

**From:** Anand Kaushik Parashar [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Friday, August 18, 2023 3:07 PM

**To:** Pribil, Jerry <[jpribil@london.ca](mailto:jpribil@london.ca)>; Van Meerbergen, Paul <[pvanmeerbergen@london.ca](mailto:pvanmeerbergen@london.ca)>; Trosow, Sam <[strosow@london.ca](mailto:strosow@london.ca)>; McAlister, Hadleigh <[hmcAlister@london.ca](mailto:hmcAlister@london.ca)>; Advisory Committee <[AdvisoryCommittee@london.ca](mailto:AdvisoryCommittee@london.ca)>; Rahman, Corrine <[crahman@london.ca](mailto:crahman@london.ca)>; Cuddy, Peter <[pcuddy@london.ca](mailto:pcuddy@london.ca)>; Franke, Skylar <[sfranke@london.ca](mailto:sfranke@london.ca)>

**Cc:** Tanmay Parashar [REDACTED]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] IN FAVOUR OF BY-LAW AMENDMENT: The Yard and Maintenance by-law IS AMBIGUOUS and NEEDS TO BE UPDATED!

To whom it may concern, take note that I am contacting you in relation to the "delegation presentation" by **Brenden Samuels** of the "Environmental Stewardship and Action Community Advisory Committee" on 2023-08-15; I watched the [full discussion here](#).

**I live in Ward 5, my home is located at [REDACTED] London, ON.**

First: Please take note that I am one of the "few" residents who received a notice of by-law infraction pertaining to the Yard Maintenance By-Law. This occurred last year (May, 2022), the infraction statement said that the state of my front lawn was non-conformant with the by-law. This was totally outrageous.

A bit of personal context. I am 44 yrs of age and have been sensitive to the exponentially declining health of the environment over the course of the last 15 years. I grew up in Toronto, Ontario and have lived in Toronto as well as in Mumbai, India for significant portions of my life. During the last few decades, I've seen that biological diversity has declined - a very good and straight forward example that you can look up quickly is the decline of Monarch Butterfly and Honey Bee populations. The constant yearly degradation of the global environmental health is continual and is there to be observed by every human being on the planet, IF THEY CHOOSE TO ACTUALLY SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING (unfortunately, most humans simply don't think about matters outside their day-to-day concerns like jobs and family). I personally feel that this is indeed the key and critical issue at the heart of environmentally concerned London residents' (myself included) complaint with the "[Yard and Lot Maintenance By-law - PW-9](#)".

You see, listening to Mr. Samuels' dissertation, **EVERY SINGLE POINT** he made resonated FULLY AND THOROUGHLY with me. I feel that **it is the civic duty of the City's administrators to ENCOURAGE the conversion of monoculture lawns THROUGHOUT THE CITY to naturalised** or, in the least, biodiversity-friendly lawns.

Please let it be known that I **THOROUGHLY AND ABSOLUTELY DISAGREE** with Councillor Van Meerbergen's follow up comments. I would counter his commentary when discussing Councillor Sam Trosow's motion with my own statement above: **it is up to the CITY to ENCOURAGE a conversion of monoculture lawns** (which are HARMFUL for the environment) to lawns that will **ACTIVELY** assist the planet to begin healing.

To further counter Mr. Van Meerbergen's commentary, please understand that "maintaining" a "grassy monoculture lawn" or as it's better known, "a green lawn" is **ACTIVELY HARMFUL** for the environment!:

1. It requires herbicides to kill off plants that are considered weeds (**MOST** of my neighbours employ lawn maintenance companies to "treat" their lawns with herbicide - I have personally witnessed this), e.g. dandelions and other broadleaf plants. These herbicides have been **proven to be detrimental to pollinator populations** - please [see this article](#).
2. It requires copious amounts of water and irrigation in order to be kept "green" because the varieties of grass needed for this type of "medieval turf" are NOT "xeriscape friendly".
  - For those unacquainted with the history of what I'm referring to as "medieval turf", here's an article to help you explore the [invention and original purpose of the grass lawn](#). TLDR: it was meant as a status symbol for the ultra-rich who could afford enough serfs to keep it trim. It DOES NOT serve any ecological purpose, it IS/WAS a "status symbol" ONLY.
3. It DOES NOT provide ANY type of food/nutrition for "friendly" wildlife including critical pollinator populations.

**To conclude: It REALLY IS necessary for the By-Law to be REFORMED.**

This By-Law is actually a double-edged sword in its current state, harmful in several critical ways:

1. It encourages residents to continue to perceive "well maintained homes" as homes that have this extremely damaging monoculture type of lawn. The flip side being that it makes them also feel that anything OTHER than this type of monoculture lawn is HARMFUL or UNDESIRABLE.
2. It perpetuates TENSIONS between neighbours because **it DOES NOT recognise bio-diverse lawns as desirable!** It perpetuates the societal perception that medieval monoculture lawns **"are the way to go"** and thus, neighbours who **do not understand the need for biodiverse lawns** actually feel their property values are being **NEGATIVELY IMPACTED** by biodiverse aka "naturalised" lawns, such as my own... ergo, the misdirected angst of some anonymous neighbour who lodged the complaint to the City asking them to "enforce the by-law" on my property... a by-law which **WAS NOT BEING CONTRAVENED!**
  - If you need proof of how this is a "contentious" topic that sparks disagreement and malice between residents, please take a look at my Reddit posts from last year; the responses were varied including both support and some few negative comments; I submit that **the varied nature of the commentary demonstrates that this by-law IS NOT well understood:**
    - My original post: [https://www.reddit.com/r/Permaculture/comments/v5s8ch/need\\_help\\_contesting\\_bylaw\\_enforcement\\_against/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Permaculture/comments/v5s8ch/need_help_contesting_bylaw_enforcement_against/) (most comments were supportive but that was because it was in an environmentally-conscious channel).
    - A cross-post in the London, ON reddit - some negative reaction here: [https://www.reddit.com/r/londonontario/comments/v5vz4p/need\\_help\\_contesting\\_bylaw\\_enforcement\\_against/](https://www.reddit.com/r/londonontario/comments/v5vz4p/need_help_contesting_bylaw_enforcement_against/) I've embedded a screenshot of a negative comment:

3. The by-law **DISCOURAGES** societal growth **AT LARGE SCALE** by **discouraging London's significant population of 430,000** (and growing) **from realising that THEY CAN USE THEIR OWN LAWNS TO HELP HEAL THE PLANET**. This point is a **REALY BIG DEAL** for me - **AND IT SHOULD BE FOR YOU TOO**.
- Take a look at the embedded screenshot below from Google Maps: **what PERCENTAGE of private property is monoculture grass? Do you SEE the proportion as a percentage of available land???** It's an **ASTOUNDING WASTE!!!**
  - What if residents were **ENCOURAGED** to use ALL of their lawn land as "arable" for "local crop growth" or for helping to **rebuild pollinator populations** with the planting of **flower/fruit bearing plants???**
  - I can say with **FULL AND ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE** - **it is the MORAL DUTY of humanity to act as STEWARDS of the land** - **I dare any and all of you to present logical arguments countering this statement**. Enough is truly enough. We (our species) have managed to bring this planet to the **edge of destruction**. Humanity acts as if it is the **ONLY** animal on this planet that has any right to use its resources. **If Cities and metropolises took an ACTIVE PART in changing the way regular every-day citizens PERCEIVE "Land Use"**, then **it would be guaranteed** that **we as a species would make great advances to helping heal the damage WE have done**.
  - The alternative, which this by-law encourages, is to simply maintain the status quo and to be **complicit in the continued abuse through non-use/misuse of the land surrounding our properties** through the perpetuation of "fallow lands" - which is what grass does; grass makes the land useless to all creatures except humans who perceive it to be a symbol of wealth.

Mr. Van Meerbergen, your saying that there is "no issue" here with the by-law is **extremely short-sighted**:

1. First, you have limited the scope of your responsibility to maintaining status-quo on a topic that is quite simply one of the pivotal issues of our time, **an issue that actually impacts the SURVIVAL of humanity as a species**. I refer you to [Mr. Johan Rockstrom's research on "Climate Tipping Points" \(a Ted Talk\)](#) (aka Planetary Boundaries) of which biodiversity (under the umbrella of "Biosphere Integrity") plays a pivotal/critical role. I encourage you to broaden your knowledge by taking the time to become better aware of the impact that the human population has had on the planet. I also encourage you to take some time to invest deep-thought upon YOUR personal role as a human being in the continuation of the species. I ask you, do you realise that YOU have an impact? Do you realise that YOU can perpetuate harm OR, that YOU COULD encourage societal reform? **MAKE NO MISTAKE sir, inaction and/or action on this topic, a topic you have stated is a "simple" matter, and "not an issue" is indeed a hidden ode to "NIMBY-ism" in the form of an "easy to abuse and misunderstand" by-law... what you call a "non-issue" CAN HAVE WORLD-ALTERING IMPACT.**
2. Second, you disregard the fact that this by-law is used by neighbours to harass neighbours. **IF NOTHING ELSE**, as Mr. Brenden stated, the **AMBIGUITY IN THE BY-LAW needs to be REMOVED**,

even if Council doesn't go as far as using it to *encourage* "alternative lawns". In the by-law, it should be VERY clear that lawns DO NOT need to be less than 8 inches in height and look like a medieval grass-moat and that a "3 foot buffer strip" is NOT needed unless it is harmful to traffic! ALL of Mr. Brenden's and the Environmental Advisory Committee's recommendations **should be implemented to reform the by-law!**

3. Third, you state that, "in all your years on council, you've not received ONE complaint". Well sir - a few things here:
  1. Consider this to be **YOUR FIRST received complaint**: I am officially complaining to you (though you are not my Ward Councillor) that this by-law is ambiguous, easy to abuse and/or misunderstand.
  2. You likely have not received any complaints personally till now because the complaints DO NOT GO THROUGH YOUR DESK. YOUR Ward's residents *likely* know well enough that YOU are not responsible for by-law enforcement and are happy enough to use the official enforcement channels to address their complaints to. Your expression that you have not received any complaints is gaseous at best, disingenuous at worst.
  3. Sir, you disparaged Mr. Sam and Mr. Brenden's stances as being akin to "watching a hamster run in circles". Well sir, let me declare that **YOU HAVE ME AND ALL other environmentally concerned citizens WORLDWIDE to watch *instead of your proverbial hamster***. May we be more entertaining for you than your "non-issue". May our concerns pose more interest for you than your hamster. May you desist in the future from equating environmental concerns about this and any other by-law that perpetuates human harms upon the environment as being "not an issue" issues. May this letter to you and your esteemed colleagues **DECLARE TO YOU THAT THIS IS A PROBLEM**. May you use your position with influence and power to affect POSITIVE change in this regard. May you thus be blessed with insight and a reformed view yourself... I.e., you and no other human is going to care about building housing IF WE DON'T EXIST on account of the species having been successful (through the likes of your lack of intuition) in destroying the planet we live upon. I repeat, the issue IS NOT about the inconvenience environmentally concerned citizens face **when they are charged with infractions against this by-law**, the ISSUE is that the by-law **ACTIVELY DISCOURAGES AND MISEDUCATES** local residents **about their RIGHT to use their lawns in an environmentally positive way**.
  4. PS: What do those three complaints received to date represent? How many MORE residents DON'T press complaints? How many residents DON'T naturalise their lawns BECAUSE of the by-law??? ONLY public consultation with WIDE media coverage will actually elicit enough comment for you to see how pivotal this issue is. Choosing to keep a blindfold on DOES NOT mean the world and its issues have disappeared.

To the other recipients of this email, namely Mr. Brenden Samuels (via the advisory committee's email address), Councillor Jerry Pribril (representative of my own Ward, who DID NOT VOTE), Councillor Sam Troscow and Councillor Hadleigh McAlister (who voted in favour of the motion) as well as Councillor Skylar Franke (who didn't seem to have voted even though she **stated she was in favour!**) and

Councillors Corrine Rahman and Peter Cuddy (who voted AGAINST the motion) I beseech you all to please treat this issue **with due importance in relation to its BROADER context**. Please DO revisit the impact the by-law has upon society's ability to **rehabilitate itself and learn how to use the lawn and other spaces around our dwellings to rehabilitate our environment and begin to redress the damage that humanity has done**.

I ask you all, for every 1 person (like myself or Brenden) who has converted our lands to an ecologically responsible form factor, **how many other residents have THOUGHT of it BUT NOT DONE SO?**

I ask you all: DO YOU want to contribute towards repairing the damage humanity has wrought? IF YES, then this by-law IS A KEY AND CRITICAL **TOOL** for you, the City Council of London, Ontario to help ENACT actual LASTING change!

*Please DO NOT turn a blind eye to this REAL ISSUE!!!*

Closing note: The ONLY reason I am reaching out to you is because **I heard about Sam's motion and Brenden's disertation in council via CTV News London**. Here is the video: <https://london.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=104066> (time code: 4.00 minutes). Please find attached pictures of my lawns, both front and back. **They look unkempt and I am SURE rile several of my neighbours' views of my property WHICH IS THE PROBLEM**.

I respectfully and humbly submit my views and concerns for your review.

Yours faithfully and concernedly,

Anand Kaushik Parashar