

**Presentation by Alex. Bovey to
Richmond City Council on April 10th, 2006
Regarding an Agenda Item
Proposed Tree Protection Bylaw No. 8057**

Your Worship, Councillors:

My name is Alex. Bovey and I live at 10011 Rosedene Crescent.

I am here tonight to speak to the proposed Tree Protection Bylaw.

Our love of trees makes us all very emotional. It has brought out strong opinions on many aspects of the issue, yet we have considerable reverence for trees in common.

As you well know, your job is to weigh these concerns and come up with workable solutions, if they are in fact necessary. It is not to impose undue burden on the taxpayer either material or financial. In fact, it should be the opposite.

This bylaw appears to go far beyond your intent.

It invades the privacy and respect of the homeowner,

It is highly bureaucratic requiring too much administration and subjective interpretation.

It penalizes those homeowners who care about their trees.

It is a tax grab that will necessitate larger municipal government, which will cost the taxpayer, and in turn renters, even more, never mind the other costs to property owners.

In this regard, I found it very telling when staff replied, to you and a homeowner who was asking for specifics such as trees being too close to buildings, trees planted too close together, and damage by raccoons and squirrels, etcetera, with and I quote:

"These are all elements that would be considered in assessing a permit application and/or a replanting order. The bylaw does not detail these elements, as they are administrative process issues. Many of these issues will be clarified in bulletins, guidelines, and supporting documentation that will be developed in the coming months, once we are fully staffed for the administration of the bylaw."

Unquote. It would appear that we are indeed in for bigger government if this goes ahead.

Over the last three weeks I have been telling residents about the desire of our city to protect trees, to which they said in effect, "Good on them". When I asked them what diameter of significant tree they think we should protect, they said 2 or 3 feet. When I said the proposal was to protect 8 inches they just laughed. When I said this included those on private property, they were upset. I should admit one person said you guys are out of your minds – emphatic expletive omitted.

They all reminded me that, with our climate, trees grow very rapidly on this arable flat land.

I am hopeful that your desire for a good tree protection bylaw will not allow you to support this proposed invasive, bureaucratic, and penalizing version.

A better solution would be to provide all property owners with incentives to keep and plant trees rather than further burdening those of us with trees.

If we must have a bylaw of this type to protect trees, and you obviously feel in your wisdom we do, then make it so that it protects truly significant trees of 75 cm (30 inches) or greater DBH (diameter at breast height).

Let's compromise and make Richmond the winner.

Thank you.