

June 18, 2021

To: WHITE ROCK CITY COUNCIL

Please accept this letter as support for the delegation on June 28, 2021 to have the city remove the black cottonwood trees growing on the road allowance of Semiahmoo St. east of Findlay St.

I am a resident of the neighborhood and professional forester with over 50 years experience growing and harvesting trees. However, as I explained to my neighbors initiating the delegation, my expertise is **not urban forestry and I cannot give a professional opinion**, only a personal one, as a homeowner who happens to have experience managing tree plantations.

In forestry we use the phrase the “**right tree in the right place**”. Black cottonwood grows very fast and will reach a height well over 100 feet much quicker than any other major species indigenous to B.C. The crowns can reach over 50 feet in width with large diameter branches that can break and cause significant property damage. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the trees in question will become a problem. There is simply not enough space for them to continue growing in their current location without creating a significant risk to personal property. **Black cottonwood is definitely NOT the “right tree” in an urban setting.**

I would also like to comment on the City of White Rock’s tree replacement policy for developers. The cottonwoods under discussion seeded in naturally when the two lots on the west end of Moffat Lane were created about 5 years ago. When they split the original lot in two and cleared the area for the 2 new houses the developers were required by the city to plant six trees for each one they removed. Also, the replacement trees were required to be a minimum girth and height.

The city’s requirements are probably well intentioned but are very short-sighted and poorly administered. The original lot had one house with a footprint of about 700 square feet, now we have 2 lots with 2 houses having a total footprint of about 4000 square feet. Where are all the additional trees going to go? Also, the developer had to clear the entire lot plus clear partly up the embankment on city road allowance to accommodate planting the new trees. Thus, providing a seed bed for the cottonwoods!

Even after the cottonwoods are removed, we still have inappropriate trees on the adjacent private lots which will create issues for the homeowners and the neighbors. A few years ago, I observed the developer planting white pine and hybrid poplars along the boundary. Both species are inappropriate for the small city lot because they will grow too tall for the site. I asked the developer why he chose those species and he replied they were the cheapest he could find that met the city’s size specifications and he was focused on getting his development deposit returned.

This old forester thinks that the tree policies of the City of White Rock are completely inappropriate and are in dire need of a complete re-think. **Currently you are not achieving the “right tree in the right place”.**

Respectfully; Russ Clinton, 15628 Cliff Ave.