

From: Carol Agocs
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2013 9:21 AM
To: Saunders, Cathy
Subject: To the Mayor and Council

Via email to:

Ms. Cathy Saunders, City Clerk
City Hall
London, Ontario
December 12, 2013

Dear Ms. Saunders:

RE: Proposal to sell City-owned green spaces (lands belonging to ESAs or in flood plains) to abutting property owners who have encroached

I am writing to ask Council to reject the recommendation of the Corporate Services Committee on December 10 to sell City properties on which private landowners have encroached to those landowners. The proposed sale involves two parcels abutting the Westminster Ponds-Pond Mills ESA, and seven parcels adjacent to private properties on Stoneycreek Crescent.

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority has advanced sound reasons for its opposition to the sale of these lands, and I believe that this advice should be accepted by Council. The sale of the Westminster Ponds ESA lands conflicts with the Westminster Ponds master plan, which was created with extensive citizen involvement and adopted by Council. The Stoneycreek Crescent lands appear to fall within an area regulated by the UTRCA. Both proposed land sales conflict with existing City policies against encroachment and prescribing the "Return to Nature" of lands on which encroachment has taken place.

Most important, the sale of these lands would set a dangerous and ill-advised precedent. It would effectively reward private property owners for encroaching in violation of policies and absolve them of their duty to re-naturalize these public lands. Given the extent of encroachment on ESAs, natural areas and floodplain lands that is occurring in hundreds of places throughout the city, this precedent poses a major and unacceptable threat to London's green spaces. Existing policies against encroachment should be enforced, and sanctions such as fines, rather than rewards, should be levied against private property owners who encroach on public lands.

Please reject the recommendation of the CSC, and retain and restore these publicly owned natural areas as existing City policies prescribe.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carol Agocs
1454 Sprucedale Avenue
London N5X1J4