



**INTERIM TREE BYLAW  
WORKING GROUP MEETING NOTES**  
Tuesday, May 9, 2017, 5:00-6:30 p.m.  
Main Floor Conference Room

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**ATTENDEES:**

**WG Members:** Andrew Gitt, Craig Bench, Don Harrison, Ian Ferguson, Nic Tsangarakis, Ernest Bodie, Lisa Morris, Mary Gamel & Debbie Parhar Bevan

**Council Liaison:** Councillor Mary Ann Booth

**Staff:** Chris Bishop, Manager of Land Development & Erika Syvokas, Planning Research Assistant

**Regrets:** William Cafferata

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**1. WELCOME**

Debbie opened the meeting at 5:01 PM welcoming everyone.

**2. APPROVAL OF MAY 9, 2017 MEETING AGENDA**

The Agenda was approved as circulated with the following additions:

- 1) Update re: quantifying the problem in terms of # of Trees removed through building permits
- 2) Q & A from member of the public in attendance.

**3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES AND REVIEW ACTIONS**

The notes of April 25, 2017 meeting were approved as circulated.

Action items were reviewed. The following items were outstanding:

- 1) Chris to organize a presentation to the group on successes and challenges in DNV & CNV. – **ACTION: Craig Bench to present on CNV street tree program. Chris has contacted Guy Exley at DNV and hasn't heard back yet. Hoping he can present at next meeting (30 min including Q & A).**
- 2) Chris to provide a summary of the successes and challenges of the current DWV tree bylaw **ACTION: Chris will discuss with bylaw services and will provide update at next meeting.**
- 3) ES to send out updated parks bylaw and policy for tree work on DWV land – COMPLETED.
- 4) ES to add White Rock, Maple Ridge and Toronto to the comparison chart of municipal tree regulations – COMPLETED.
- 5) Debbie to compile and share the comments from group exercise on defining the problem – **ACTION: Debbie to send out.**
- 6) Chris will ask Parks about the possibility of obtaining Lidar data. Chris will also talk to Parks about meeting with other municipalities on the north shore and discussing a north shore bylaw/tree management plan. **ACTION: Chris spoke to mapping team and parks.**

There might be some existing data sets that we can use but he will need to look into it further.

- 7) Chris to provide demographic information from housing study. COMPLETED
- 8) Chris to look into getting a representative sample of building permits (which include a tree survey) across the District. COMPLETED
- 9) Don and William to look into the costs of aerial canopy measurement and review sample of building permits to help quantify the problem. COMPLETED
- 10) Sub groups were formed to work on some topics offline and then report back to the group. COMPLETED

#### 4. STAFF LIAISON AND COUNCIL UPDATE

Staff Liaison Update: None

Council Update: Councillor updated Council and is keeping them in the loop

#### 5. UPDATE RE: QUANTIFYING THE PROBLEM IN TERMS OF # OF TREES REMOVED THROUGH BUILDING PERMITS

- DH and WC looked at a sample of 10 surveys and their associated building permit plans from across the District showing trees removed to try and get a sense of the number of trees removed through redevelopment.
- It was not possible to get an inventory of new trees planted as only a couple of the plans showed the proposed landscaping.
- Timeframe: in the last couple of years.
- The sorted properties by neighbourhood and categorized trees removed by type (fir, cedar, deciduous) and 3 size categories (small <12", medium 12-24" and large >24").
- What they found:
  - Cedars common
  - Largest tree was 54 inch cedar
  - Not many trees were removed on south side of lots (view side). For the most part trees were being removed for pools, driveways, larger homes.
  - Not a lot of information on landscaping or trees proposed. Note: If we looked at plans that have come in since the requirement for a landscaping plan came into effect this would provide a clearer picture.
  - One property took out 16 trees. Some had no trees removed.
  - On average 6 trees removed per lot. If extrapolated over approximately 150 developments per year it would total 900 trees removed on an annual basis.
  - This information doesn't take into consideration all the other trees that are also taken down on lots not being redeveloped.
  - Hard to know if this was a representative sample. An 8,000 sq ft lot is much different than a 40,000 sq ft lot in terms of number of trees so results might be much different based on lot size. No plans were reviewed for more urban areas such as Ambleside or Dundarave. More review is needed. **ACTION: DH and WC to look at more plans for the areas that weren't looked at. Chris to provide a list of District neighbourhoods for Don to pare down into 6-8 groups. DH to identify the specific areas where more review is needed and staff will organize a time for permits from these areas to be reviewed.** Need to put this information into time context to see if frequency of tree removal has changed over a period of time.

- Looking at pre-bylaw applications might give more representation of how many trees were removed. **ACTION: Look at the plans and get the dates of before and after the Interim Tree Bylaw was implemented.**

Discussion around using Lidar data to quantify the problem via determining a measurement of tree canopy:

- Lidar is a remote sensing method that measures distance to a target by illuminating that target with a pulsed laser light, and measuring reflected pulses with a sensor. It is a relatively direct measurement of tree/canopy height.
- Costs likely in the 10's of thousands of dollars.
- Would be a corporate decision to have a full lidar done - could be a recommendation from the ITBWG to Council.
- What is happening at the regional level? It might be possible to get Lidar data from Metro Vancouver. **ACTION: Craig will forward a study they did regarding climate change which might have some numbers in terms of canopy cover and recommendations. ACTION: Chris to look into the possibility of getting Lidar data from Metro Vancouver.**
- Identifying the canopy cover would help identify the scale of the problem.
- Councillor Booth shared that UBC students are working on a project to map the District's old growth conservancy but the project is specific to that area.

## 6. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON VISION

- NT provided a background on the visioning exercise.
- Last week AG, EB and NT got together with the view of making improvements to Draft #3 of the Interim Tree Bylaw Vision. The objective was to keep the standards of a good vision in the forefront while going through the document and to remove any duplicate statements.
- The difference between Draft #3 and #4 are the changes that they made. Statements are now more succinct and concise. They came up with some questions that they felt needed more research, such as under the tree canopy and tree maintenance category would tree replacement happen on all lots including those not being redeveloped? How many trees would need to exist on the property i.e. min number of trees based on lot size.
- One issue is recognition that there is a difference between urban (Ambleside and Dundarave) and non-urban portions of the District. If lot size was taken into consideration this might help the disparity.
- The Vision is still a work in progress. The last category, trees as a valued resource is not complete yet. **ACTION: the sub group will continue to work on the Vision and will present at the next meeting.**
- The objective of the visioning exercise is to describe a future state 5 years from now as vividly and specifically as possible. What is coming out of this is an umbrella description of what a tree management program might look like - a multi-faceted and holistic approach that is not just focussed on bylaws.
- A discussion ensued around the benefits of a tree (or species of tree) vs. a hedge in terms of canopy. I.e. One large 75 cm tree might have a huge canopy so replacing with a Japanese maple is not the same. Trees dissipate water, provide habitat, cool homes etc. Is there an equation? Tree canopy is a measurement tool that is used to compare changes. Helps sets goals and parameters.
- Landscape plans are not focussed on tree replacement just on landscaping. Values are very subjective. **ACTION: ES to provide zoning bylaw requirements for landscape plans.**

## 7. DISCUSSION ON PROCESS AND MILESTONES

DPB provided an overview of where she sees the process heading.

Desired outcome >Data> Vision>“project definition”

Inputs: Workshop, public input, best practices, property inventory, staff/public support, council adoption \*More data needed.

4 sub working groups:

Engagement  
Forest management  
Education  
Bylaw

Outputs:

Tree Bylaw  
Urban Forest Management Strategy  
Education Plan

Discussion:

- How do we know we actually have a problem? Where is the data to support this? Hearing a lot of what we want to see but not what the problem is.
- Is it a problem or an opportunity?
- The issue seems to stem from redevelopment as compared to existing lots.
- We are one of the only municipalities that doesn't have a tree bylaw.
- Need more data to convince people that there is a problem, how things are changing over time. Will help quantify things to see how many homes/sites are being cleared. This was happening 5 years ago in the BP's but due to the newcomers Council didn't hear about it. But as redevelopment started booming in Ambleside and Dundarave the progression of complaints has gone up. In addition to the information gathered from building permit plans, there might also be an opportunity to collect data observationally. Chris' update on successes and challenges in west van will help inform the problem statement.
- Problem Statement: not in a position to write this yet.
- Ernie looked into Invasive species working group – 3 subgroups: legislative, methodology, communications and education. They hosted public outreach sessions. Draft strategy document goes out to public. Documents produced – internal document (what was going to be a bylaw) and education document.
- CB reached out to an inter municipal arborist group to ask the very question if any of their municipalities have developed a Urban Forestry plan/strategy as part of the implementation of a new Tree Bylaw or have recently significantly changed their Tree Bylaw. Quite a few municipalities have a UF Plan/Strategy but it has not been until lately that it has become part of the Tree Bylaw changes due to the outreach component. He received good feedback from Delta, Courtney and New Westminster.
  - Delta said that an Urban Forest Strategy or Plan has a much further reaching scope than a new or revised Tree Bylaw. Bylaw does not contribute to public awareness or education. Delta has a tree protection bylaw which had two revisions over the past 3 years, however, these revisions are not presently guided by an Urban Forestry strategy or master plan.

- City of Courtnay is going through similar process to us and are currently in the process of proposing a new Tree Bylaw and are hoping to conduct an Urban Forest Strategy. The intent of the UFS would be to learn more specifics around their forest canopy and how to engage the community on the topic.
- New West implemented an Urban Forest Management Strategy and subsequently a tree protection bylaw in January 2016. Went through their strategy in detail – good framework and process. Main takeaways: Phase 1) understanding/quantifying the urban forest canopy. Phase 2) Engaging stakeholder groups to identify priorities for the strategy and to begin crafting a shared community vision. Phase 3) The strategy was structured around 3 principal goals: protect, enhance, and engage. The outreach was well thought out and organized – provided education as well as opportunity to voice opinions.
- Common themes between municipalities. Forest strategy and bylaw needed together.
- CNV does not have a private tree bylaw as so much growth now so focus is on street tree planting and boulevard design.

Debbie put together a proposed timeline:

May 23- working groups recommendations  
June 6 for working group recommendations  
July 20-July 4 Public information sessions and public survey  
July-August Refinements  
Mid sept Report back to public  
Early October (presentation to Council)

Comments on the proposed timeline:

- report to CEC and report to Council will be needed prior to public engagement.
- timeline is too ambitious.
- need to push out timeline for more robust recommendations.

**ACTION: Debbie to send out process and timeline documents as a draft after making discussed changes.**

## 8. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Two residents that live in Eagle Harbour attended the meeting to observe and get a sense of how the ITBWG is progressing. They commented that they have many trees surrounding their home and are concerned about the possibility of a more restrictive bylaw. They feel that property owners should be treated differently than developers and that western (more rural) lots treated differently than urban lots.

## 9. NEXT STEPS

- Oak Bay in Victoria is similar to West Vancouver and might be a good comparison  
**ACTION: ES to add to Oak Bay to tree comparison chart.**
- Chris will present on successes and challenges and CB for CNV (see action item from Item 3)
- More work on data collection (see action items from Item 5)
- Sub group to continue work on the Vision (see action item from Item 6)

- **ACTION:** Ian to look into cultural aspects of how landscaping is treated by different cultures.
- Ernie will think about questions that could be asked when looking at the survey data.
- Local experts – possibility of having someone come and present to the group. Nic has contacted someone and hopes to hear back soon.

## 10. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.