



INTERIM TREE BYLAW WORKING GROUP MEETING NOTES

**February 27, 2018 5:00-6:30 p.m.
Main Floor Conference Room - North**

ATTENDEES:

WG Members: Andrew Gitt, Mary Gamel, Don Harrison, Ian Ferguson, Nic Tsangarakis, Craig Bench, Ernie Bodie & Lisa Morris

Council Liaison: Councillor Mary Ann Booth

Staff: Chris Bishop, Manager of Neighbourhood and Development Policy & Erika Syvokas, Planning Research Assistant

Regrets: William Cafferata

1) WELCOME

Nic opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m., welcoming everyone including the three (3) public observers in attendance.

2) APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 27, 2018 MEETING AGENDA

The Agenda was approved as circulated, with the exception of the following additional items for discussion:

- Public information sessions
- Status of www.westvantrees.com website

3) APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES AND REVIEW ACTIONS

Action items were reviewed. The following item was outstanding:

- 1) Chris to look into the Council meeting dates and circulate. COMPLETED - SEE STAFF UPDATE

4) STAFF LIAISON AND COUNCIL UPDATE

Council Update:

Councillor Booth relayed that there has been some confusion as to when and how Council should receive the ITBWG's Final Recommendations Report. The strategy is to get it to Council tomorrow, which still gives plenty of time for the councillors to review the report. The ITBWG presentation will be the main item for the agenda March 5, 2018.

As previously discussed, the report will be received by Council "for information". The target date to return to Council after the public review period and after any ITBWG adjustment based on the review period is the May 7th regular meeting. Between March 5th and May 7th the public will have an opportunity to provide comment.

Councillor Booth suggested that the ITBWG have a CAO briefing session for Council to allow Council an opportunity to ask questions. CAO sessions are scheduled every Monday. **ACTION: Staff to confirm availability on the agenda for the April 16, 23, or 30th meetings.**

Staff Liaison Update:

1) Public Information Sessions:

As previously discussed, and as part of the March 5th staff report to Council, it is recommended that there be a public review period of the ITBWG's recommendations before being considered formally by Council. Staff recommend holding four (4) public information sessions, 2 weekday and 2 weekend events. It is up to the WG on the format for these events between:

- o formal presentation style events with a public Q & A opportunities in a meeting room; or
- o informal style events with a table and some information display boards set up in high traffic atrium areas with ITBWG members answering questions to smaller groups of people.

Staff suggest that a format that would allow for the greatest amount of traffic (to catch walk-throughs) would be preferred. This approach also requires less time commitment than a more formal, structured session. Suggested venues are the atriums of the West Vancouver Community Centre and Gleneagles Community Centre. These venues have provided recommendations for their busier times to aid the ITBWG in their date/time determination.

Discussion:

- A casual format where people can just stop in for a few minutes and ask questions about how the proposed recommendations will affect trees on their property etc. is better, allows for less of a time commitment from the public.
- Availability of members to be able to attend the events is key.
 - o **ACTION: Mary will set up a Doodle poll to request volunteers for each event.**
- Ideally the weekday sessions would not be mid-day.
- Rooms are harder to get and might not get as much traffic.
- 4 sessions is a good number of events.
- Display boards to convey basics of the bylaw.
- First two weeks April might be best to allow time for preparation and to allow time for the ITBWG to process their thoughts and actions as a result of the Q&A sessions.

- 2) Staff are pressing forward on the **staff report going to Council on Monday, March 5th.** **ACTION: Staff to make any formatting / editing changes to the report as time permits. However, it is understood that the report is in DRAFT format at this stage and will be properly formatted for the final report to be considered by Council.**

5) REVIEW

Tree Density Table

Purpose of the discussion: to reach consensus on the proposed tree density recommendations.

- A suggestion was made to increase the number of trees required per lot above what is currently proposed in the draft report (67 trees/ha in draft vs. 83 trees/ha).
- AG discussed the context around the previously proposed tree density numbers. The table below offers a quick comparison to other local communities that use a tree count approach for development and / or non-development sites:

Trees/ha City

83 West Vancouver (Most recent proposed change Feb. 26, 1 tree per 120m²)

72 Langley

67 West Vancouver (proposal, as submitted based on 1 tree per 150m²)

50 Courtenay

50 Chilliwack

50 Coquitlam

40 Maple Ridge

- Rationale for staying with current proposed density:
 - o The draft report recommends counting existing trees starting at 10cm, taking into account the stem size of deciduous trees often used in West Vancouver. While the target number of trees is at the high end of tree density targets of other jurisdictions, it is based on a smaller tree diameter than many other jurisdictions.
 - o The City of Vancouver, City of Courtenay and City of Coquitlam tree bylaws were used as comparisons as they have tree-count based density goals, rather than canopy percentage goals. City of Vancouver's target is to grow their canopy coverage by over 50% by 2030 (from 18% to 28%). City of Coquitlam has a goal of 40% canopy. City of Courtenay's goal is to have 50 trees per hectare. And our goal, based on community input, is to maintain West Vancouver's tree coverage.
 - o The proposal for DWV's tree count is the most aggressive out of these comparisons.
 - o Feels that the numbers that EB had worked out were erring on the conservative side of protecting trees.
 - o Several members expressed reservations about making changes at this late stage in the process.
- Rationale for adjusting proposed density:
 - o When we compare our proposed bylaw with other municipalities it justifies a proposal that our tree standard is higher.
 - o When comparing between other municipalities' tree bylaws, need to consider the whole suite of features, not simply just one feature (as is being done with density numbers). The DWV is one of the few municipalities where the bylaw doesn't apply to all properties (will only apply to development properties). In addition, some municipalities count / protect trees of smaller diameter. (E.g. City of Courtenay bylaw protects trees that are 20cm and above but in terms of counting trees is 2cm and above).

Discussion:

- CB commented that tree replacement hasn't really been acknowledged in the tree density discussion and doesn't feel that there is enough detail in the report around replacement. The public expressed concern about clear cutting. Replacement trees would alleviate public's concern. AG commented that it is difficult to have replacement trees for this bylaw in terms of tree counts (other municipalities use this for bylaws based on minimum diameter). Would be difficult to track / administer.
- AG said that there was agreement that the problem is redevelopment of properties. No protection for trees under 75 cm diameter now so unlikely that non-development lots will go out and start cutting trees with the new bylaw. The proposed bylaw is more restrictive than what we have now. Have done benchmarking with other municipalities.
- Councillor Booth suggested that Council can make a recommendation / motion to staff that a review of the bylaw could be done in 12 – 18 months, allowing for it to be adjusted as needed. Note: This is already in the WG's report, however without a specific timeframe.

Other comments:

- The WG's draft report also recommends voluntary self-reporting via logging in on the website for tracking tree removal.
- Courtenay used to have a permit system for tree removal over the minimum number and now has removed this.
- Slope issue – can be addressed on steep slopes.

Decision: Keep tree density recommendation as status quo.

Slide Deck (PowerPoint presentation)

- Presentation Format: 30 min of information sharing (presentation by the WG), 30 minutes of discussion. Any member of the public can also sign up to provide comment / ask questions. The format will go presentation, questions from the public, questions from Council.
- Comment: the presentation slides are missing community input (views, safety etc.)
ACTION: EB will provide suggestions for the PowerPoint. Others encouraged to do the same.

6) NON-DISTRICT TREE WEBSITE

A potential conflict of interest was identified with the chairperson of the WG. The WG was made aware that the chairperson (NT) is the principal operator for www.westvantrees.com website, a private website established by a small community group that has the stated goal of lobbying West Vancouver Council on tree bylaw issues.

Response:

- In early 2016, a small group of residents started an initiative aimed at petitioning Council on the lack of tree protection
- NT was asked to lead the group
- The group crafted a position, a petition statement and gathered signatures at the DWV Farmers Market in the summer of 2016.
- NT made a presentation to Council in February 2016.
- The group disbanded after the presentation. The website still exists.
- NT was transparent in his Working Group application that he was a member of the West Van Trees group, as well as to the WG members early in the ITBWG term.

Specifically, he referred to his involvement in the community group and their findings during the March 28th ITBWG meeting.

ACTION: staff to look into whether this constitutes a conflict of interest.

7) GENERAL / HEAR FROM RESIDENTS

Therese Reinsch, Tadeusz van Wollen and Diana Sonderhoff were in attendance and addressed the working group.

Therese Reinsch

- The clearcutting by developers was the straw that broke that camel's back, however was not the only concern.
- Feels that trees are a community resource.
- We should recognize that a large tree is far more valuable than a small tree, so large trees should be protected.
- Attended two of the public sessions. Was disappointed by people's perspective regarding their personal circumstances, rather than recognizing the community benefits of trees. We need to be proactive in protecting our canopy.

Diana Sonderhoff, British Properties Area Homeowners' Association

- Has lived in British Properties for many years. Has seen small trees grow into old growth.
- Feel that we need to maintain the urban forest.
- Trees dying because of lack of water due to global warming. People should be encouraged to water trees.
- Q: Do trees count within an easement in the proposed bylaw? A: If the easement is on property, the trees would be included in the tree count.
- Commented on the danger of having trees too close to your house from a forest fire perspective.

Tadeusz van Wollen

- Has an interest in safety of trees, considers large trees as "living structures".
- Hobby to look at tree safety in parks such as Lighthouse Park.
- Trees growing in an urban environment are limited in their stability – forces such as wind, snow load, and small root ball etc. impact stability.
- Suggesting that to protect people and homes need to look at trees from an engineering perspective.
- Sometimes very healthy trees are uprooted by wind or snow.
- This issue is not being taken into account by arborists when addressing the safety of the residents of West Vancouver with respect to assessing the hazard of trees (strength of a tree is not considered, only consideration is disease).
- Strongly recommend that this issue be considered and discussed with the Association of Professional Engineers or UBC.
 - o The WG commented that there is a recommendation in the report that the root system be protected on adjoining properties and does consider safety issues with regards to large trees. Might be an opportunity for further consideration in the future. Could be incorporated into educational material.

Next Meetings:

- 1) Council meeting: Monday, March 5th.
- 2) Regular ITBWG meeting: Tuesday, March 13, 2018, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Main Floor Conference Room - North

8) ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.