



## **INTERIM TREE BYLAW WORKING GROUP MEETING NOTES**

Tuesday, July 11, 2017, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Main Floor Conference Room

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### **ATTENDEES:**

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

**Council Liaison:** Councillor Mary Ann Booth

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

**Regrets:** Ian Ferguson, Debbie Parhar Bevan, William Cafferata

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### **1. WELCOME**

Nic opened the meeting at 5:00 PM, welcoming everyone. Jim Adams, a public observer was in attendance.

### **2. APPROVAL OF JULY 11, 2017 MEETING AGENDA**

The Agenda was approved as circulated.

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

The notes of the June 27, 2017 meeting were approved as circulated.

Action items were reviewed. The following items were outstanding:

- 1) ES to update the ToR document and website. COMPLETED
- 2) Chris to talk to staff to see what information can be gathered from staff re: data collection. UPDATE ON THIS AGENDA
- 3) Debbie to contact the Communications Department to coordinate/ help execute outreach activities. COMPLETED
- 4) Add discussion around tree booklet to next agenda (how the booklet can be used going forward). ON THIS AGENDA
- 5) Share group meeting dates so that members can be involved in both subgroups if desired. COMPLETED
- 6) Chris to talk to staff about ITREE - System that uses web based mapping. **ACTION:** Chris will report back at next meeting.

#### 4. STAFF LIAISON AND COUNCIL UPDATE

Staff Liaison Update: A District Arborist, Gyula Oszvald, has been hired to handle tree permits and inquiries for trees on public boulevards and private property. Prior to this the Parks department was handling boulevard tree permits until the Arborist position was transferred into the Planning department at the beginning of the year (2017). When the position became vacant, some temporary help was hired to handle the administration of permits, the Senior EPO was able to assist, and a Land Development Technician who had some experience handling trees in the DNV helped with the private tree permits. The absence of an Arborist for several months opened our eyes to the volume of work involved. A positive outcome was that it allowed for different perspectives rather than just one person managing application of the bylaw. The Arborist position now reports to Chris in Land Development (was previously Parks).

Council Update: None

#### 5. SUBGROUP UPDATE AND DISCUSSION: ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Update: The subgroup met to discuss the pop up events and locations and the overall engagement/awareness strategy. Debbie has been in contact with staff in the Communications Department, who are helping with ideas for what is needed at the pop up events such as a banner, post cards etc. The group is also looking at a campaign to raise awareness through ads in community newsletters (i.e. the Beacon), a community hot sheet, meeting with OCP staff, social media campaign, expert panel discussion, open houses etc.

Awareness Strategy Ideas:

- 1) Post Card - This will be the only handout and will direct people to the website.

Possible wording:

*We have developed a vision for the management of the urban forest.  
Please provide us with your opinions on this important topic.  
Visit the West Vancouver website at .....  
An Open house and public survey is planned for Sept 2017"*

*Issued by the Interim Tree Bylaw Working Group.*

Comments on wording:

- Need to have information in multiple languages? A member of the CEC has translated other docs (neighbourhood booklet) so maybe she could help. The Communications Department might have more information on this.
  - "Management of Urban Forest" might be difficult for the public to understand. Other options: tree management on private land, tree enjoyment etc.
  - Instead of "a survey is planned" say "will be conducting public consultation".
  - Add reference at the end to recommendations will be made to Council.
- 2) Internal campaign – do all the committees within the District know what is happening? Might be a good way of creating awareness.

- 3) ITBWG web page – should be robust and easy to use. Delta.ca has a great website. Conversely West Vancouver's bylaw is difficult to locate.
- 4) Events:
  - To be held from September to end of the year.
  - Looking to set up an event with the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, as well as with the West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> event: Harmony Arts Festival. Under a time crunch to get post card produced in time for the event. Debbie has spoken with someone who is organizing the event and has arranged to get a table for a few hours a day.
- 5) The Residents' Guide
  - Needs to be updated.

Discussion:

- Wonderful strategy with lots of thoroughness in terms of instruments and tools.
- What is the message communicated through these vehicles? Want to be clear with the CEC on the purpose of each communication piece. Less is more in terms of communications.
- Can piggy back on communication pillars: inform, consult, collaborate, & empower.
- What are the key communication messages? How will you consult?
- Members at the pop events should have key points to speak to (a script) and anticipate the most common questions.
- Important to reflect that we are continuing consultation (adding to survey information received previously).
- Get survey information from North Vancouver to see what led to them writing another bylaw.

Next subgroup meetings:

- 2 future meetings set up:
  - 1) 9:30 AM, Thursday July 13<sup>th</sup> at Dundarave Starbucks
  - 2) 9:30 AM, Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup> at Dundarave Starbucks

Communications Plan

- Chris circulated a Communications Plan document. First part is overview. Top of page 2 focuses on engagement, awareness etc. **ACTION: Members to review and provide any feedback.**
- Suggestion: take wording from page 1, paragraph 4 of this document "undertake community consultation to determine a long-term strategy for tree protection on private lands" and use it on the post card. **ACTION: Lisa will discuss the suggested revisions to the post card at the next subgroup meeting.**

## 6. SUBGROUP UPDATE AND DISCUSSION: URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT (UFM) AND BYLAW

1. Initial subgroup meeting was held July 6, 2017 with 4 members in attendance.
  - The subgroup had a roundtable discussion of the short-listed ideas for recommendations on work completed thus far.
  - Elements discussed that were in common:
    - o Protection of certain native species (ex. Garry Oak, Arbutus, Yew)
    - o Protection of trees based on trunk diameter (e.g. 30cm, 75 cm, etc.)
    - o Protection for other reasons ex. "heritage trees", nesting birds, etc.

- Tree retention/replacement requirement based on lot size – refers back to canopy cover
- Cash in lieu of replacement could be an option (e.g. DNV)
- Fines for non-compliance, but also possible incentives for tree planting (tax rebates etc.)
- Provision for tree removal with arborist consultation (hazard trees)
- View retention, sunlight considerations are relevant
- Cost-effective permit process for residents and DWV
- We should be careful to avoid unintended consequences (Sarnia, Ontario as an example – people cut down trees in anticipation of a tree bylaw)

Also agreed upon as being important were considerations that may be outside the bylaw per se, but that fall within the mandate of recommendations to Council affecting the long term management of trees on private lands in the DWV, under what might be considered “Urban Forest Management”.

- Education for residents on selecting appropriate trees etc. (an updated “tree book”?). Tree book is a valuable document – could be updated and make it available to residents. Make people aware of its existence to help people choose trees.
- A district wide “best practices” policy on Urban Forest Management, canopy goals, etc. similar to the Metro Vancouver and New Westminster documents that were produced by an external consulting firm. DWV could commission a similar tree study. Question around can UFM be covered in bylaw or is a separate study required?

Some additional comments were discussed that could merit further discussion:

- Look at assumptions around current bylaw. I.e. what has been the effect of the interim bylaw up until now and has it addressed the main problem it was put in place to address: concern over lot clearing and large scale tree removal with (re) development. Or has it missed the mark?
- With the current interim bylaw, building envelope size in relation to lot size still allows for (re) development and large scale tree removal without penalty, while homeowners have to deal with new bylaw requirements, arborist costs, etc.
- Are large native species important to preserve in DWV’s residential context (i.e. Cedars, Firs, and Hemlocks over 75 cm) or is this just an artifact of other jurisdictions having size-based permit requirements? The natural context of these species is as part of a dense, high-canopy forest. Should species that have been deemed undesirable on boulevards etc. in DWV require a permit to remove at all on private lands?
- Generally our bylaw should not include assumptions made from bylaws from other municipalities.

The group then discussed how to proceed in drafting recommendations. It was noted that the ITBWG is charged with the following responsibility:

*“The Working Group may decide to maintain the present bylaw, expand the bylaw: or contract the bylaw” (Tree Bylaw Working Group Draft Terms of Reference, p.2).*

- With that goal in mind, a document was created using Google document so that all members of the ITBWG are able to individually comment and suggest changes to the existing bylaw and those comments and suggestions can be tracked over time. The idea is that this central document will serve as a basis for discussion and evolve as we

work through the process of community engagement etc. Once consensus is achieved, the final document will inform the recommendations made to Council.

2. Mary provided a summary of the meeting held with staff on whether the existing bylaw is working/not working.
  - Staff from Bylaw Services, Planning, the staff Arborist, and the EPO were in attendance.
    - Staff were asked what typical questions and comments they receive. Such as:
      - o Homeowners commenting that they want to have autonomy to do what they want on their own land (want to preserve views/sunlight)
      - o Calls from residents who are concerned about neighbours in the process of cutting trees.
      - o Concerns re: impact of clear cutting on neighbourhood character, stormwater management etc.
    - Staff were also asked how they would improve the bylaw
      - o Staff want clarity on language of the bylaw (regular maintenance, limbing etc.)
      - o Clarification around roles and responsibilities around tree maintenance
      - o Fines as they are not a dissuasion
    - **ACTION: Mary/Ian will send out staff comments.**
    - **ACTION: Chris will come up with a spreadsheet for tracking comments/questions which will go out to staff to be used for a period of a few months unless it proves to be very onerous.**
    - Chris is looking at permits done to date and checking with GIS to see if they can produce a layer so we can see where the permits are being generated and identify if there any geographical concentrations.
    - Landscaping requirement brought in at the same time as tree bylaw has had some unintended consequences (people don't want to bond for expensive landscaping so end up putting in grass). The group could also make a recommendation on broader issues such as this.

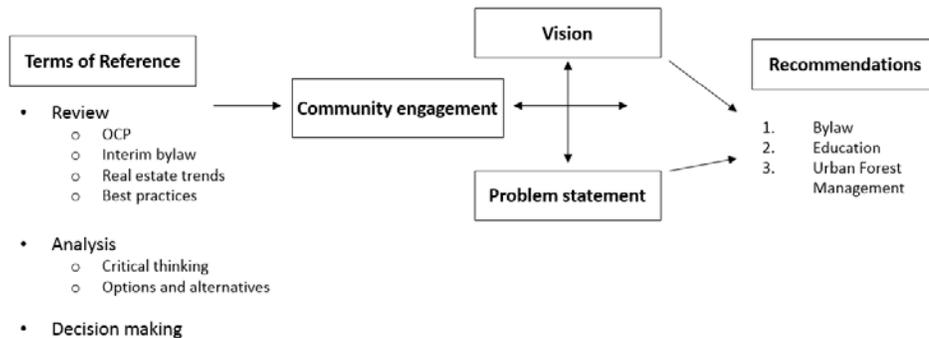
Final thoughts:

- **ACTION: Next meeting more time will be allocated to discussion on the topic of UFM and Bylaw.**
- There are very different opinions in this subgroup, which will provide with a more robust solution.
- Google doc allows for a lot of sharing. **ACTION: Andy will send a link to the broader group.** If other sub groups want to set up a google doc they can.
- **ACTION: Suggestion to distribute notes ahead of time so that the group can discuss the contents during the meeting.**

## 7. WORKING GROUP STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

Purpose: to review proposed deliverables and proposed timeline.

## ITBWG Strategy



- ToR – Review, analysis, & decision making are the key elements
- Vision and problem statement are outputs – these inform each other and both inform recommendations
- Nic will be meeting with the CEC on July 19. The group will also be doing a mid-term report to Council. Should these ‘recipients’ be added to the chart?

### Timeline

#	Deliverable Name	Lead	31-Jul	31-Aug	30-Sep	31-Oct	30-Nov	31-Dec	31-Jan
1	Provide update to Community Engagement Committee (CEC)	Nic							
2	Complete recommendations (Bylaw and UFM)	Andy							
3	Complete recommendations (Education)	Debbie							
4	Do engagement and analysis of survey results	Debbie							
5	Improve recommendations	Nic							
6	Write report and present to Council	Nic							

- Deliverable #2 & #3 recommendations by end of September. That outcome is a bit of a stretch but doable.
- What is implied is that although engagement happens throughout the process, we can go back to the public in October.
- Month of November to make improvements and then make recommendations to Council.

### Discussion:

- Will there be assistance in compiling the report to Council? Staff will help administrate the process and put in correct format but the group will be responsible for the content.
- Instead of a 6 month term for the working group it would be 9 months (3 month extension).

- Community engagement
  - o The trickiest engagement piece is how best to consult with the community. What is the best value low risk option for checking in with the community before going to council with recommendations? The CEC will be a key resource on how to best consult.
  - o Risks associated with going to public for feedback on recommendations. Need to decide, why we need to go to the community. Awareness is important, but sending bylaw to the community might be risky.
  - o People want to be asked if they think a bylaw is a good idea in the first place. The assumption in the ITBWG's mandate is that there is going to be a bylaw. Might be enough information in the initial survey to not have to do another.
  - o One reason to have a survey is to give people to have the opportunity to give feedback if they were not able to do that previously and to do so in an informed way.
- A suggestion was made to have a bylaw for just new developments as well as allowing 1 tree to be removed per lot/per year.

Next step: meet with the CEC and summarize the discussion around consultation. Ask for advice and bring the info back to the group to make a decision around public engagement (engage once at beginning, twice or whether to even survey at all).

## **8. TREE BOOKLET**

Item deferred to next meeting.

## **9. HEAR FROM RESIDENTS ATTENDING OUR MEETING/ GENERAL**

N/A

Next meeting is July 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.