

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - DECEMBER 5, 2005

BOULEVARD GRASS CUTTING

RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, and the Director of Parks & Forestry Operations, recommends:

That a by-law be enacted to require homeowners and businesses to maintain the grass on the City boulevard abutting their properties.

Economic Impact

Requiring all homeowners and businesses to maintain boulevards abutting their properties could save up to \$5,000 per year from our Boulevard Maintenance Contract.

Purpose

To obtain Council approval for a by-law to ensure that all property owners in Vaughan maintain the City boulevards abutting their property.

Background – Analysis and Options

Generally, responsible Vaughan residents and business owners maintain the boulevards abutting their properties by cutting the grass. However, some property owners only cut the grass within their own fence line or only between the sidewalk and their homes leaving the boulevard area uncut. This is particularly problematic and unsightly on residential corners and side lots.

In addition, some developers have erected entrance feature walls adjacent to businesses such as gas stations. Some business owners only maintain the area behind the entrance feature. The City of Vaughan receives several complaints with regard to these poorly maintained boulevards and properties.

When a complaint is received regarding uncut grass on boulevards and side lots, the By-Law Enforcement Department usually leaves a notice with the owner to cut the grass. However, under the former Municipal Act, there was no authority to enforce such maintenance. If the owner ignored the notice, staff would have no other option than to have the grass cut by the Boulevard Maintenance Contractor. Each additional hectare of boulevard grass added to the contract, costs an average of \$2,800 per hectare plus administration costs per year under the current contract. The number of refusals to cut side and front lots is growing; the average yearly cost is in the range of \$2,500 to \$5,000.

New powers granted in the New Municipal Act (2001) authorize municipalities to enact by-laws requiring owners to maintain the boulevard, similar to sidewalk snow clearing. Enforcement of the by-law would be similar to sidewalk snow clearing, where a notice is sent and if ignored, the City does the work and adds the costs to the tax roll.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

Implementation of this bylaw will enable staff to provide effective and efficient delivery of service for the residents of the City of Vaughan, and is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council.

Conclusion

Residents and businesses that do not maintain their boulevards have a negative impact on Vaughan's streetscapes. Homeowners have the option of hiring contractors or students to perform property maintenance if they do not wish to do the work themselves.

Homeowners and businesses are generally proud of their properties and realize the benefit of enhancing the value through landscape maintenance. A by-law that requires businesses and homeowners to cut the grass on boulevards abutting their property would ensure a consistent well-maintained look within the community and would give staff the authority to recover costs if required to do this work.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

Marjie Fraser, Director of Parks & Forestry Operations, ext. 6137

Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen
Commissioner of Community Services