



RIVER WARD CITY COUNCILLOR MARIA McRAE'S REPORT TO THE RIVERSIDE PARK COMMUNITY Wednesday, May 2, 2012

748 Garner Avenue

A couple of years ago, a home was damaged in a fire on Garner Avenue and recently, I took the opportunity to view the property again. There is no building or demolition permit application submitted for this property to date. Provincial legislation affecting buildings on private property, which municipalities enforce, is limited to addressing safety of the occupants of a building and the public. Municipalities are creatures of provincial legislation and are permitted to regulate what the Province has tasked the municipality to regulate, such as the Building Code, or has provided authority for the municipality to opt to regulate, such as regulating the maintenance and operation of buildings through a property standards by-law.

As per Provincial legislation, the City cannot order nor cause a building to be demolished unless there is an immediate and grave danger. For example, if the building was structurally unsound and there was imminent danger of collapse that was presenting a danger to the residents and abutting property owners, the City would have the right to order demolition.

The City of Ottawa has a Property Standards By-law, which is enforced by the By-law and Regulatory Services Branch. The By-law imposes minimum standards for vacant and abandoned buildings, which involves the boarding up of the building to prevent unauthorized access by persons/trespassers. The boarding up is limited to the ground floor access points (doors and windows) unless there is access via a fire escape to the second floor. The owner is also obligated to monitor the property to ensure that these restrictions are not tampered with or removed, again to protect the public. By-law and Regulatory Services would also issue Notices of Violation to the owner should the yard become a dumping ground or weed infested.

Fire Services will order the demolition of a building that is in imminent failure following the investigation by the Office of the Fire Marshall. Building Code Services Branch has surmised that since this was not done, the remnant of the building is structurally sound. Again, this authority rests with the Fire Marshall.

There is no Provincial regulation that requires a building owner to remediate the damaged building or to demolish the building within a stipulated time frame. This reflects the fact that the process of determining the course of action (to remediate or demolish) can be hampered by the settling of claims (whether with the insurer or in civil court), fire and police investigations, the availability and resources of the owner, etc. It can often take a long time for all of these matters to be resolved for an owner to be in the position to rebuild or demolish the building. The City is not permitted by Provincial law to become involved in any of these processes other than ensuring that the minimum safety standards in the Property Standards By-law are adhered to.

I have recently asked City staff to investigate this property again to ensure compliance with the City's by-laws. Rest assured that I will continue to monitor this situation carefully.

Airport Parkway Pedestrian Bridge – UPDATE

After a thorough review of the Airport Parkway Pedestrian/Cycling Bridge, it was determined that the best solution to address a concrete deficiency is to tear down the current main tower of the bridge. Demolition of the tower began on May 2, 2012, following preparatory work designed to heighten our protection system to ensure the safety of workers and residents.

The preliminary schedule presented by the contractor anticipates that rebuilding of the new main tower to its current stage will begin towards the end of May and take approximately 12 weeks. Once the structure is rebuilt, the contractor will form and pour the rest of the tower, and complete the bridge deck and remaining construction activities.

I am working closely with City staff and I am assured that they will closely monitor the contractor's construction of the new tower. I would also like to reaffirm that the contractor is responsible for demolishing and rebuilding the tower at no additional cost to taxpayers.

City of Ottawa's Approach to Address the Emerald Ash Borer

In 2008, City Council approved a high level approach to address the Emerald Ash Borer ("EAB") issue. It was laid out in 5 steps:

- Regulation of wood movement and disposal;
- Tree removal;
- Selective tree injections;
- Proactive tree planting and replacement tree planting; and,
- Public Consultation/Outreach.

TreeAzin Injections

One element of the City's EAB strategy includes tree injection as a mitigation measure to minimize the impact on our forest cover. Ash trees located on City property are thoroughly assessed to determine if they will respond well to TreeAzin injection. Some trees may be too infected to be treated, in poor condition due to other health factors, or simply in a poor location. To date, the City has injected over or 750 Ash trees and the program will expand this spring to 1500 Ash trees. The cost of this treatment is directly related to the size of the tree.

Residents have the option to inject City-owned trees located on their property, at their own cost, if it is deemed reasonable to do so. Please call my office and I will ask staff to determine whether your tree may be a candidate for injection and how to proceed before engaging a qualified contractor. TreeAzin injections should only be performed by a qualified professional and trees must be re-injected every two years, potentially for the life of the tree.

Broad Consultation

The City's Forestry Services Branch has actively consulted with many groups, both internal and external. A "Made in Eastern Ontario Solution" was needed and this was addressed through the formation of a Regional Forest Health Working Group comprised of members from government departments, Conservation Authorities and forest industry representatives.

The City has also actively participated with EAB working groups across Canada and Ontario to provide advice and to seek expert advice from communities, such as those in southwestern Ontario who have dealt with the impacts of EAB longer than we have.

This spring, the City hosted two citywide EAB sessions, at Ben Franklin Place and at the Jim Durrell Centre. Stay tuned for details regarding an EAB Open House for River Ward residents.

Next Steps

The City estimates that there are 75,000 Ash trees on City streets. Thankfully, not all are infested at this time. For this reason, staff will continue to monitor, expand the injection program and expand the interplanting program to help ensure that the Ash tree is around for future generations in some form.

Free PRESTO Smart Cards

OC Transpo riders will soon experience the convenience of using smart card technology with the official launch of the PRESTO card this summer. OC Transpo has successfully negotiated an agreement to distribute the first 200,000 smart cards for free starting on June 10, 2012.

The PRESTO system uses smart cards and readers, which are considered industry best practice because they enhance customer service and allow rapid boarding. Transit users will be able to go online to purchase, renew or load up their cards with per-use or per-month rides. PRESTO cards will be operational on most OC Transpo buses starting July 1, 2012.

PayByPhone Parking Now Available

The City of Ottawa's PayByPhone parking system was launched on April 5, 2012, allowing residents and visitors to initiate and extend their parking time using a mobile application, the Internet or by calling the PayByPhone number. The system also features an optional text message reminder to notify customers when their time is about to expire. The new technology can be used for the City's on-street parking spaces and non-gated off-street public parking lots.

You can sign up for the system via phone at 613-691-1700, or by visiting paybyphone.com and entering your mobile phone number, credit card number and license plate number of your vehicle(s). Accounts are activated immediately. For more information, please visit ottawa.ca/paybyphone.

New ServiceOttawa Capabilities

New online capabilities on the ServiceOttawa gateway have been launched to coincide with new City programs and services. You can now complete these actions at serviceottawa.ca:

- Register for Cleaning the Capital
- Report a smoking violation as part of the City's new Smoke-Free Regulations
- Register for PayByPhone

City of Ottawa Named Top Green Employer

A national competition, held annually by Mediacorp Canada Inc., has recognized the City of Ottawa as being among Canada's Greenest Employers based on an evaluation of its workplace environmental programs. Among the initiatives that earned the City the recognition were:

- The "Ottawa River Action Plan", consisting of 17 projects focused on reducing combined sewage overflows, reducing storm water impacts and improving wastewater treatment;
- The City's "Energy Reduction Program", which has helped the City reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by over 13,000 tonnes through a variety of energy-efficient upgrades, including lighting conversions, new building automation systems, and the installation of high efficiency boilers, furnaces and chillers;
- The recent conversion of over 20 per cent of the City's 1070 traffic signals to energy-saving LED lighting, with additional conversions ongoing, and guarantee that all new and rebuilt intersections are equipped with LED lighting technology; and
- The implementation of a "Green Building Policy for the Construction of Corporate Buildings" which requires all new municipal buildings over 500 square metres to be built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental (LEED) "Certified" standard.

Safer Roads Ottawa Program

May Initiatives

During the month of May, the Safer Roads Ottawa Program will focus on motorists who **run red lights** and **do not fully comply with stop signs**.

March Results

In March, the Safer Roads Ottawa Program targeted distracted drivers and motorists failing to use their seat belts. Enforcement of seat-belt use resulted in 353 charges being laid, while 314 motorists were fined for distracted driving.