

Urban Forestry Advisory Committee

Minutes

Thursday, October 09, 2014

Ante Room at 5:00 – 7:00pm

Attendance:

Peter Howes, Ron Calvert, Stephen Holmes, Michael O'Neill, John Stevens, Bruce Zimmerman, Jacilynn Lewis, Emily Davis

Regrets:

Councillor Mark Elliott, Councillor Bill Phillips, David DeRocco, Brian Delaney

Staff Liaison:

Mike Anderson, Gavin Pally

1. **Call meeting to order (Peter Howes)**
5:08pm
2. **Motion to approve the agenda**
1st John Stevens, 2nd Mike O'Neill
3. **Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting September 11th**
1st Mike O'Neill, 2nd Jacilynn Lewis
4. **Business arising from the minutes**
 - In regards to the significant tree list, last meeting a motion was made to add "all conifers over 15ft in height" to the list. This raised some questions with Gavin Pally because of the nature of conifers in a city setting is that they are more susceptible to insects and disease and inevitably outgrow their space. An example given is that conifers over 12-15 years of age, it is very likely to have cankerous bore. Pally's concern is that the forestry team that would be managing this would do a thousand inspections to save only a few trees since most of them would have legitimate issues.
5. **Business**
 - 5.1 Significant Tree Species List**

- In regards to Gavin Pally's concerns, Ron Calvert asks if then Pally is suggesting that they are creating a punishment based by-law. Also, Calvert explains that outgrowing their space due to improper placement by the planter can be applied to not just conifers but other trees as well. People plant all types of trees too close to houses all the time.
- The purpose of the Significant Species List is that it is asking that the tree needs to be verified by someone with experience before the tree is removed. The list needs to be comprehensible and manageable in order to be enforceable. By adding conifers to the list, it takes away its feasibility.
- The discussion leads towards whether the list should include only native, or include some exotics. Also, when the term native is used, it needs to be specified where the geographical boundary is. It is decided that "native" in this sense is related to the Niagara Region, below the escarpment to Stoney Creek. The ecosystem in this area is unique.
- Lots of species in nature need to be genetically adapted to new areas, they naturalize.
- Exotic trees are not core to the unique environment here. Significant trees should contribute to this. However, it should be noted that the Asian Longhorned Beetle will primarily attack natives so it may be strategic to include some exotic species. The Asian Longhorned Beetle is something that is expected to be in our region, most likely from Michigan, in the next 3-5 years. This estimate is from the Ministry of Resources.
- Stephen Holmes asks, in order to have a clear answer, if the Asian Longhorned Beetle is a threat? Gavin Pally responds that, yes it is. Holmes asks, if there is currently a plan in place to deal with it? Pally responds, no. Stephen Holmes asks to the committee, "Is it reasonable to ask for a plan then?"
- There is some discussion over if it is the time now to create a plan, and whether it is necessary in this immediate time frame. Stephen Holmes explains that it is best to be safe and proactive than sorry.
- There is template for threat assessment but it is generalized and just needs to be tweaked in order to fit the needs here. What the committee would like to see is for senior management and council to see that it is a threat and that they need to be made aware of it.
- There is a concern that it is possible that the committee recommending this now would be too soon and council would not take the threat seriously if it the beetle takes longer than estimated to get here.
- Stephen Holmes explains that the bug can be tracked geographically so this should not be an issue.
- There is a question over why the Asian Longhorned Beetle is not in the general media. It is answered by Bruce Zimmerman who explains that it is not currently in

media because the general public does not care right now because it does not affect them yet.

- Strategy plans are excellent and reasonable. It is not hard to ask council and senior management to simply be made aware of the repercussions of this beetle.
- Motion: Committee recommends to council that a threat response plan for the Asian Longhorned Beetle be created, and circulated to them to review and back to the committee to review. 1st Stephen Holmes, 2nd Jacilynn Lewis. The vote was unanimous.
- At the last meeting, to clear any confusion, the vote to add conifers over 15ft to the list was passed, but there was no motion to actually approve the list itself.
- Gavin Pally reiterated his points regarding conifers. He would prefer to see specimen conifers dealt with through the nomination process rather than seeing them added to the significant tree list.
- Stephen Holmes notes that the protected species list in the bylaw bylaw needs to be acceptable to council and council will seek the opinion of staff. The list has to have a practical reality to it.
- Mike Anderson suggests that instead, they can use conifers as a top focal point in the education aspects of the bylaw. This would promote the planting and care of conifers because of their resistance to the Asian Longhorned Beetle, but not protect them on the significant species list. Conifers could still be nominated through the nomination process.
- Motion: To reopen discussion of conifers over 15ft on the significant species list. 1st John Stevens, 2nd Ron Calvert. Vote was unanimous.
- Motion: The wording, "All conifers over 15ft in height" to be removed from the significant species list with the intention that it will be one of the focal points of the education piece. 1st John Stevens, 2nd Jacilynn Lewis. Vote was unanimous.
- The committee members went through the significant species list to determine if it would be acceptable for the bylaw.
- Red pine was removed because there are so few of them and they are not native.
- Ron Calvert would prefer that items on the list such as beech species and oak species be specified to only native species.
- There was disagreement here. The idea of the list is to make it as easy for homeowners to follow as possible. It would be incredibly difficult to ask homeowners to differentiate these tree species and suggests that they would need to pay for an arborist to tell them what kind of tree is on their property. Also, oak trees aren't affected by the Asian Longhorned Beetle, so Gavin Pally would prefer to look at each oak to determine if they can come down.

- Would be far better to do this than break apart the individual species. Especially because then you run the risk of homeowners cutting down native oaks and saying they thought it was the English Oak, for example.
- Sufficient canopy is provided by oak and beech trees and therefore it is worth adding them to the list as a whole.
- The decision to not include all endangered species on here is because they are already protected by the federal Species at Risk Act. This does not always protect endangered species the way that we would like so our list includes some endangered species that would now also be protected under the city bylaw.
- Business going forward is to also review the planning and development bylaw to ensure that in that department people are protecting trees properly.
- Motion: Approve significant species list as amended today, which is the removal of “all conifers over 15ft in height and Red Pine”. 1st Bruce Zimmerman, 2nd Stephen Holmes. Vote was unanimous.
- For another meeting, something that needs to be considered is what the size is of the tree that the bylaw will protect. By saying “all” do you include all the suckers?

5.2 Criteria for Nominating and Evaluating Trees as *Significant*

- There is not a sufficient amount of time left to discuss this in detail.
- Mike Anderson had sent out information from other municipalities to the committee members which gave a lot of information but needs to be sifted through to be utilized efficiently.
- Peter Howes suggests a subcommittee to do this.
- Subcommittee: John Stevens, Ron Calvert and Peter Howes.
- Gavin Pally wants the meeting dates passed along to him in hopes of being able to send one of his colleagues since he would not be able to make it himself.

5.3 Education Aspect

- There are some feelings that they might be jumping too far ahead on this when they don't have even the technicalities worked out.
- There are already programs out there that can be reviewed and tweaked for the needs of the committee. It might be good to at least start talking about what is going to happen there.
- Subcommittee: Stephen Holmes, Jacilynn Lewis, Mike Anderson.

5.4 Dangerous & Rotting Trees

- The request for this discussion was raised by council at their October 6th meeting.
- There might need to be an exemption in the bylaw due to liability issues.
- Gavin Pally says that he will consider an exemption to the bylaw process if the homeowner provides an arborist report from a trusted arborist.
- What is considered a trusted arborist? One consideration would be an arborist who is certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). It is very simple to call and ask for certification numbers. There is also an ISA Ontario website.
- Therefore, a homeowner can be exempt with the arborist report, but other than that will need to follow the same process as other citizens.

6. **Date of next meeting**
 Thursday, November 13, 2014
 Ante Room

7. **Motion to Adjourn: 7:07**