

June 27, 2021

Community Association motion regarding the urban forest emergency in Ottawa.

Whereas on May 6, 2021, The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) submitted to the City of Ottawa a Site Plan Control application for its new campus that would remove 680 trees, many of them to accommodate proposed surface parking, including 312 considered “distinctive” trees under the City of Ottawa Tree Protection By-law which came into effect January 1, 2021;

Whereas on June 17, 2021 the National Capital Commission (NCC) submitted a revised application for proposed embassies at 1 and 19 Sir John A MacDonalD Parkway that would remove 55 mature trees and pave over 3.7 hectares of open grassland containing 3 substantial clumps of milkweed, which is critical Monarch Butterfly habitat, and which will eliminate a much-loved greenspace called Lazy Bay Commons by Mechanicsville and Hintonburg neighborhoods;

Whereas on May 12, 2021 Otto’s BMW Group submitted a development application to establish parking that would result in the removal of a substantial portion of a mature red pine forest at Hunt Club on 1.57 hectares owned by the Airport Authority;

Whereas during the spring of 2021, a record outbreak of the LDD moth (a.k.a. gypsy moth), a species of invasive moth caterpillars, devastated Ottawa’s urban trees following the driest month of May on record, and at a time when the urban forest is still recovering from dramatic losses due to the Emerald Ash Borer;

Whereas on April 24, 2019, the City of Ottawa declared a climate emergency and has adopted an ambitious climate change master plan that recognizes the value of green infrastructure in mitigating the impacts of climate change;

Whereas on June 28, 2017, the City of Ottawa adopted an Urban Forest Management Plan seeking to establish a long-term vision for management of Ottawa’s urban forest canopy;

Whereas the City of Ottawa is proposing in its new Official Plan to set an urban tree canopy target of 40% and address inequities across the city with respect to access to the benefits of an urban forest;

Whereas the draft Official Plan of the City of Ottawa will allow for urban buildings with “zero or shallow front yard setbacks” and “minimal functional side yard setbacks” (Draft OP Section 5, Table 6), thereby limiting scope for tree planting;

Whereas the Champlain Park Community Association and other neighborhoods have made significant commitments and contributions to protecting and restoring a biodiverse urban forest in and around their neighborhoods.

Therefore:

Be it resolved that the CA urge the City to reject the applications by the TOH, NCC and Otto's BMW Group referenced above;

Be it resolved that, the CA strongly objects to the chaotic approach to the city's urban forest canopy reflected in one-off consideration of development and rezoning applications;

Be it resolved that the CA urge the Mayor of the City of Ottawa to sign on to the Mayors Monarch Pledge now endorsed by more than 300 mayors from Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, and integrate monarch butterfly conservation into its planning process.

Be it further resolved that the CA urge the City to recognize trees and the urban forest as a much higher priority land use, and act accordingly via stronger provisions in the new Official Plan and implementation of the Urban Forest Management Plan, including the adoption of a 40% tree canopy coverage target at the Ward level rather than city-wide.