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Sent: February-26-21 6:44 PM

To: Jenna Leifso <jleifso@kincardine.ca>

Subject: Letter to Council

Your Honourable Mayor Anne Eadie and Members of the Council for the Municipality of Kincardine,

My name is Mary Beth Dennis, and I will soon be speaking at your Council Meeting on March 8, 2021.

But, there will not be enough time to say it all, so I will try to express all my thoughts here for you to read.

My home is on the corner of Golf Links and Queen in Kincardine.

That alone might tell you what has caused my head to pop up about the protection of

Kincardine trees.

I am ashamed and admit, that I did not pay attention, or fight hard to preserve woodlands behind my home in our community.

Not aware when it was severed, not aware when it's zoning was changed from green space to residential land,

Not anticipating what it meant when sewers were put in place (yes by close friends of mine)

Only at one meeting about the development of the woods behind us.

Not fighting hard enough to support all of you with the fight to preserve the watershed and the trees.

I, like many others, naively believed the woods would never be clear cut.

When I first expressed my sadness online to friends about the woods coming down as they did, I was harassed at my doorstep,

by the landowner (no idea how he saw my post, let alone found my address)

I wanted to curl up and do nothing.

When I joined in with a few others wondering if we had any tree bylaws to protect trees in Kincardine,

an irate stranger rudely told me to mind my own business and not to harass private property owners.

Again, I backed away, thinking I had no rights.

BUT THEN I STARTED RESEARCHING and asking questions.

I found that there are no by-laws protecting the trees of our community.

There are provincial by-laws, and we have county by-laws, but it seems that these can be overturned by municipalities to build sub-divisions.

In 2003 Ontario gave tree-cutting bylaw powers to all municipalities in Ontario, and some have developed them.

They DO have clear by-laws to protect trees on private lands, whereby any land owners must get a permit to cut living trees on their property within certain parameters.

whereby there are limits to the sizes and amount of trees cut, whereby if building is to be done, only those trees which MUST be cut, will be permitted to be cut, and whereby replacement trees must be planted.

You already know all about the goodness of trees...oxygen, less child asthma, temperature moderation, water filtration, wind protection, erosion prevention, animal habitat from microbes to deer, ecosystem balances, phytoncides.....why even dead trees are needed for the woodpeckers and owls.

At the moment our group "Kincardinians Concerned For Our Trees" has grown to almost 200 residents of our Municipality, all supportive of welcoming new residents, but strongly asking for by-laws to be written to protect the trees and ecosystems of our community. We are thrilled to know that the Environmental Committee is moving forward with by-laws for tree protection on Municipal land, but believe we need them for PRIVATE lands also. We all agree that we are totally opposed to clear cutting and that parameters should be in place about why a tree will be permitted to come down, and where it is woodland, that every effort will be made to preserve as many trees as possible.

We need to protect every bit of woodland that we now have, and encourage new building on fallow non-wooded lands,
We believe that having these by-laws, once in place, will make it so much easier for you to protect our trees right up front,
NOT just during our lifetimes, but into the future, to preserve the Kincardine we know.

We aren't opposed to growth, just growth at the expense of our integrity.
Why can't we insist that new builds fit OUR environmental beliefs?
If land with trees is severed, it can be done within a bylaw which ensures certain protections.
When land is purchased, it can be with the understanding that under our by-laws, this is what must be preserved.
If developers intend to build on treed land, they will have to spend a little more, to plan and implement building with minimal impact on the natural environment there.
No more clear cutting.
And when trees must be cut, we could have by-laws stating that 2 new native trees should be planted by the land owner, if not on their land, then somewhere in the Municipality.

These by-laws will show our young people that we walk the walk, by putting in place what is right, rather than what was easy.
When teachers teach about preserving and valuing our natural environment, they will be able to proudly show them these by-laws for their own community.
How do we reconcile what happened behind my home, with what we teach the children in our schools?

We understand that up until now, every clear cut has been done legally, with proper permits and blessings.
But we are counting on you to never allow it again on private or public lands, through the writing and enforcement of clear tree protection by-laws.

We've come across so much that would help and support you in this process.....grants, by-laws from other cities, documents to help in writing and implementing....
I have attached a document with these links, which are just a few that we have found.
Please let us know if there is any way our group can help in the future.

Sincerely,
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