
Subject:

Email - Communication - Joanne Blythe - City Tree Policy - File CK 4139-4

From: Web NoReply

Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 5:38 PM

To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>

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Submitted on Monday, August 24, 2020 - 17:38

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Date Monday, August 24, 2020

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name Joanne

Last Name Blythe

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City Saskatoon

Province Saskatchewan

Postal Code [REDACTED]

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable)

Subject City Tree Policy

Meeting (if known)

Comments

To the Mayor and City Council,

(this is a copy of a letter I recently sent to my Councillor, Cynthia Block)

I am writing to you about the City of Saskatoon Tree Policy. I understand that at the August 10th City of Saskatoon Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services the committee moved to recommend to City Council an amendment to the current C09-011, Trees on City Property policy. The proposed changes would make the removal of trees easier by residents who perceive them as a nuisance.

I urge you to support the existing City Tree Policy and to advocate for increased funding for the expansion of the Saskatoon urban forest, as well as for education about it.

The current policy already covers the necessary removal of dying, diseased and safety hazard trees. The proposed amendment would allow for the removal of healthy, non-hazardous city trees, simply because a resident thought the tree was a nuisance, i.e., cast too much shade, was ugly, blocked their view, dropped too many seeds.

The proposed amendment is lacking in that it does not include reference to the ecological importance and the value of trees. City trees sequester carbon, provide much needed shade and cooling (they can cool the air between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius), filter and clean water, reduce air pollution, help conserve water and prevent erosion, provide habitat and food for pollinators and birds, help to increase biodiversity, provide a healthful environment in which to live, and of course provide beauty. People are generally healthier in treed neighbourhoods than in neighbourhoods with few or no trees. City trees are a city asset provide us with so many benefits, and as citizens of Saskatoon we need to care for and protect them in return.

There is also the question of who pays? The proposed amendment establishes a different payment system even though it already has a system in place (ISA valuation) for trees destroyed by vandalism, infills etc. Currently the resident requesting the tree removal is responsible for the cost of removal and tree value. Under this recommendation the city will pay for 50% of the tree removal and replacement and absorb the entire loss of the tree valuation.

If the proposed amendment passes, there are some funds in the tree replacement fund to pay for nuisance tree removal for 2020 & 2021. Starting in 2022 Council will have to budget for nuisance tree removals. Rather than putting money towards removing trees deemed a nuisance in the eyes of the beholder, money could be much better spent on adding to the urban forest and on environmental literacy education. In this case focusing on the value and importance of City trees. It could start with a session or two for the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services and extend to the public at large

We are currently in the midst of two related emergencies, a climate emergency, and a biodiversity emergency. This is not the time to be removing trees someone deems to be a nuisance simply because they think it looks ugly or blocks their view. There are legitimate reasons to take down a tree from time to time. These are already covered in the existing policy. We do not need to extend this to personal opinion. We need to be doing all we can to protect and restore all aspects of the natural world including our City trees.

Again, I would urge you to advocate for the current City Tree Policy and for increased funding for the urban forest and for promoting its several benefits.

Sincerely,
Joanne Blythe

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]