible Wounds or open cavities
18. Broken from lightning strike.
19. The root system has been compromised.

**Town Of East Haddam**

**July 31, 2024**

**Work Orders – Related to Trees**

**October 25, 2022 – June 30, 2023**

125 Calls into Public Works about concerned Trees in town

77 calls were regarding down trees in roads

**December 23, 2022**

36 Roads not passable due to Down trees in town

Took entire crew to clean up trees (5 Hours OT – Holiday Double Time)

**July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024**

170 calls into Public Works about Concerned Trees In town

40 Calls were regarding Down Trees in Road

**Total of 246 Calls Tree Related in 2023**

**July 1, 2024 – Present Day (7/31/24) WO#52**

7 Calls into PW about Concerned Trees in town

6 calls were regarding trees down in the road

**Eversource 2023 Reliability Scorecard**

5,084 Customers served in town

**Cause of Power Outages in town**

Year 2021 - 63% - Trees

Year 2022 - 89% - Trees

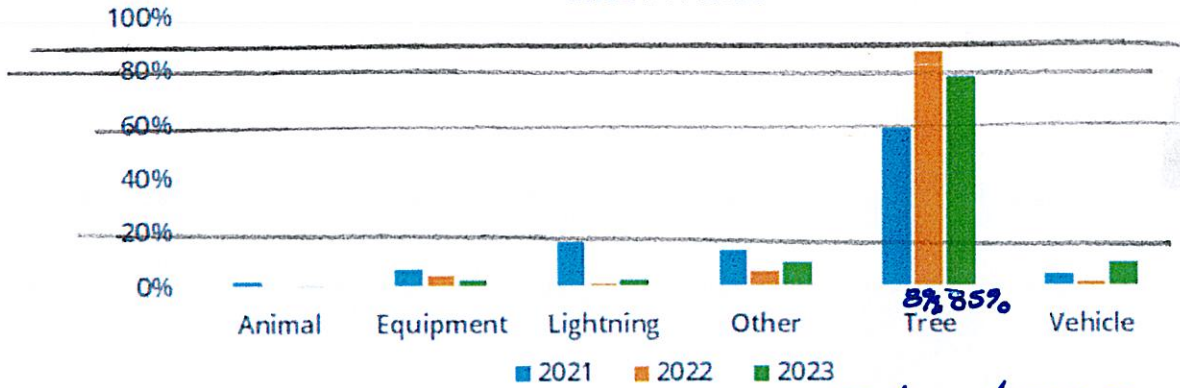
Year 2023 - 85% - Trees

(See Score Card)

## 2023 East Haddam Reliability Scorecard

5,084 customers served in town

Cause Trends



*63% / 89% / 85% } causes  
Trees  
21, 22, 23*

### In East Haddam,

The average customer experienced 1 outage every 4 months.

Outages in your community were more frequent than the state average of 1 outage every 19 months.

The average customer experienced a 275-minute-long outage. This includes all customers in your community even if they did not experience an outage.

Your community's outages were longer than the state average of 72 minutes.

When an outage occurred, it took Eversource an average of 103 minutes to restore power.

2,767 customers experienced 3 or more outages.  
360 customers experienced an outage that lasted 7 or more hours.

### What does this mean for you?

This information is meant to help you understand how frequently outages occur and how long they last, on average, in your community. It also shows you how your community compares to the state's averages. Those that do lose power may be restored faster or be without power longer than the average.

Public Hearing

Tree Warden

June 25, 2024; 2pm - 3pm

Intersection of Bone Mill and Shelter Rock Road

Please Sign in and note if you would like to speak:

Name Address Yes, I would like to make a comment

1. Rob Smith 119 Boardman Rd E Hadden
2. Joe & LORE Iannelli 70 Hemlock Valley
3. Sydney & Peter Rowland 25 " "
4. Chris Donnelly 670 Ferns Pl, Durham, CT
5. LISA Costello 78 Bone Mill Rd
6. Andrew Compagno 36 River Rd - Bone Mill
7. Robert Molinsky 51 Bone Mill Road
8. Valerie Clark 33 Bone Mill Rd
9. Eugene Bonysewicz 33 Bone Mill Rd
10. Matt Elgart Day Hill Rd.
11. Jim Leatherbee 40 Bone Mill
12. ISABEL BUTT 8 SHELTER ROCK RD
13. Robert Hart 64 Hemlock Valley Rd
14. Carolyn Hart 64 Hemlock Valley Rd
15. Greta Macdonald 138 BALLAHACK
16. Sarah Bunch 131 Ballahack Rd #2
17. Patricci Linn 217 River Rd EH

Public Hearing

Tree Warden

June 25, 2024; 2pm - 3pm

Intersection of Bone Mill and Shelter Rock Road

- 18. KIM SECRIST 117 RIVER RD ESTER HADDAM
- 19. Amalia 61 Hemlock Valley Rd
- 20. Burns 1/2 Schulman Veslak
- 21. Marty 177 Ballhawk
- 22. \_\_\_\_\_
- 23. \_\_\_\_\_
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