

My name is Ron McBryan and I live at 11620 No. 2 Road.

Mayor Brodie and Council I have written you and spoke at the last General Purposes Meeting discussing the proposed Tree Protection Bylaw. I know it may sound like I keep asking the same question, and I am, and that is because you have either ignored or skirted around it in some way. The question I would like a direct answer to is how does the city intend to compensate homeowners for having one or more significant trees that the City refuses to give me a permit to remove. The City has told us that they negotiate with builders and developers to save as many trees as possible. To do this they grant reduced setbacks and allow the builder to increase the number of stories to give the same square footage on a smaller footprint. These negotiated deals have no financial penalty for the developer as they get higher density than would be allowed had there been no trees on the land. This extremely flawed piece of legislation targets homeowners in an attempt to plug a loophole and as usual the homeowner ends up on the short end of the stick. The City already has the tools to protect trees. Educating builders and developers to call before they cut, the City has said it is more that willing to compensate builders with relaxed setbacks and higher density as a reward for tree retention. Making it financially more rewarding for developers and builders to work with the City to save trees.

Since the City can not refuse to allow a builder to remove a tree no matter how significant it is if it interferes with his development plan. All this bylaw accomplishes is it ensures that replacement trees are planted, not that significant trees are saved.

A homeowner who applies to remove a tree and is refused a permit gets no compensation. The City is in effect expropriating the homeowners' tree and the land it occupies, and the area it shades. Is this how the City does business? Remember after all it is the builders and developers who are clear-cutting the urban forest that was planted by the homeowners with no help from the City.

Work with builders who are good citizens and drive the builders and developers who aren't out of Richmond. Don't go after the homeowners who have managed the urban forest they planted in the first place. Use zoning and other related bylaws to control this problem as the problem was created by bad builders and developers and leave the homeowners alone.

If the City feels that a Tree Protection bylaw is the only way to prevent unnecessary tree cutting, how is the City prepared to compensate a homeowner for a tree he is forced to keep even though he no longer wants to?