## Jenna Leifso

[redacted]: [redacted]il.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 December 2021 4:07 pm
**To:** Jenna Leifso; Jenna Leifso
**Subject:** By-Law No. 2019 - 124 Considerations
**Attachments:** Municipality By-Law.jpg

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up
**Flag Status:** Flagged

To the Council Members of the Municipality of Kincardine,

This email is regarding By-Law No. 2019-124, Standards for the maintenance of yards in the municipality of Kincardine. As a resident of Kincardine and advocate for the protection of the environment, I am writing this email for council to reconsider the implications and intent of the following clauses in By-Law No. 2019-124:

4.1 Every owner or occupant of a property shall keep their yard at the said property free from excessive growth of grass or weeds
4.6 Every owner or occupant shall keep all sodded and grass covered areas of the property in a good living condition and properly maintained so as not to present an unsightly appearance.
"Excessive Growth of Grass or Weeds" - means grass or weeds which have grown to a height so as to be inconsistent with the surrounding environment or over 20 cm in height.
(Note, my property is across from a natural area, so having plants taller than 20cm is consistent with the surrounding environment, reference attached photo).

Clause 4.1 issues:

- It directly contradicts the science behind pioneer plants and ecological succession. Pioneer plants are by definition plants that thrive in barren ecosystems, and are the first to appear after clearing events like forest fires or man-induced clearing. Unfortunately many of these species are thought of as 'weeds' because they are not planted by the owner and they are not sod. Pioneer plants build the soil to make the area more hospitable for later plants. This is achieved through soil stabilization, nutrient enrichment, reduction of wind exposure, and temperature moderation. Healthy soils allow secondary succession which supports tree growth.
- If an owner needs to plant the species necessary to replace the naturally occurring species (ideally with native species), it can be costly and out of the homeowner's budget, forcing frequent mowing to adhere to this bylaw which increases air pollution at most homes. (We use a scythe and push lawnmower when forced by this by-law to mow, but majority of residents use gas or electric machines).
- With a yard that is free from tall grasses and 'weeds' there are limited areas for wildlife to live either forcing them into crawlspaces for protection from the environment, or to leave the area risking death by traffic or inability to adapt or find food in different areas. This is not to mention the lack of species available for pollinators.
- Elimination of healthy soils by either forcing the homeowner to mow often, or by encouraging homeowners to implement monoculture grass lawns.

Clause 4.6 issues:

- In order to keep sodded and grass covered areas in a good living condition and green, fertilizer, pesticides, and excessive water are required. It is difficult to keep grass alive and in an 'attractive' appearance since it is a monoculture and does not have the biodiversity needed to keep the soil healthy, and thus the grass healthy.
- Excessive turf lawns cannot hold the same amount of water, leading to run off of nutrients and chemicals into our lake.

Soil health is incredibly important to regenerate our natural environment, and I am by no means an expert on ecology or soil biology, but I do hope the council can consider the negative impacts these clauses in the bylaw have on the environment.

My request:

- Remove clause 4.1 and 4.6 from the by-law (and consult experts in policy management and environment restoration if there are disagreements). The by-law clauses can be replaced with clauses to prohibit dangerous species, and clauses related to health and safety.
- Educate by-law enforcement on the intent of the clauses (if there is an intent which is not just to have a community of attractive grass lawns to show social status)
- Encourage residents to have conversations with their neighbours rather than reporting to by-law officers.
- Encourage residents to convert portions of conventional lawns to drought resistant and minimal maintenance yard areas that support pollinators, the environment, and wildlife. Other places in the world have grants and rebates to make these changes like the California turf replacement program.

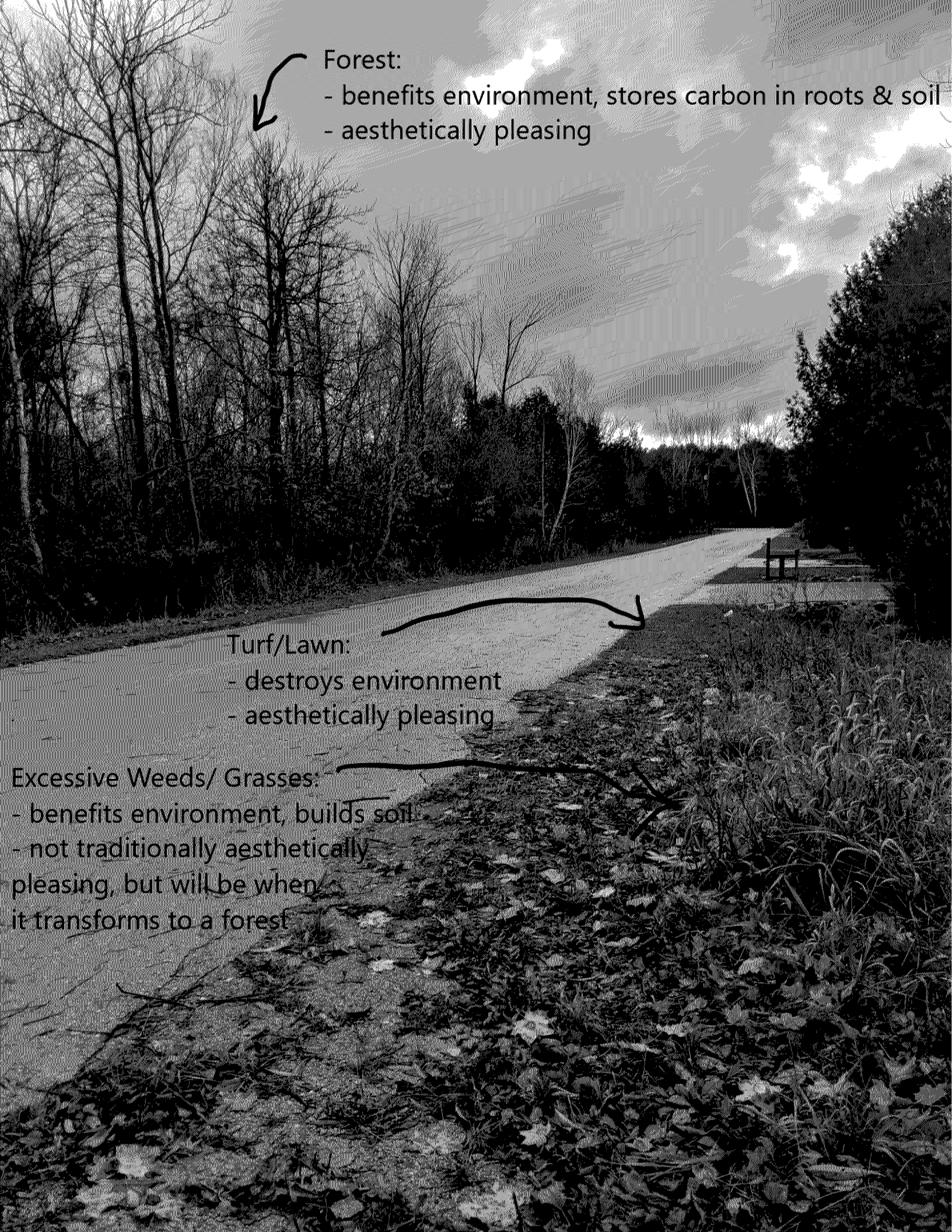
Lawn management (building soil, creating habitat, reducing fertilizer/pesticide/water use, attracting pollinators) is a great way for the average individual to make a real difference in mitigating the impacts of climate change.

References / Scientific Basis to name a few:
https://eorganic.org/node/2314
https://www.nrdc.org/stories/more-sustainable-and-beautiful-alternatives-grass-lawn
https://socalwatersmart.com/en/residential/rebates/available-rebates/turf-replacement-program/

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to opening a dialog about this to benefit the community, and assisting in any way I can.

Regards & Happy Holidays,
Minnie Huang, B.ASc, P. Eng
Chemical Engineer

Sent from Mail for Windows


Forest:
- benefits environment, stores carbon in roots & soil
- aesthetically pleasing
Turf/Lawn:
- destroys environment
- aesthetically pleasing
Excessive Weeds/ Grasses:
- benefits environment, builds soil
- not traditionally aesthetically pleasing, but will be when it transforms to a forest