

Topic: Community Standards Bylaw Amendment Bylaw No 2015-05

Introduction:

The Community Standards Bylaw sets standards for neighborhood livability in Parkland County. Administration is attempting to address long grass issues.

Facts (Background):

In the previous version of Community Standards Bylaw No 03-2012, residential grass length was restricted to a maximum height of 25 cm. Administration's rationale for using this value was to establish a consistent standard. What resulted was escalated neighbour disputes, which included neighbor's measuring each others grass in order to report the infraction and force the County to take action. In Community Standards Bylaw No 03-2012 the 25 cm grass height reference was removed and replaced with a requirement to maintain properties so they appeared consistent with the majority of the particular subdivision.

It should be noted there are several areas of the Community Standards Bylaw requiring review including noise, event permits, etc. As such, the Community Standards Bylaw does need a full review with public input. This input will be sought at the same time as the Off-Highway Vehicle and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan public engagement sessions, which are currently scheduled for the fall of 2015.

Analysis:

Enforcement Officers have been unable to enforce grass height violations because the changes in Community Standards Bylaw No 03-2012 do not clearly identify an offence. The proposed amendment in Community Standards Bylaw No 2015-05 addresses this exclusion by amending Part 4(6) "Accumulation of Materials" which currently reads "No Person, Owner or Occupant of a Property shall allow the following to accumulate on the Property such that the accumulation is visible to a Person viewing from outside the Property" by adding sub-section (g):

(g) "Uncut grass, which in the opinion of the Enforcement Officer, is excessive or which demonstrates neglect."

It is believed this amendment will address the long grass concerns in time for the summer of 2015.

Alternative:

Do not regulate grass as Parkland County is a rural municipality.

Conclusion/Summary

Administration supports Community Standards Bylaw No 2015-05. Administration also supports a full review of the Community Standards Bylaw with the appropriate public input in the fall of 2015.

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