

Good Neighbour Guide and Good Neighbour Agreements

ISSUE

This report provides information on the recently completed Good Neighbour Guide (Guide) and on Good Neighbour Agreements.

BACKGROUND

The City of Saskatoon's Good Neighbour Guide was recently completed by Administration as part of an ongoing strategy to provide public education on common bylaw issues.

At its meeting on January 27, 2020, as part of its consideration on a Discretionary Use Application for a Child Care Centre, City Council resolved in part:

"That the Administration report back to the appropriate committee on the use of the good neighbour agreements."

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Good Neighbour Guide

The Guide was created to provide residents with information on common bylaw regulations and generally held expectations towards being a good neighbour (see Appendix 1). This guide is intended to promote positive, proactive community relations and practices to help ensure quality of life and safety of all residents. The Guide is to be used for information purposes only and summarizes the most common neighbourhood issues identified through complaint intakes over the past three years.

In 2019, Bylaw Inspectors conducted 4,841 investigations related to the administration and enforcement of the:

- 1) Bylaw No. 8770 - Zoning Bylaw, 2009;
- 2) Bylaw No. 7200 - Traffic Bylaw, 1991;
- 3) Bylaw No. 8379 - The Drainage Bylaw, 2005;
- 4) Bylaw No. 7491 - Temporary Sign Bylaw, 2005; and
- 5) Bylaw No. 8463 - Sidewalk Clearing Bylaw, 2005.

Administration has developed an effective education-based strategy to help achieve compliance. The development of the Guide will help advance this strategy.

Some of the main areas of focus within the Guide include:

- 1) boulevard and back lane maintenance;
- 2) property drainage;
- 3) fencing
- 4) fire pit regulations;
- 5) garbage, recycling and composting;

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- 6) home-based businesses;
- 7) landscaping and trees;
- 8) noise issues;
- 9) parking on private and public property;
- 10) responsible pet ownership;
- 11) snow/ice on sidewalks; and
- 12) untidy properties.

An online version of the Guide will be available on the City of Saskatoon website by the end of August 2020. Print versions will also be available for pick up at City Hall once it fully reopens to the public.

Good Neighbour Agreements

Good Neighbour Agreements are a tool that may be used to provide an opportunity for community stakeholders to mutually acknowledge the need to build a relationship responsive to the needs of each group for a case-specific situation. These agreements are voluntary, not legally binding and are intended to encourage socially responsible behaviour and accountability between stakeholders involved. Agreements require commitment, collaboration and a willingness to work together for all involved.

Good Neighbour Agreements are used throughout Canada to promote collaboration and positive behaviour in communities. While agreements are designed to reflect the specific community or organization's needs, the general structure of a Good Neighbour Agreement includes the following:

- 1) acknowledgement of expectations for stakeholders involved;
- 2) identification of boundaries and issues of agreement;
- 3) identification of a dispute/resolution process;
- 4) identification of contact persons for complaint resolution; and
- 5) evaluating and measuring the effectiveness of the agreement.

While the use of a Good Neighbour Agreement has been offered as a tool for neighbours for contentious land use applications, no agreements have been established in which the Planning and Development Division or Community Standards Division have been directly involved. Where Administration facilitated meetings with the intent to establish an agreement, the opportunity for individuals or groups to discuss concerns was determined to be sufficient from those involved.

It is important to note a Good Neighbour Agreement is not used to resolve the problems of one individual or group. The goal of an agreement is to initiate and maintain communication among those involved, and develop a procedure to resolve problems should they arise. Given the goals of Good Neighbour Agreements and the fact they are not legally binding, it is important that all parties voluntarily agree to be part of such Agreements.

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IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social, CPTED or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

A Communication Plan will be implemented to promote the Guide and educate residents on some of the more common bylaw concerns. This plan will include a News Release, social media posts/ads, a utility bill insert and other targeted advertising opportunities.

APPENDICES

1. Good Neighbour Guide

REPORT APPROVAL

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