



Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
Alliance pour les espaces verts de la capitale du Canada

Postal address: P.O. Box 55085, 240 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1A1 □ Tel.: (613) 739-0727
E-mail: contact@greenspace-alliance.ca □ Web site: www.greenspace-alliance.ca

DRAFT 1b - 12 August 2014

September 13, 2014

Dear <candidate name>,

Founded in 1997, the Greenspace Alliance works to preserve and enhance green spaces in the National Capital area, and engages with all levels of government. It believes that urban greenness is essential for a community's quality of life, contributing to personal, social, economic, cultural and spiritual well-being, and connecting us with the natural and cultural history of our region.

As a candidate in the upcoming municipal election we write to ask for your support for the following four propositions. Endorsements for our proposals by others are shown below. We will be pleased to publish your responses on our web site at <http://www.greenspace-alliance.ca/>.

1. Support for a strong site alteration by-law, with emphasis on "strong."

The Official Plan of 2003 already included a directive to staff to come forward with such a by-law; its purpose was further clarified in the 2009 revision of the Plan and unaltered in the 2013 update. The policy reads:

"The City will work with the Conservation Authorities and other interested stakeholders to develop a by-law under the Municipal Act to regulate the removal of top soil, grade alteration, and placement of fill." (Section 2.4.5, Policy 10)

An Ontario Municipal Board decision of July 2011 took explicit note of the City's intent to develop this by-law. To date, no draft has been circulated. We emphasize the need for a "strong" by-law, one that includes provisions on the removal of vegetation. Site alteration by-laws in cities such as London, Oakville, Hamilton, and many more, have site alteration by-laws that include clauses on the impact on vegetation or trees. Having such a by-law on the books will help prevent the repeated "tree massacres" which Ottawa has experienced over the last decade.

Preservation of remaining woodlots should have high priority in the city's promotion of environmental sustainability.

2. Renewed commitment to an annual allocation towards an environmental lands acquisition fund.

The Environmental Lands Acquisition Fund started off the year 2014 with a balance of \$1.6 million and no additional funds were allocated to it this year, after receiving a mere \$800,000 in 2013. Opportunities to acquire pockets of remaining natural areas continue to arise and the City should have a somewhat larger kitty available. The mandate should be restricted to the acquisition of environmentally sensitive land. No further "raid" on the fund for tree planting or the Emerald Ash Borer strategy, as happened in 2012, should be allowed.

3. Standing firm in support of the prohibition against future country lot subdivisions.

In the 2013 update of the Official Plan, Council decided to prohibit future country lot estate development (be it not without a major concession to Thomas Cavanagh Construction) and we applaud Council for that decision. Sunset Lakes Development has appealed the new policy. We ask for your pledge that, if elected, you will not support further compromises.

4. The City's Advisory Committees should be genuine bridges between the public and Council.

The revamp of the advisory committee structure in 2012 has deprived the City of much goodwill and volunteer effort. There is much intelligence within the community. The City should work with community experts, not choke off their efforts.

The current mandate of most new Advisory Committees does not even require that they meet with the public! Their role is portrayed solely as one of advising Council and being a resource for staff.

The public needs to be consulted in a range of ways. Open Houses and Roundtables do not exhaust the possibilities and needs. Circulation of proposals a week before consideration by a Standing Committee and then allowing five minutes to speak is a deeply unsatisfactory way of "hearing from the public."

The Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee in particular should invite public input, meet more often than quarterly and form subcommittees to filter and focus citizen input in city-wide environmental issues.

We look forward to your response and wish you the best in your campaign for election.

Erwin Dreessen
Co-chair

This letter has been endorsed by the following groups and individuals:

[groups]

<name>

<position>

<group name>

[individuals]

<name>

<Ward # or name>