



## Environmental Advisory Committee

### Minutes

January 21, 2021, 4:00 p.m.

Via Electronic Means

- PRESENT:**
- R. Hynes, Chairperson
  - S. Crozier, Vice-Chairperson
  - W. Boyd
  - P. Byer
  - J. Lawrence
  - D. Riley
  - I. Lessner (entered the meeting at 4:15 p.m.)
- COUNCIL:**
- Councillor E. Johanson, Council Representative (Non-voting)
- STAFF:**
- J. Gordon, Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations
  - G. Newman, Manger of Planning
  - A. Claffey, Arboricultural Technician
  - D. Johnstone, Deputy Corporate Officer
  - C. Richards, Committee Clerk
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#### 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:06pm.

#### 2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**2021-EAC-011:** It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Environmental Advisory Committee adopt the agenda for January 21, 2021 as circulated.

**Motion CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Minor housekeeping amendments were addressed.

**2021-EAC-012:** It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Environmental Advisory Committee adopts the minutes of the January 7, 2021 as circulated.

**Motion CARRIED**

**4. TREE MANAGEMENT BYLAW 1831 & TREE MANAGEMENT ON CITY LANDS POLICY 611**

I. Lessner entered the meeting at 4:15pm.

It was suggested that Item 4 (Tree Management Bylaw 1831 & Tree Management on City Lands Policy 611) and Item 5 (Referral from January 11, 2021 Land Use and Planning Committee) be discussed simultaneously to ensure there is a proof of concept with the Tree Report document.

A further discussion took place by the Committee with respect to proposed amendments for Bylaw 1831 and Policy 611.

There were no concerns with the editorial corrections done to the document.

The executive summary received approval from Committee members.

The following draft recommendations (noted in italics) were discussed:

R12:

*The EAC recommends that Bylaw 1831 be revised to add a Type 4 Permit entailing reduced fees, documentation and/or replacement tree requirements. Qualifying activities would include works resulting in harm to a protected tree that is causing serious demonstrable damage, or risk thereof, to an existing building or infrastructure, in circumstances where the damage cannot be remedied or averted by other reasonable means. Works authorized under such a permit would normally be limited to pruning of structural branches or roots, would not normally extend to the removal of a protected tree, and would not include works to facilitate additions or modifications to existing buildings or infrastructure (eg, landscaping esthetics, driveway expansion or diversion) for which a Type 1, Type 2 or Type 3 Permit would otherwise be required.*

- Concerns were expressed that this is a difficult recommendation to grasp. It was suggested that the refined recommendation is altered from the original recommendation.
- That there should be a permit that encourages the public to protect trees.
- That R12 be amended to read the version that was formed at the October 22nd, 2020 meeting.
- It was noted that a quick review of R12's wording may open up concerns for small building projects.
- It was suggested that the Committee could revise the new proposed version to address the previously noted concerns or the recommendation would be removed completely.
- The initiative behind R12 should be to tackle emergencies that would threaten a building and avoid unnecessary costs. R12 should be referred to a maintenance emergency and not a renovation emergency.
- The Type 4 Permit's reasoning is intended for citizens who require a permit quickly and, as a result, typically would not get a permit in the past (at the time, this would have been a Type 2 Permit).
- It was noted that the discussions surrounding the Type 4 Permit have changed over time.
- Chairperson Hynes noted that he had inquired to staff on possible ways of addressing a Type 4 permit based on the original rationale. Staff concluded that this would be too complicated for homeowners who wish to do small renovations.
- It was suggested that the Committee should not be creating a new type of permit that may open greater possibilities for people to do work that may affect trees, and to be able to do their work at a lower cost. It was noted that the suggestions of a Type 4 permit could come from staff and not the Committee.
- It was suggested that if the Type 4 Permit does not satisfy all committee members, that the permit be removed from recommendations, and that Staff to address this situation while reviewing the appropriateness of this sort.
- Staff noted that it currently costs 500 dollars to remove a tree. Having a Type 4 Permit would allow for homeowners to save money.

**ACTION ITEM:** The Chairperson to rescind the text of the report underneath the Works to Address Damage to Existing Buildings or Infrastructure section.

**2021-EAC-013:** It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Environmental Advisory Committee rescind the previously adopted R12 (Motion 2021-EAC-003).

**Motion CARRIED**

**2021-EAC-014:** It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Environmental Advisory Committee has no further recommendations in regards to Motion 2021-EAC-013.

**Motion CARRIED**

**Note: The Committee discussed the referral from the January 11, 2021 Land Use and Planning Committee: Early Review of Rezoning Application - 15733 Thrift Avenue (Agenda Item 5) at this time.**

It was noted that the intent of having this referral is to see if the final recommendations on the Tree Management Recommendations report work effectively. The Committee's purpose is to provide a proof of concept and to consider whether and how this kind of situation raises issues that has either been addressed in the Tree Recommendation report or if it should be addressed.

The following was discussed regarding this matter:

- It was noted that there are three recommendations in the Tree Management Recommendation report that would be of help in addressing these kinds of cases:
  - R1: That Planning Bylaws and Zoning Bylaws be reviewed in removing the protection of trees.
  - R9: The review of securities and other fees.
  - R18: That Staff develop criteria for Type 2 and 3 tree permit applications.
- Staff explained that the recommendations that are being advanced will help the City with tree retention. As of right now, the bylaw currently does not have enough strength in place to avoid the removal of protected trees in the case of applications for building new structures.
- A member inquired on what would change to make the Tree Bylaw stronger.

- Staff noted that the City would explicitly add at a minimum a provision that gives recognition to design changes that would allow for greater tree retention. This would provide staff the ability to leverage a provision that says applicants shall demonstrate that every effort has been undertaken that final design does not require tree removal. It was also noted that they are not proposing additional recommendations from the Committee.
- The following amendment was suggested for the recommendations to the Tree Management Recommendations report:
  - R9: *The EAC recommends that Council direct staff to review the current fees, securities, replacement values and fines related to tree removal and replacements to ensure they are commensurate with best practices conducive to achieving the goals of maintaining and increasing the number of healthy trees and the amount of tree canopy in the City.*
    - In the second line, after "securities," add "cash in lieu requirements,"; and
    - In the second line, after "replacement values", add "and quotas,".
  - 2. Tree Replacement Requirements, On Private Lands: *As noted above, under Bylaw 1831, in most cases where “protected trees” are removed from private lands, there is a requirement to plant new, “replacement trees”. The Committee supports this policy as well as the current replacement quotas based on size of the removed trees. However, the City Arborist has acknowledged that, once a tree is planted, it will in most cases take over 20 years before it can actually add significantly to the tree canopy and yield the environmental benefits provided by the removed mature tree. This underscores the crucial, over-riding importance of pursuing ambitious canopy enhancement goals and maximizing the normative protections for existing trees through the various means suggested elsewhere in this report.*
    - In the second line, after "replacement trees", add "and/or to make cash in lieu payments for the City to plant trees elsewhere"; and
    - In the second sentence, remove "as well as the current replacement quotas based on size of the removed trees".
- A suggestion was made to make changes to the Official Community Plan terms with respect to lot coverage, in hopes to preserve tree retention.
  - Staff will consider minimum landscape open space provision while reviewing R1.

- A tree covenant might be beneficial to preserve trees in perpetuity until a permit is provided to remove them.
  - Staff noted that the City does not have the opportunity to request covenants through the process of tree management permits. The existing configuration of the property contained many trees. If someone were to purchase the property and build a large house, the City would have to issue a Tree Removal permit. If the application must go through a planning application process (rezoning, subdivisions, etc.), covenants can be put in place during this stage.
  - It was suggested that covenants could be placed for a long period to the point that the protected trees become part of a canopy.
- Concerns were noted about the houses being too large on properties, minimizing the area of trees to be planted.

**2021-EAC-015:** It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Environmental Advisory Committee rescinds the previously adopted R9 (Motion 2020-EAC-035).

**Motion CARRIED**

**2021-EAC-016:** It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Environmental Advisory Committee recommends that Council direct staff to review the current fees, securities, cash in lieu requirements, replacement values and quotas, and fines related to tree removal and replacements to ensure they are commensurate with best practices conducive to achieving the goals of maintaining and increasing the number of healthy trees and the amount of tree canopy in the City.

**Motion CARRIED**

**2021-EAC-017:** It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Environment Advisory Committee adopts the entire Tree Management Recommendations report, including the executive summary and draft resolution report, with the following changes:

- Delete R12 and the narrative that proceeds it.
- Make the following changes to 2. Tree Replacement Requirements, On Private Lands (text noted above):

- On the second line, after "replacement trees", add "and/or to make cash in lieu payments for the City to plant trees elsewhere"; and
- In the second sentence, remove "as well as the current replacement quotas based on size of the removed trees".
- The newly amended R9, as voted in the above motion.

**Motion CARRIED**

**5. REFERRAL FROM JANUARY 11, 2021 LAND USE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**5.1 EARLY REVIEW OF REZONING APPLICATION - 15733 THRIFT AVENUE**

At the January 11, 2021 Land Use and Planning Committee meeting, Council made the following recommendation:

*THAT the Land Use and Planning Committee refers the preliminary Rezoning Application for 15733 Thrift Avenue to the next Environmental Advisory Committee meeting so a review can be done applying the proposed recommendations they have been working on for Bylaw No. 1831 and Policy No. 611.*

The Manager of Planning provided history on the project.

The Committee further discussed the project while referencing the Tree Management Recommendations report. Item 5.1 (Early Review of Rezoning Application - 15733) was discussed simultaneously with Item 4 (Tree Management Bylaw 1831 & Tree Management on City Lands Policy 611).

**6. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**7. INFORMATION**

**7.1 COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKING**

The Committee reviewed the Action Tracking document and discussed potential topics for discussion for 2021, including:

- The Chairperson proposed that the consideration of organization of work and remaining priorities be the first order of business at the February 4, 2021 meeting.

**ACTION ITEM:** The Manager of Engineering is to provide a briefing of remaining tasks at the February 4, 2021 meeting.

**8. 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE**

The following meeting schedule was approved by the Committee at the November 19, 2020 meeting and was provided for information:

- February 4;
- February 18;
- March 4; and
- March 18.

**9. CONCLUSION OF THE JANUARY 21, 2021 ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Chairperson concluded the meeting at 5:58pm.

Approved at the February 4, 2021 meeting

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R. Hynes, Chairperson



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Chloe Richards, Committee Clerk