

June 19, 2017

Mayor Strathdee and Members of Council
Town of St. Marys
175 Queen Street East
St. Marys, ON
N4X 1B6

Dear Mayor Strathdee and Members of Council:

RE: Tree Management Policy for the Town of St. Marys

My name is John Hensel and my wife Velma and I reside at 555 Emily Street North. We have owned land in the Town and Blanchard Township for 40 years and over that time we have planted over 30,000 trees on our property. We obviously value trees and believe that any growing community such as ours should have planning and development policies that address both tree management (including removal) and tree replacement (landscaping).

Most progressive communities in Ontario recognize that natural environment based policies including considerations for trees must be a part of the planning and approvals process where new development is proposed. Those natural environment based policies do not preclude development within a community and provide guidelines and guidance to promote environmentally responsible development of land where residential, commercial and industrial land uses are proposed.

As the Town of St. Marys considers the preparation of a new policy to address Tree Management we respectfully request that this policy reasonably address development within the Town where there are existing trees located within development land.

A recommendation from Town staff a few years ago presented a very punitive penalty to anyone, in any circumstance who wanted or needed to remove trees in the Town of St. Marys. That approach was unreasonable. Due to conflicts with construction, trees may need to be removed in circumstances where developments and related infrastructure must proceed in accordance with the Planning Act in the Province of Ontario. A Town of St. Marys Tree Management Policy must allow for tree removal on approved development without penalty. Mechanisms in the planning process, Site Plan Approval, Part Lot control, etc. provide opportunities for the Town to review development applications and influence Tree management decisions while responsible development lawfully proceeds. Penalties for unlawful removal of trees should be punitive to discourage reduction of tree cover in areas where development cannot/will not occur.

Thank you for the consideration of our comments. We look forward to hearing how the Town will address tree management in future reports from staff and comments from Council. We respectfully ask that we be kept informed as the new Tree Management policy is prepared.

Sincerely,

John and Velma Hensel