

Removal of Trees

Please provide information on the rationale for the removal of trees in Heritage Hills, and explain who has the authority to approve the removal of trees, and how the County addresses the inventory of trees generally.

Response provided below speaks to the Information Request made by Councillor Parks and to the Open House presentation made by Mr. McLeod on October 20, 2020.

Mr. McLeod,

Thank you for taking the time to address Council on Tuesday, October 20th. During your presentation you asked for clarification on whether Strathcona County had given permission for the removal of trees along Heritage Drive boulevard. I can confirm that the County approved the removal of the trees as part of the development approval process for the new school build. In order to accommodate the final site design, the trees along Heritage Drive Boulevard had to be removed to accommodate the three (3) new school site accesses, to help ensure safe traffic site-lines adjacent to these accesses, and to accommodate the temporary construction staging area for the school.

While the County approved the removal of the boulevard trees, we also worked with Elk Island Public Schools to ensure planting of new trees within the boulevard in areas that could accommodate the necessary room for new plantings. There are still approximately five (5) trees left to be planted. Utility line locates have now been completed within the boulevard and the trees should be planted shortly. As indicated to you previously by county administration, Clark Builders had initially planned to have these trees planted the week of October 12th but were unfortunately delayed.

Separate from the original site plan approval, an additional boulevard tree was more recently removed to accommodate the rink access. This removal was approved by the County as well. All trees removed are a recorded asset in the County inventory and had an assessed cost which included the cost of replanting the tree. We appreciate your comment that the new trees being planted are significantly smaller than the trees that had been removed. Replacement trees are typically replaced with younger trees to allow them the greatest chance of surviving. Replanting a large mature tree has greater risk of failure due to trauma to the tree root system.

Lastly, I also wanted to let you know that I personally followed up on the concerns you highlighted at the Open House related to a delay in response from County Administration. Our records indicate that your first contact on this specific matter was to Recreation Parks and Culture (RPC) through a County Connect inquiry on September 11, 2020. As noted in the email chain below, you were contacted by RPC staff on September 17th with a follow up email from the department on September 25, 2020. RPC received your follow-up email a few weeks later (October 14, 2020) indicating that you were registered to speak at the October 20th Council Open House on this matter (email chain attached below).

Construction projects bring change but also provide new opportunities for the community. Now that the Heritage School and recreation project construction is coming to an end, residents can enjoy and benefit from all of the new amenities that have been added to the Heritage Hills area. Again, thank you for taking the time to attend the Public Open House and present your concerns. I trust this clarifies this matter however should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly to discuss.

Stacy L. Fedechko, RPP, MCIP

Associate Commissioner, Infrastructure & Planning Services