

Bylaw update means residents must now maintain boulevards

By Zachary Roman

Caledon residents must keep the grass in check on boulevards adjacent to their properties, as well as make sure they're free of refuse.

That's because Town of Caledon staff have created an Encroachment Bylaw and amended the Town's clean yards bylaw. Town Council voted in favour of adopting the bylaw changes at its April 26 meeting.

In the bylaws, boulevard is defined as "the portion of a highway which may be paved, unpaved, grassed or landscaped with other materials, and is situated between the curb or edge of pavement and the adjacent property line on both sides of a highway."

In a presentation at a previous Council meeting, Caledon Building and Municipal Law Enforcement Director Mark Sraga said most Caledon residents choose to maintain municipal boulevards adjacent to their properties, despite the lack of rules requiring them to do so.

The Town's amended Clean Yards bylaw requires residents to "maintain the grass portion of boulevards that are immediately adjacent to their property, excluding rural/agricultural properties," according to Sraga.

Town Operations staff will continue to maintain all the boulevards they already do, he added.

This change was made as Sraga said the Town's had some instances where property owners, as well as property owners of vacant development properties, have not been maintaining their adjacent boulevards, leading to complaints. Maintaining adjacent boulevards under the new bylaw means keeping them free of refuse and tall grass.

Councillor Lynn Kiernan asked Sraga if the Town was responsible for maintaining the adjacent boulevards in the case of a non-compliant property owner. Sraga said the Town's contractor would do that work, then the cost of it would be put back on the non-compliant property owner in their property taxes.

The Town's new encroachment bylaw means minor encroachments on Town-owned boulevards are no longer prohibited. Sraga said old rules prohibited all encroachments on boulevards adjacent to Caledon residents' properties, which is very restrictive. Further, he said many minor encroachments have no negative impact from an operational or safety perspective and in fact improve streetscapes, benefiting the community.

An example of a minor encroachment would be the planting of flowers on a boulevard, or the placing of mulch or tree ring edging around boulevard trees. In the past, Town staff have had to tell people to remove such beautifications despite them not really being a problem, said Sraga.

The new Encroachment Bylaw allows Caledon residents to make these sorts of minor aesthetic improvements to boulevards adjacent to their properties, while still prohibiting anything deemed to be an operational or safety hazard. Those wishing to make a major encroachment will now need to go through a permit process.