

Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee - Minutes

Executive Boardroom
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2013
Time: 6:30 pm
File: 0540-20

Present:

Chair – Councillor Hayne
A. Schulze
G. Sahota
B. Stewart
M. Alvarez
D. Skaey
B. Campbell
J. Purewal
J. Stewart
G. James
S. Van Keulen (AFSAC Representative)

Regrets:

R. Grewal

Staff Present:

C. Baron, Manager, Drainage & Environment
A. Mathewson, Sustainability Manager
N. Avan, Manager, Urban Forestry & Environ. Program
D. Luymes, Manager, Community Planning Division
P. Bellefontaine, Manager, Transportation Planning
L. Luaifoa, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was

Moved by G. Sahota

Seconded by J. Purewal

That the minutes of the Environmental

Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting held on April 24, 2013 be adopted.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

1. Red Oak street trees near 141 Street and 67 Avenue
File No. 6300-01

At the February 27, 2013 Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC) meeting, a delegation attended the meeting and reported concerns of on-going issues with the neighbourhood Red Oak trees. The delegation requested removal of the trees. The Committee resolved to receive a staff report at the following ESAC meeting and provide recommendations to Council thereafter.

Neal Aven, Manager of Urban Forestry and Environment Programs provided a report re: the Red Oak Trees issue near 141 Street and 67 Avenue. The report concluded that the Committee support forwarding Council a recommendation to retain the 17 mature Red Oak street trees in the neighbourhood of 141 Street and 67 Avenue.

The report included the following information:

- The large Red Oak trees were planted in December, 1981. The trees are the City's most mature street trees and are maintained regularly by the City by pruning and pest management.
- In 2009, the City received several requests from residents to remove the trees and after thorough discussions with the residents the City removed eight (8) of the Red Oak trees with 17 remaining.
- Since November of 2012, the City has received requests including a petition signed by 32 residents to remove the remaining Red Oak trees due to on-going issues with aphid secretions, acorns, and damages to pipes and driveways.
- Several of these concerns are considered nuisances as per the City of Surrey's *Tree Removal Policy* and are not recommended to be removed as nuisances do not justify removal of trees in the policy.
- In Fall 2012, the City conducted a tree appraisal (Trunk Formula Method) and one tree was appraised at \$8,551. The appraised monetary value does not factor in other important benefits that the tree provides and is much more difficult to assign a dollar value to. The City's cost to maintain each tree is approximately \$300 per year based on treatments 3x a year. The value of the tree outweighs the cost to maintain it.

The Committee made the following comments:

- It was questioned what root management is. Staff noted that root management includes root pruning, severing roots and in certain cases, installing root barriers. Root barriers vary in depth and are plastic material that is inserted in the trench which prevents roots from extending out.
- Part of the complaints from residents includes some of their driveways being lifted up as a result of the roots of the trees. It was questioned at what point root management is implemented. Staff replied that root management happens when a homeowner notifies staff of the problem. Staff can then make an assessment and address the issue. It was further noted that the Risk Management division through the City accepts claims for those types of damages. The City is not aware of any claims forwarded to the Risk Management division in regards to the Red Oak trees in question.
- It was questioned if a homeowner can perform root management on their own property. Staff replied that a homeowner can prune branches and roots at the property line providing it doesn't impact the tree.
- Further clarification was requested on the *Tree Removal Policy* and its conception. It was noted that the policy was created to deal with the dense planting of trees in the City. The *Tree Removal Policy* would indicate not to remove these trees.
- Insects seem to be a big issue and it has been indicated that you can wash off the secretions; however, it is going into the car and seams of the car. Staff noted that the City is currently spraying for aphids in the area to help reduce the population and minimize infestation. The current approach is to spray the canopy. Populations are difficult to manage on aerial spraying due to the City of Surrey's *Pesticide By-law*.

- It was suggested that a more aggressive pruning program be introduced. Staff noted that pruning is done to mature crowns and trees to keep them structurally stable. If you prune trees often, you get more shoots. The shoots are weakly attached to branches and are likely to pivot out and break out and fall. Topping a tree to make it safer is a short term fix.
- It was suggested that the amount of spraying done be increased. Staff noted there is opportunity to increase spraying; however it is not specific to aphids. When spraying is increased, you also remove the beneficial insects.
- From the various issues raised, issues with respect to aphids and leaf droppings clearly do not fall with the *Tree Removal Policy*. There is some criteria that may come within the policy justifying removal of the trees:

"Permission for tree removal may be given by the City when:

- 6. It is documented that substantive damage is occurring or likely to occur, eg. roots growing into and breaking sewer lines.*
- 13. It is determined the tree species is inappropriate in its location, eg. cottonwood trees growing in a confined and heavily used location where it poses hazard due to large branch drop, aggressive roots, etc. "*

The situation requires further evaluation and the Committee should recommend that Council do everything in its power to make sure the criteria is addressed as well as the damage to the private properties.

- Homeowners' properties should be protected however, insect and infestation is not reason enough to remove these trees according to the *Tree Removal Policy*.
- It was questioned who decides what kind of trees is planted and where they are planted. Staff reported that the decisions are made by arborists who manage the tree planting program. Factors such as the adjacency of infrastructures, sidewalks, hydro boxes, overhead lines etc. are considered when deciding what trees are to be planted and where they are to be planted. Also considered is the mix up of the species in the neighbourhood to avoid losing trees to one disease. The trees in this case were planted long ago when the City had no arborist and the benefit of local knowledge of tree species was minimal at that time.

RECOMMENDATION

It was Moved by G. Sahota
 Seconded by J. Stewart
 That the Environmental Sustainability
 Advisory Committee recommends that Council:

1. Support the recommendation of staff to retain the 17 mature Red Oak street trees in the neighbourhood of 141 Street and 67 Avenue; and,
2. Direct staff to work with residents of the community in the area near 141 Street and 67 Avenue to assess infrastructure damages to the properties; and,
3. Direct staff to assess the spraying schedule and other mitigation tactics to help suppress aphids.

Carried

2. Sensitive Urban Infill Study

File no: 6430-01

Don Luymes, Manager, Community Planning Division provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Sensitive Urban Infill Study.

- Staff from Planning, Engineering, Parks, Sustainability, Economic Development assisted by UBC graduate students and experts from different parts of North America took part in a 3 day charrette organized by the UBC Design Centre for Sustainability.
- The information and different ideas from the 3 day session was drafted into a more coherent document.
- The study is a long term vision that is speculative in nature. It illustrates how the City of Surrey can accommodate the future population and employment growth within the existing neighbourhoods.
- Surrey is expected to continue to grow from 1/2 a million to 3/4 of a million. Surrey's tradition in the past was to extend urban footprint and it is getting to the point where land is running out for new neighbourhoods.
- The study reflects how to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiencies, support transit improvements and transportation, strengthen community and neighbourhood centres and enhance parks and green spaces and improving environmental health.
- It is a challenge to be able to accommodate the growth in Surrey without ruining the character of the existing neighbourhoods.

The Committee made the following comments:

- It was questioned if geothermal heating was considered. Staff noted it has been considered and noted that the issue with geothermal heating is the space required.
- To go in the direction of geothermal heating, a review of the civil infrastructure is required. It would seem prudent to change the pipes at this stage of preparation for the increase of population.
- It was questioned what the policy is for low income people that will be displaced by densification. In particular, along King George Boulevard, one of Surrey's main transit corridors there are numerous manufactured parks along there.
- It was questioned if the increase to green space will be community and urban parks or more natural green areas. Staff noted more natural areas.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS**D. NEW BUSINESS****E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL**

F. CORRESPONDENCE**G. OTHER BUSINESS****1. Surrey Board of Trade Environment and Business Award Nomination**

- The Committee received the invitation to attend the award event and were reminded of the deadline to submit nominations for the award.

2. Public Information Session on Coal Transfer Proposal Update

Councillor Hayne provided an update to the Committee on the public information session hosted by the Surrey Fraser Docks.

The following comments were made:

- Two public information sessions were held on May 23 and May 25 at the Vancouver Sheraton Guildford Hotel in Surrey. Both sessions were poorly attended by the public. Media criticized that the sessions were not well publicized.
- Some people opposed the presentation type of format and expressed interest in having a public hearing regarding the proposal.
- Surrey's official position has been to get as much information as possible to the table to have discussions and negotiations with the communities involved.

The Committee made the following comments:

- Staff noted that BSNF was in attendance at the information session to talk about the transportation of the coal. An environmental team was also in attendance.
- The Surrey Board of Trade endorsed the proposal and it was questioned what other alternative there is to move coal as it has always been transferred by train, ships and barges. It was noted that the alternative is using closed cars for transporting the coal.
- Port Metro Vancouver does not need approval from the City for the proposal and it was questioned if a public hearing could have an effect on the results of the proposal.
- Surrey residents would support a public hearing and the Committee should recommend that Council support a public hearing.

Deb Jack noted that the Parks and Environment Committee of Metro Vancouver received presentations from two professors who provided data about the health impacts of coal and suggested the Committee try to locate that information.

RECOMMENDATION

It was Moved by B. Campbell
Seconded by A. Schulze
That the Environmental Sustainability
Advisory Committee recommends that Council encourage Port Metro Vancouver
to hold a Public Hearing regarding the Coal Transfer Proposal at Surrey Fraser
Docks.

H. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Agricultural Food and Security Advisory Committee (AFSAC) Update

There was no AFSAC meeting to report on.

2. Development Advisory Committee (DAC) Update

G. Sahota reported that there was nothing pertinent to report to the ESAC from
the May 23, 2013 DAC meeting.

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee will be held on
Wednesday, June 26, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. in the Executive Boardroom.

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was Moved by S. Van Keulen
Seconded by G. Sahota
That the Environmental Sustainability Advisory
Committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

The Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

Councillor Hayne, Chair