

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL IN REGARDS TO CITY MEMORIAL TREE AND BENCH POLICY

OBJECTIVE

To provide Council with information re. the proposed Memorial Tree And Bench Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report of the Special Projects manager dated March 31, 2021 be received;

AND THAT Council direct staff to proceed with implementation of the Elliot Lake Memorial Tree And Bench Policy



Steve Antunes
Special Projects Manager



Daniel Gagnon
Chief Administrative Officer

BACKGROUND

Residents have contacted the Public works Department in regards to the planting of memorial trees and the placing of plaques on benches within the City. Currently, there is no program or policy in place to address this issue.

ANALYSIS

The planting of memorial trees and the memorialization of benches is common in other Municipalities and serves as a way to beautify City spaces with assets purchased by those looking to commemorate a person or event. It is not advisable to allow private residents to plant their own trees in public spaces for several reasons. This includes potential damage to City assets and poor placement that will negatively affect how public works execute their duties. Further, standardization of trees and benches allows the city's parks, trails and other open spaces a uniform presentation.

This Policy sets forth 2 options for people to memorialize and commemorate loved ones or special occasions.

Option 1

This option is focused on the adoption of existing city assets. This program allows for the 5-year adoption of either a tree or a bench. The adopter pays for a 5-year term with the ability to renew. The cost of adoption includes, in the case of a bench, a 3"x 8" metal plaque affixed to an existing city bench. In the case of a tree, a 5"x 8" is mounted to a cement pad installed into the ground at the base of the tree. At the end of the term, the purchaser may renew or pick up their plaque at city hall.

Option 2

In the event that there are no benches or trees available in the specific area that is requested by the adopter, the policy also outlines a purchase option for both a tree and a bench. In the case of a purchased item, while the purchaser may request a location, Public Works has final approval of placement. The tree is a one-time purchase. As public benches typically have a 15 year lifespan, the purchaser has the option to purchase another bench at current rates in 15 years. If they choose not to, the space then becomes available for a new purchaser. In the event that there is a no new purchaser in the queue, the City shall replace the bench and add it to the adoption pool.

In all cases, the funds collected from these programs will allow the City to continue to add new assets and lower the cost to replace others as they age and are no longer useful.



FINANCIAL IMPACT

The financial impact is unknown and will depend on the number of assets adopted and benches and trees purchased. Both options have been priced to be cost positive. This program may also serve as source of cash flow for the municipality to assist with other programs.

With the City creating a new asset naming & renaming policy, this seemed like the ideal time to address this issue as well.

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The recommendation aligns with the strategic goal of offering customer service excellence.

SUMMARY

Staff is recommending the adoption of a Memorial Tree and Bench policy.

