

Urban Forestry Advisory Committee

Minutes

Thursday, September 11, 2014

Ante Room at 5:00-7:00pm

Attendance:

Peter Howes, Ron Calvert, Stephen Holmes, Michael O'Neill, John Stevens, Brian Delaney, Emily Davis

Regrets:

Gavin Pally, Bruce Zimmerman, Jacilynn Lewis

Absent:

Councillor Mark Elliott, Councillor Bill Phillips, David Stevens, David DeRocco

Staff Liaison:

Mike Anderson

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1. **Call meeting to order (Peter Howes)**
5:22pm
 2. **Resignation of Committee Member David Stevens**
 3. **Motion to approve the agenda**
1st John Stevens, 2nd Michael O'Neill
 4. **Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting June 12th & July 10th**
1st Michael O'Neill, 2nd John Stevens
 5. **Business arising from the minutes**
 - The City of St. Catharines tree website and its content was reviewed by Michael O'Neill. He didn't find any concerns. O'Neill said it was manageable, easy to use and that it is simple to find what you are looking for.
 - Stephen Holmes asked if it provides educational information such as why trees are important and why we need to plant them.
 - Mike O'Neill explains that there is information that would be beneficial for people with basic level knowledge of trees. It may be helpful to possibly include some links at the bottom for citizens to access more information about trees.

- It is agreed that the use of technology is a way to promote more phone calls about trees. Currently, there is educational information, but maybe not set up for the way that the committee needs it. The website is only 1 portion of the educational material.
- There is agreement that the website needs to be set up in a way that a citizen would want it to be. Necessary to avoid being technical. Prioritizing the website would be a good step.
- When considering the tree removals due to the Emerald Ash Borer disease, citizens are likely looking at the tree website more than ever and therefore, it is an opportune time to promote the cause.
- It also might be important to include more information about the trees, such as the Latin names and the soil types that the trees thrive in. This would increase the professional aspect of the webpage as well as gives homeowners more information to do research on the trees themselves. Some trees can go by several names or different species can be attached to one name. By providing the Latin name, it ensures that the tree someone is researching is correct.
- There is a question about the quality of soil on boulevards.
- Mike Anderson answers that it depends. Soil will change depending on where the location is through the escarpment. For example, soil contains more sand the closer you are to the water.
- There is a question asking if the city's online tree list goes in sync with the geography of the city. Anderson responds that the trees on the list will do well just about anywhere. The online lists 1-6 help avoid any particular street having more than 30% of any one particular tree on it.
- It is decided that the discussion of what should be included in the education will be discussed in a sub-committee.

6. **Business**

5.1 Significant Tree Species List

- Ron Calvert has some concerns about the list that was established in the last few meetings. The criteria that were added as rationale for being on the list do not sound like something defensible. He feels that the regional by-law has something that really explains it properly, but feels with this explanation that all exotics need to come off the list and all conifers need to go on. Calvert also feels that adding all the conifers is the strategic thing to do when anticipating the Asian Longhorned Beetle's arrival. In order for Calvert to accept the list, he feels that the rationale needs to be changed.
- Some members of the committee bring up the fact that there are several conifers that are not native to Niagara, such as Red Pine which is currently on the list.
- Calvert agrees that this would be an exception, but feels that it is very important to add these to the list to protect the canopy against the Asian Longhorned Beetle.

- A question is asked about the small landscaping conifers which would have to be included in this umbrella. It is also brought up that in the last meeting Gavin Pally said that all the calls he would receive about cutting down conifers would not be worth the amount he would save and to leave it to the nomination process to protect the significant ones.
- Some members feel that the regional by-laws description is too wordy for the general public; the committee wants this to be easy to grasp.
- There are other feelings that synchronization with the Niagara Regional by-law would benefit them.
- There is an agreement to include some of the Regional by-laws wording in this by-law.
- The committee comes to more of an agreement that maybe it is possible to include all conifers, but only over 15 feet, which is the legal definition of a tree.
- If the committee is trying to protect canopy, then why would conifers be included as they do not create the canopy they are looking for. There is some confusion on what the main goal of this is. It is to protect and promote the city's canopy cover.
- Motion made by Ron Calvert to recommend that the committee adds all conifers over 15 feet in height to the significant tree list. It is 2nd by Michael O'Neill. The vote resulted in 5 in agreement and 1 opposition.
- There is no time for agenda items regarding criteria for the nomination process and creating the education program.

5.2 Trillium Awards

- The Trillium Awards are coming up on October 1st. Mike Anderson gives a short description of what they involve. The awards are giving for citizen's participation in beautifying the city. The nominations are typically based on the resident's private lot. The Awards Ceremony always has a number of guest speakers. Anderson wanted to present this as an opportunity for someone from the committee to speak about the good things that this committee has accomplished, what they goals are, discuss Emerald Ash Borer. It is emphasized that there is no pressure for anyone to do it, it is just a suggestion.
- The committee members see this as an opportunity to tell people the importance of trees, but no one in attendance is available to speak or would know what exactly to say.
- Anderson suggests that he could send out invites to the committee members for them to attend this year, so that next year, they have a better idea of what the speech should be about.
- Emily Davis, the secretary, is to ensure the invitations go out to the members.

7. **New Business**

- In light of the devastation the Emerald Ash Borer disease has caused, there is discussion over what the committee plans to do with the possibility of the Asian Longhorned Beetle which is causing issues in other municipalities.
- Stephen Holmes is wondering what the city's plans are currently.
- Mike Anderson says that the forestry department is very aware of the beetle and is keeping track of its most up to date movements.
- Holmes is wondering if the committee agrees to ask the city for more information on their threat response plan for the Asian Longhorned Beetle. Asking now may help avoid the same devastation that the Emerald Ash Borer caused.
- The committee is in agreement over this.

8. **Date & Location of next meeting**

Thursday, October 09, 2014
Ante Room

9. **Motion to Adjourn: 7:08**