

## The Civic Works Committee & Councilors

The CWC meeting of March 15 2021 was a complete disappointment and a Farce. I presented at the meeting for Imperial Rd against the upcoming reconstruction project that included a sidewalk on our street. What we were expecting was an honest discussion and debate over the abundant documentation and presentations made to the CWC prior to and at the meeting of March 15<sup>th</sup>. What we received were councilors who had already decided not to accept any deviation from the city works plan to have sidewalks on every street. Even worse, our councilor Maureen Cassidy sold us out and did not defend our position.

The accessibility argument that the councilors used and form the basis for the city works plan to have sidewalks on every street is deeply flawed and conflicts with other city high priorities. Just because there are sidewalks on Dufferin and on Wellington does not mean City Hall is accessible. For City Hall to be accessible you require ramps, automatic doors and elevators. The same can be said for all our streets. As a result, each individual case should be examined for merit. Listening to all the delegations, they all had merit as the same message was delivered and repeated for each street.

The statement that a sidewalk is required for accessibility is false and poses as many problems as benefits. A sidewalk is great for safety reasons on busy streets and for able bodied individuals. Sidewalks should be included on streets to schools, stores, parks or are cut throughs to other streets. That is not the case for Imperial Rd, which was built to increase neighborhood density by 11 homes. Imperial does not go to any schools, parks, stores or cut throughs. It just runs between Balcarres and Grenfell Dr. The only traffic Imperial sees, both vehicular and pedestrian are the residents on the street. All the streets that surround Imperial have sidewalks on one or both sides (Grenfell Dr, Estevan, Milestone & Balcarres).

The negatives to sidewalks are that there are joints every 5' or 6', they are concrete, they do not drain properly, they heave due to frost and in winter they become uneven & icy because they cannot be cleaned properly. For individuals with special needs like my granddaughter, mobility is uncomfortable if you use a stroller, walker, wheelchair or canes and a tripping hazard on heaved sidewalks. In winter they we impassable due to ice and uneven snow cover. Sidewalks cannot be cleaned to bare like streets can. These points were brought forward by individuals with handicaps and mobility issues for each street who live in the area.

The councilors also indicated that the accessibility requirement was not necessarily just for individuals living in the area but, also for any visitor who may pass through the region in the next 5 to 10 years. Councilor Helmer brought up a constituent that was blind and said sidewalks are required because it would be impossible for him to travel through a neighborhood if there was a sidewalk on every street. Councilor Cassidy brought up her father who also is blind and who does not live in London, basically the same reasons and said she could not exempt any street including Imperial Rd from having a sidewalk. Decisions should not be made on hypothetical events. Most of us don't stop driving because we might get in an accident.

Accessibility is for those who live in an area and those who visit. The people on Imperial help each other out. If a blind person were to visit, whoever they visit would make sure they got safely to a sidewalk for a walk. If they were to visit one of the neighboring streets, they would already have a sidewalk. Other than Imperial Rd almost every other street has a sidewalk. If my granddaughters were to go to the park, we would walk safely on Imperial to Grenfell and on the sidewalk to the park.

Most of my presentation is as follows:

Good Afternoon, my name is Herman Post and I live at 4 Imperial Rd with my extended family of wife, daughter, her husband and 2 granddaughters one of which is a special needs child. We purchased on this street 4 years ago because of curb appeal, the quiet street, mature trees and a laneway that could hold our 4 vehicles.

Imperial Rd is a short narrow street that runs between Grenfell & Balcarres. This street sees minimal traffic for both vehicles and pedestrians and according to my neighbors, traffic patterns have not changed in almost 50 years. The reason Imperial Rd has so little traffic is because there are better routes to and from South Wenige to Grenfell, Balcares and Constitution Park via Estevan and Milestone. In fact, Imperial Rd sees as much traffic as a deadend street or Cul de sac. Speed on this street is not an issue or concern.

Putting a sidewalk on Imperial Rd would destroy the reasons we purchased this house. A sidewalk would remove all the trees from the west side of the street, which would damage the curb appeal, remove 16 parking spaces (including 2 of our parking spaces) and damage the decorative concrete driveways (ours included). The removal of the parking spaces would force us and our neighbors to park constantly on the street and since there isn't enough parking available on the one side there would be vehicles parked on both sides of the street.

That causes 2 safety issues. The first is Imperial Rd is 22' wide and with vehicles parked on both sides of the street there would be less than 8' for a service vehicle such as an ambulance, fire truck or sanitation truck to drive down the street. The 2<sup>nd</sup> safety concern is the safety for my granddaughters who could get hit by a car not being seen while stepping between the parked cars.

After the presentations from the delegates the councilors discussed the some of the streets including Imperial Rd. They suggested moving the sidewalk to the curb on east side of Imperial Rd, making the street 6.5m wide and allow parking on one side only. While this removes 10 parking spaces and a few less trees, we would still have the safety issue for my granddaughter who could get hit stepping between the parked cars. Our granddaughter will never reach the height to be safely seen.

The final issue is the loss of mature trees on either side of the street. These trees if they were in my back yard, we would not be able to get a permit to cut down, while the city does not think twice if they are in the way of a sidewalk installation. We lived through this 2 years ago when Grenfell Dr went through reconstruction. The plan had the removal of 11 trees. I believe 36 were cut down. Again, all mature trees. Carbon reduction was supposed to be a crisis point for this city. Removing trees increases our carbon footprint. Along with curb appeal, trees need to be saved and replacing with saplings does nothing.

There was never an intention for Imperial Rd to have a sidewalk with the house designs of the garages further back and bedrooms closer to the street. None of the residents on this street want sidewalks and signed petitions to show our displeasure. We all pay taxes and least we expect is our elected counselors to advocate for us. Since we got the brush off at the meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup> we are requesting that this matter be brought before full council to get this exemption we requested.

Ragards  
Herman Post  
4 Imperial Rd