



GRADING AND LANDSCAPING DRAFT BYLAW

Council / Governance Issue

A draft bylaw regarding grading and landscaping is provided to the Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) for review and direction.

Recommendation

That draft Bylaw XX-23 Grading and Landscaping be confirmed as the direction the Governance and Priorities Committee would like to proceed.

Recommendation Alternatives for Consideration at the September 25, 2023 Council Meeting

- a) That Administration be directed to amend draft Bylaw XX-23 Grading and Landscaping as discussed and bring back to the October 10, 2023 Regular Council Meeting; or
- b) That Bylaw XX-23 Grading and Landscaping be given first reading and brought back for second and third readings no later than December 31, 2023; or
- c) That Bylaw XX-23 Grading and Landscaping be given all three readings.

Background and Considerations

At the September 26, 2022 Regular Council Meeting, the motion below was made directing Administration to create a policy(s) that creates further opportunities for or mandates xeriscaping and drought tolerant turf installations in new residential and commercial developments. The directives from the motion being addressed is shown in blue:

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved that the Town of Okotoks Council directs Administration to create a policy(s) that achieves the following outcomes:

1. Institutes a minimum percentage xeriscaping requirement for all new residential and/or commercial developments to decrease outdoor use of potable water;
2. Examines the potential of mandating the use of only drought tolerant grass species in all new residential and/or commercial developments;
3. Explores other avenues to expand the current xeriscaping rebate program for established properties; and
4. That the aforementioned policy come into effect prior to the 2023 or 2024 growing season.

In order to implement the directive by Council to mandate drought tolerant turf grass in all new residential build landscapes, Grading Bylaw 15-12 would be rescinded and replaced with a grading and landscaping bylaw.

Considerations in Creating a Grading and Landscaping Bylaw

Administration created the grading and landscaping Bylaw to continue addressing lot grading, and to address the mandatory install of drought tolerant turf grass in all new residential building landscapes. The decision was made to modernize the grading parameters of infill development. Infill development had not been addressed in any previous bylaw or specification. As discussed at the May 15, 2023 GPC meeting, commercial landscaping will not be addressed in a bylaw as all landscaping parameters are included in the General Design and Construction Specifications.

The mandatory installation of drought tolerant turf will be managed through the lot grading permit process. Administration intends to continue providing an incentive through the Water Conservation Rebate Program on a first-come, first-served basis for all residents who install drought tolerant turf. To increase capacity within the program, the rebate amount for drought tolerant turf will be adjusted from \$1500 to \$500. This amount will continue to help offset any price difference between traditional and drought tolerant turf while providing a high incentive amount. Within the two-year window of the bylaw coming into effect, Administration anticipates a continuing and increasing trend toward installing drought tolerant landscapes. Within this period, Administration will not pursue any penalty for non-compliance to the Bylaw. After the two year period, administration will begin to charge a penalty for yards that do not comply to the bylaw or will allow the resident to re-install a drought tolerant species of turf. After the two-year period, Administration will begin to charge a penalty for yards that do not comply to the Bylaw or will allow the resident to reinstall a drought tolerant species of turf.

As the Town encounters more redevelopment, the Bylaw will address the need for an 'As Built Survey' for the impact of redevelopment on landscape grades. This will ensure that the property in question and adjacent properties will not be negatively impacted by stormwater flows.

Current Policy or Bylaw Analysis

n/a

Municipal Comparisons

n/a

CAO Comments

This draft bylaw attempts to implement Committee and Council direction and requires review and feedback.

Attachment(s)

1. Draft Bylaw XX-23 - Residential Grading and Landscaping
2. Engineering General Design and Construction Specifications
3. Bylaw 15-12 Residential Grading

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