



City of Surrey

Environmental Advisory Committee

Minutes

Executive Boardroom
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2005
Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present:

R. Wetzel - Chair
Dr. Dragomir
B. Gray
Dr. K. Hoekstra
A. Keshvani
J. Lotzkar
D. Maher
B. Stilwell
Councillor Bose

Regrets:

Bob Gray
H. Locke
Dr. F. Perello

Staff Present:

C. Baron, Drainage & Environment Manager
K. Swaele, Legislative Services

Agricultural Advisory Committee
Representative

S. VanKeulen

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Environmental Advisory Committee - Minutes

It was Moved by A. Keshvani
Seconded by J. Lotzkar
That the minutes of the Environmental
Advisory Committee meeting of September 21, 2005 be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

1. Surrey Environmental Partners

Delegation of Surrey Environmental Partners to discuss recommendations contained in Corporate Report R185 concerning the Tree Preservation By-law.

Deb Jack, President Surrey Environmental Partners explained that they were unable to provide an overhead presentation due to computer difficulties, but it would be provided for distribution to the Committee early next week.

Ms. Jack noted:

- That Surrey Environmental Partners vision is “a community where nature will flourish”.
- That trees form the foundation for every living thing.
- An acre of trees provides enough oxygen for 18 people for a year.
- That as the human population grows more trees will be needed, not less.
- That trees provide storm water management, protection of salmon habitat and clean particulates from the air.

Ms. Jack then went on to review the history of the existing tree by-law, which had essentially the same goals as the proposed by-law. She continued:

- That while there are some good points about the proposed changes, they do not go far enough.
- That there are essential items not addressed which relate to the preservation of Surrey's natural capital and heritage representatives, its trees.
- That trees are the longest living organism on earth although in an urban environment it is 8 years,
- That Surrey is a significant part of a highly environmental area and significant migration route for birds.
- That we have to determine our land use in the context of preserving the international environment.

D. Maher joined the meeting - 6:40 pm

- That the current bylaw protects all trees in Environmentally Sensitive Areas, but there is no mention of that in the proposed by-law.
- That the preferable replacement of trees is an equivalency of biomass, which is difficult on private land and would require the purchase of land.
- That in order for protected trees to be destroyed justification should have to be made public ahead of time about why there was no alternative.
- That replacement trees in Surrey are both deciduous and evergreen, but deciduous trees do not produce oxygen in the Fall and Winter.
- That there is an extrapolated deficit in replacement trees from 2001 to the present of about 32,184 trees.
- That if Campbell Heights is included the total is 41,080.

Ms. Jacks then discussed recommendations from Corporate Report R185 and commented:

- That they like the position of Tree Administrator, but the qualifications should be at a minimum Municipal Arborist designation.
- That a sole additional By-law Enforcement Officer position may not be sufficient.
- That there is a concern with separation of the assessing arborist and tree cutting firms in the event there is collusion.
- That the City should monitor protective tree barriers, rather than owners monitoring themselves.
- That tree pruning should be at international standards along with American National Standards.
- That there is concern with the cash-in-lieu for trees that cannot be accommodated as it is a possible "out" for developers/owners.
- That the City should develop guidelines or policies against which requests for removal of inappropriately placed trees can be measured.
- That notable hedges should also be included in protected trees.
- That the posting of a security should be extended to two years.
- That the 5 year restrictive covenant on Agricultural Land is not enough and should be a 10 year minimum.

- That the fees and charges increase of 10% is not high enough to make a significant impression.
- That \$300 for cash-in-lieu is too low, as this is the cost of a replacement tree not an evergreen.
- That \$15,000 per acre is inadequate, as a single good Douglas Fir or cedar can bring \$8,000 to \$10,000.
- That it takes 20 to 100 years to replace a good tree in terms of its contributions to the health of the citizens, environment and Surrey's biodiversity
- That perhaps \$10,000 per tree, using aerial photos to determine the number with a \$100,000 per hectare minimum.
- That Surrey Environmental Partners and the Environmental Advisory Committee should be included in a recognition and award program for individuals and organizations demonstrating exemplary tree preservation and stewardship.
- That zoning and other bylaws allow design flexibility and they support this as long as the setbacks are not reduced in total from present requirements.
- That they would like to see stronger by-law language with " may" replaced with "must".

Ms. Jack closed by distributing photos of development areas where trees had been removed and protective barriers may not have been respected. She stated that Surrey has to begin to act proactively to protect natural areas as it has done in developing and providing for the built environment.

The Committee discussed the presentation with Ms. Jack and commented on fines, which should be on a per tree basis and high enough to be a deterrent.

The Committee noted that the City needs to protect the forest cover and biodiversity and learn from the lessons being learned in Europe.

2. Development Advisory Committee

Mr. Steve Kurrein, Progressive Construction, and a member of the Development Advisory Committee was present to provide comments on the impact of the proposed tree bylaw on the development community.

Mr. Kurrein noted that his comments were not an officially adopted position but thoughts from the Development Advisory Committee and community and would need further discussion. Mr. Kurrein continued:

- That the presentation by the Surrey Environmental Partners was very good and he could support 90% of what was said.
- That the majority of developers are responsible corporations who certainly want to make a profit, but have a community conscience.
- That there are difficulties with the form of a tree and development restrictions.
- That the development industry has been trying to provide affordable housing by making units and houses smaller so that the cost comes down.
- That it is increasingly difficult to keep a huge tree on a small lot.

- That the municipal regulation process is difficult in that most zoning bylaws are strict in lot size, frontage, depth, etc.
- That they have suggested that if there is more flexibility in the bylaw they can plan around the trees.
- That the concept of clustering houses around trees is a good one, but requires a flexible zoning bylaw that allows that.
- That he supports a plan showing significant trees on a site, before a zoning or subdivision application is made.
- That he supports penalties for those developers who don't follow the rules.
- That he supports the same rules and regulations for government as for developers and in particular school boards.
- That there is land zoned agricultural but not in the Agricultural Land Reserve and there is support for a tough restriction on development in these areas.
- That deciduous trees on small lots are used for shade in summer and allow light in winter.
- That in dealing with small back yards, deciduous trees fit better than coniferous.
- That they also have suggested dwarf variety fruit trees so that people have something to enjoy.
- That the developer is not the same person as the builder.
- That the developer makes a contract with the City for so many trees, but it is the builder who plants the trees, which are inspected by an arborist.
- That when the homeowner moves in they may not like the tree and either pull it out or do not water it.
- That the developer is still responsible for that tree.
- That the developers have asked the City to look at a voucher system where the developer pays cash to the City and the ultimate homeowner can then access a voucher to get the type of tree they prefer.

The Environmental Advisory Committee discussed the delegations and noted that cluster housing may be a practical way of saving significant trees.

Mr. Kurrein left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

3. Riparian Area Regulation (RAR) Pilot Project

Rachael Jones, Environment Coordinator, City of Surrey, introduced Harriet Rueggeberg, Land Use/Environment Planner of Lanarc Consultants Ltd.

Ms. Rueggeberg provided an update of the Riparian Area Regulation Pilot Project and noted:

- That this is new provincial/federal policies and legislation regarding fish habitat protection.
- That the City of Surrey wished to respond to this in a manner that integrates all facets of riparian area management that the City is responsible for.
- That Lanarc Consultants were hired to assist in developing a method for determining a "base-level" riparian setback on the City's various types of watercourses – for example a simple assessment method.

- That assessments were conducted on two pilot sites to test the robustness of the simple assessment method and indicate where different riparian management factors may take precedence over others in determining the riparian setback.

Ms. Rueggeberg then reviewed the riparian setback determination methodology matrix and table. She noted that the pilot sites were in the South Newton NCP area on an unnamed tributary of Hyland Creek located south of 64th and east of 144th, and in the Rosemary Business Park NCP where Titman Creek and Morgan Creek have their headwaters. Ms. Rueggeberg continued:

- That members of the consulting team assessed the two pilot sites in their respective areas of expertise – fisheries, drainage, slope stability/erosion, tree integrity and wildlife.
- That the report contains tables that summarize the setbacks determined for each of the riparian management categories in the two pilot sites.
- That detailed assessments were only conducted on the pilot sites for fisheries, following the simple and detailed assessment methods defined under the Riparian Area Regulation.
- That they are recommending changes to determining riparian area setbacks, which will include stream assessment/verification and setback determination; wildlife assessment (species at risk, corridors, nest trees, etc.); and if required, geotechnical assessment, floodplain assessment, and forest stand integrity assessment.

The Drainage and Environment Manager noted that the report is draft and if members of the Environmental Advisory Committee want to provide input it should be sent to herself or Rachael Jones, Environment Coordinator. Municipalities are legislated to have some kind of local way to deal with riparian areas by March, 2006.

C. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. Sub-committees / Work Plan/Retreat

Update from Chair on a retreat to:

- Establish a work plan for the Environmental Advisory Committee
- Review Terms of Reference
- Receive a presentation from Val Schafer on Urban Biodiversity

R. Wetzel, Chair, noted that he had been out of town for quite a bit of the month, but was able to contact Val Schaffer who would be happy to make a presentation at a Retreat. The Chair felt that in order to plan a proper retreat, the Committee should look at a potential date of January 28.

It was Moved by B. Stilwell
Seconded by S. VanKeulen
That in light of Council encouragement for the Environmental Advisory Committee to hold a retreat, that Council approve in principle the holding of an Environmental Retreat on January 28, so that the Committee can move forward in searching out costs for a facilitator, meeting place and associated expenses.

Carried

4. West Nile Treatment Update

At the September 21, 2005 Environmental Advisory Committee meeting, the Drainage and Environment Manager was asked to provide information on funding, and whether the larvicide had been successful in reducing the mosquito population

The Drainage and Environment Manager noted that West Nile has not hit BC but is in Washington State and has shown up in horses. The City did monitor for the vector species of concern, but it did not show up in significant areas. The mosquitoes that they believe are the carriers like to live in catch basins, and pre-emptive larviciding was used in areas where catch basins are not cleaned.

The Drainage and Environment Manager continued:

- That the larvicide is not effective at the adult stage, but target mosquitoes when still developing as larva. The catchbasin treatments were conducted for about 2 weeks.
- That they treated approximately 9,000 catch basins in Ocean Park and Cloverdale. That they have enough larvicide to treat about 38,000 catch basins next year.
- That they did not spend all the UBCM money and still have some left over.
- That staff from her section sit on the GVRD WNV Mosquito Management program and they will be looking at buying the product in bulk for 2006

D. NEW BUSINESS

The Chair noted that the Committee may wish to revisit whether it holds its meetings on Wednesdays or Thursdays, and this can be discussed at the next meeting.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

1. New Environmental Stewardship Program – Successor to SHaRP – Report R232

At its Regular Council (Public Hearing) Meeting held October 3, 2005, Council referred Corporate Report R232 to the Environmental Advisory Committee, the

Agricultural Advisory Committee, and the Parks and Community Services Committee for information.

The Drainage & Environment Manager noted that the program will encompass more of the environment and give it a bigger mandate, and be a successor program to SHaRP. The program will broaden out to different sectors of the community and provide stable funding.

The Drainage & Environment Manager continued that they are thinking of one person to run the program and provide continuity, but will use students at different times. They would like to tie in with the high school career prep program where students have to give 3 weeks of volunteer time. They are also looking at having mini-nurseries to keep the cycle of plants going.

The Committee discussed the new Environmental Stewardship program and noted:

- That Council is to be commended on the work it has done to establish this program.
- That it would be nice if there was a mechanism to have people donate to it and a way to ensure continuous funding for the program.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

H. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

D. Maher advised that the church which owns Camp Kwomais has hired a consultant to talk to the community on Saturday, October 22, at 1:00 p.m. The church has been talking about selling part of the property for development and part of the point is environmentally sensitive and has erosion difficulties. .

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee will be held on November 16, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. in the Executive Board Room.

J. ADJOURNMENT

The Environmental Advisory Committee adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Margaret Jones, City Clerk

R. Wetzel, Chair, Environmental Advisory Committee