



**INTERIM TREE BYLAW
WORKING GROUP MEETING NOTES**
Tuesday, April 25, 2017, 5:00-6:30 p.m.
Main Floor Conference Room

ATTENDEES:

WG Members: Andrew Gitt, Craig Bench, Don Harrison, Ian Ferguson, Nic Tsangarakis, William Cafferata, Ernest Bodie, & Debbie Parhar Bevan

Council Liaison: Councillor Mary-Ann Booth

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

Regrets: Lisa Morris & Mary Gamel

1. WELCOME

Debbie opened the meeting at 5:00PM welcoming everyone.

2. APPROVAL OF APRIL 25, 2017 MEETING AGENDA

The Agenda was approved as circulated with the exception that the Orientation to Community Engagement Committee's Role was moved to 6:15PM.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES AND REVIEW ACTIONS

The notes of April 11, 2017 meeting were approved as circulated.

Action items were reviewed. The following items were outstanding:

- 1) Chris to look into previous tree bylaw circa 1980 – Chris indicated that there is a sizable section on trees in 1980 OCP but staff have been unable to locate an associated bylaw. Appears to be a vision document only and that the bylaw was never adopted.
- 2) Chris to look into the possibility of using some of the budget to sort responses into categories – Chris informed that this would be an involved process and would likely be costly. It depends on how valuable this information is. Ernie did a quick scan of the responses provides a high level view. The group made a decision not to pursue this further.
- 3) CB to contact CNV and DNV - Chris contacted the CNV and DNV.
CNV - focused on tree planting and establishing a foundation throughout the City for street trees as part of Greenway and Development projects. On average receive 2-300 new trees per year. In addition CNV requires soil cell technology installed under sidewalks so they can have mature street trees along Marine Drive and Lonsdale which cost approximately \$10,000 a tree to construct.

DNV – many people involved in tree work (approx. 8 people or 1.5 FTE). **ACTION: Chris to organize a DNV presentation to the group on successes and challenges in DNV. Craig Bench to present on CNV street tree program.**

- 4) Chris to look into \$ used to date - \$0 used of the budget to date.
- 5) Debbie and Nic to put together a problem definition and project deliverables including timeline: to be discussed this meeting.
- 6) Chris to provide a summary of the successes and challenges of the current DWV tree bylaw – **ACTION: Chris to provide for next meeting.**

4. OBTAIN THOUGHTS ON 2014 WEST VAN COUNCIL REPORT ON TREES

The group provided the following comments on the 2014 West Van Council Report on Trees:

- View of the ocean highly valued
- A lot of flexibility currently permitted on private and public land
- Not a lot of emphasis on maintaining native species or cutting endangered species. Extensive list of invasive species.
- Identified that the problem is that protection has been around view protection rather than tree protection. No enforcement policy.
- The benefits trees provide needs to be considered.
- Council has seen two appeals to remove a significant tree. Which was denied. The tree contractors that the municipality uses are up to speed on the bylaw but other tree contractors might not be. The good ones won't do work without the permit.
- Ecological and Environmental values and economic values identified in the report might not be as relevant to West Vancouver – so need to be careful to support statements with facts.
- Tree diameter size not specified in the policy. What people are allowed to do on public land should be consistent with what you are able to do on private land. I.e. Changes to trees on public land policy to reflect new ITBWG bylaw. Councillor Booth indicated that the Parks plan came first and then the private land bylaw. Strategy initially was to look at the policies for parks and boulevards and then determined that boulevards were more aligned with private land. We now have a tree removal bylaw for parks, a boulevard bylaw and the interim tree bylaw for private property. So this 2014 report is considered an old document. **ACTION: ES to send out updated parks bylaw and policy for tree work on DWV land.**
- It is fairly unique in the lower mainland for residents to have the ability to cut trees/hedges on the boulevard.
- Views are also something fairly unique to West Van. White Rock might be a good comparable. **ACTION: ES to add White Rock, Maple Ridge and Toronto to the comparison chart of municipal tree regulations.**

5. STAFF LIAISON AND COUNCIL UPDATE

Staff Liaison Update: Chris contacted the Bylaws department to see if they could provide some details on the numbers of complaints received by the municipality regarding tree cutting on private land, the nature of those complaints and how the complaints were resolved. The process is that Bylaws enters a call for service (CFS) to investigate a potential breach in bylaws, but if during conversation it becomes clear to staff that there is no breach (or bylaw to regulate the reported activity), that information is relayed to the caller and a call service isn't entered. As the District has only regulated tree cutting on private land for a short period of time they had limited records on the topic. Since the new interim bylaw has come into place 38 CFS for "tree cutting without permit", 2 CFS for "damage tree" and 1 for "obstruct inspection" have been received. Bylaws staff

indicated that in their experience calls are generally regarding concern about the number of trees cut down on private property, concerned that the tree being cut is actually on Municipal property, or there is a neighbour dispute over tree cutting to obtain a better view from their home. There can also be concerns over tree cutting near waterways and or other issues related to the tree cutting itself such as safety/noise. Anecdotally Planning dept. staff shared that they receive a lot of the volume of complaints regarding trees being cut without permit, in addition to inquiries from people wanting to remove trees to improve views and sunlight. Trees are taking up a lot of staff time.

Council Update: nothing this time.

6. FORMULATION OF A PROBLEM STATEMENT

A good problem statement:

- 1) vision: where do we want to be?
- 2) what is the problem that we are trying to solve
- 3) process

- All 3 components feed into the problem statement. They should be considered concurrently but are discreet entities.
- The problem statement will inform the vision.
- Questions that need to be answered: who, what, when, why?
- Needs to be substantiated by data to get public buy-in.

Group Exercise: What is the problem today? Everyone was asked to define the problem as they see it.

- **ACTION: Debbie to compile and share the group comments**
- Themes identified: culture shift (history of home owner had autonomy regarding tree removal), value around view protection, education, issue is different across the municipality.
- Missing data to back up whether there is or is not a significant problem.
 - o Canopy study - No canopy study so hard to quantify rate of trees being removed. Data would help determine how big of a problem it is and confirm if it corresponds with change in development rate in the last few years. Possibly would be a recommendation from the group. **ACTION: 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.**
 - o Changes in demographics - Impact on how lots are being developed (house sizes, lot sizes, trees being planted etc.). Could provide better context to why a problem exists. Quantifying the problem is important. Real estate demographics could be helpful – everyone maximizing the square footage for return on investment. **ACTION: Chris to provide demographic information from housing study.**
 - o # of trees removed through building permits in a time period (i.e. 5 years) **ACTION: Chris to look into getting a representative sample of building permits (which include a tree survey) across the District.** **ACTION: Don and William to look into the costs of aerial canopy measurement and review sample of building permits to help quantify the problem.**
 - o Getting the numbers above will provide a benchmark and would inform the vision.

7. DISCUSS ITBWG ROAD MAP

Item deferred to next meeting.

8. REVIEW CHANGES MADE TO VISION 3 AND DISCUSS IDEAS FOR FURTHER ENHANCEMENTS

ACTION: The following sub groups were formed to work on some topics offline and then report back to the group.

- 1) Vision: Nic, Andrew and Ernie
- 2) Process: Craig and Debbie

9. ORIENTATION TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CEC)'S ROLE

Jeff MacDonald (Staff Liaison) introduced himself and Councillor Cameron (Council Liaison). Councillor Cameron then provided an overview of the CEC's role and requests of the ITBWG:

- The CEC is a committee that governs and supports working groups.
- The ITBWG is the first group where the members were interviewed. Working groups in this community have a big involvement in Council policy. So it is important that the members are representative of the community and understand the role. The working group is a quasi-board.
- The working group needs to be supported through staff and consultants and the CEC is there to support.
- All members are welcome to contact the CEC on what is working and what isn't working.
- The group was asked to check-in before doing any significant outreach as there are lessons learned from previous public outreach.
- The ITBWG will present a final report to the CEC and then following that will be asked to come back and share what worked and what didn't work through the process.
- Past issues:
 - o figuring out the terms of reference – need to make them specific to the ITBWG
 - o timelines
 - o staff support and resources (staff turnover, not enough staff, need for consultants etc.).
 - o dealing with the public – people have very strong views on either side of the issue.
 - o consultation – how to effectively conduct public engagement
 - o media relations – requests should go Jeff MacDonald. Jeff will work with the Chair to formulate a response.
 - o outside meetings – no decisions to be made in sub group meetings (work can be done but decisions need to be made by the group as a whole). Verbal reports from the work conducted by a sub group would go in the meeting notes. Written reports need to be posted online for all to review.
- Councillor Cameron handed out working group guidelines, which are also available online. He reiterated that the group should feel free to ask questions.
- Council really appreciates the service provided by working groups.

- No legal liability for the working group as no decision making role (just provide recommendations for Council to decide upon). Council has the ability to adopt recommendations or not.
- Members are asked to look at where the consensus or balance of the issue is for the greater community.

Questions/Discussion

- 1) Any benefits of using an outside facilitator? The members are happy with the work Debbie is doing moving the conversation forward, therefore not necessary.
- 2) Market research – any statistical analysis done thus far? Jeff said no. Has the District had an omnibus? Jeff indicated that one hasn't been completed since 2013. But we could maybe use the online tool we have through Peak Democracy.
- 3) Communications plan? Jeff commented that there are some opportunities for mass communications but that it has been challenging to get people to public meetings and to generate media attention. We can make a plan when it makes sense to do so. However, if the group needs media to further recommendations, educational efforts etc. then that is what we have to achieve.

10. NEXT STEPS

The ITBWG Road Map and follow up on work done by sub groups.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.