ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
April 24, 2024 Regular Council Meeting
Re: Agenda Item 9a)

The Tangled Web of the Lantzville Tree Bylaw

Bylaw 331, adopted at an emergency meeting of Council on Saturday morning November 5th, prohibits the felling of trees above a certain size (20 cm) on any property larger than 1 acre. Bylaw 332 quickly followed which expands the definitions of all aspects of tree type and tree associated activities but retains the original wording of Bylaw 331. It ran to 17 pages of local government overreach. Bylaw 332 failed to achieve second reading at the January 11, 2023 Council meeting and was postponed until a special Council meeting could be held.

Bylaw 332 was amended several times at future Council meetings, but never adopted. Council decided to have public input so an electronic and paper survey was conducted to determine residents feelings about the proposed tree bylaw. At the September 6, 2023 Council meeting, Staff summarized the two most important questions in the survey; "Should tree cutting be regulated on developed land (your homes) and should trees on vacant properties be regulated prior to an owner submitting a development application?" The results for these two questions clearly indicate a majority of residents do not want tree regulations on their home sites nor do they want their vacant land regulated. The summary sheets are contained in the Council agenda package for the September 6 meeting. Survey results for these two questions are attached.

Council could have stopped the whole tree cutting regulation fiasco at this point, but no, they doubled down when one Councilor suggested that 82% of respondents wants all trees regulated on vacant land. Clearly this is in conflict with the results of Survey Question #5 where a majority do not want regulation on vacant property. Council supposedly retained a consultant to rewrite the tree cutting bylaw to bring back to council for further discussion and adoption. Bylaw 358 doesn't look like there was any help from a consultant. In the Staff report for this bylaw it says,

" It is anticipated that Tree Protection Bylaw No. 358 will be brought to Council for consideration of third reading following a public engagement process and subsequent amendments to the proposed Bylaw."

Yet, the motions in the Agenda package call for third reading. **Are we going to have a public consultation process to get resident's input?**

It is sad to realize that this on been the number one issue that Council has spent the most time on their first year in office. One member of Council described the whole process as "way out of control". I can't even imagine how much staff time has been "wasted" (the words used many times by Council members to describe their own process) on this issue.

Here's a suggestion; just "shelve" the tree bylaw and focus all that energy on fixing potholes in our community.

Lance Geselbracht
[redacted] Spence's Way

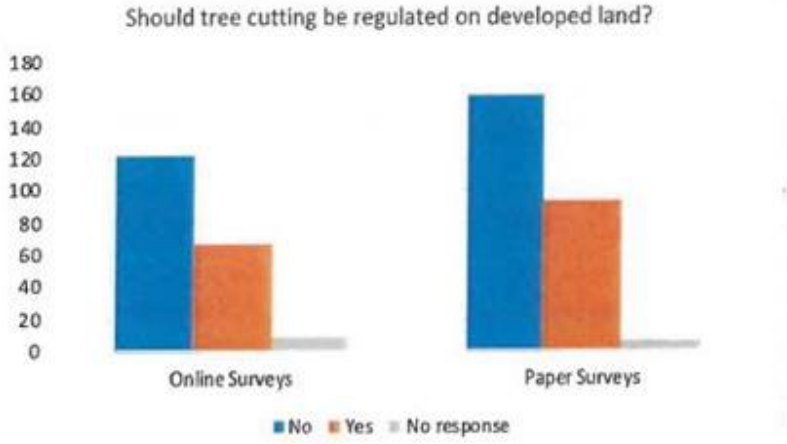
SECTION 1: REGULATING TREES ON DEVELOPED PROPERTIES

Question 1. Should tree cutting be regulated on developed land?

Notes:

- No significant difference in distribution of responses for online surveys vs. paper survey (chi-square test, significance set at $p < 0.5$).

Response	Online Surveys	Paper Surveys	Total Surveys
No	122	159	281 (62%)
Yes	67	93	160 (35%)
No response	8	5	13 (3%)
Totals	**197**	**257**	**454 (100%)**



SECTION 2: REGULATING TREES ON VACANT PROPERTIES

Question 5. Should tree cutting on vacant properties be regulated prior to an owner submitting a development application?

Notes:

- The difference in the percentage of survey respondents stating YES or NO is **within the margin of error**, meaning that it is not clear whether regulation of tree cutting on vacant properties is supported by the majority of the population.
- There is no significant difference in distribution of responses for online surveys vs. paper survey (chi-square test, significance set at $p < 0.5$).
- Twenty-two respondents who said YES provided additional comments. Environmental concerns (5/22) and opposition to clear-cutting (5/23) were the most commonly cited reasons for supporting regulation.
- Twenty-three respondents who said NO provided additional comments. The most common sentiment (9/23) was opposition to regulating private land, followed by support for existing systems for regulating land use (e.g., BC Wildlife Act; 6/23).

Response	Online Surveys	Paper Surveys	Total Surveys
No	95	129	224 (49%)
Yes	95	112	207 (46%)
No response	7	16	23 (5%)
Grand Total	**197**	**257**	**454 (100%)**