



TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON

REPORT

Item No.

REPORT TO: Reeve Vincent and Members of Council
PREPARED BY: Pat Newson, Director of Recreation and Facilities
DATE: 06/11/2017
SUBJECT: North Huron Public Tree Program
ATTACHMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron hereby suspend the public tree program for 2018, and direct staff to review the program and bring back options for Council's consideration for 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Huron Council supports a free tree giveaway program for North Huron residents. Staff recommend that the program be suspended for 2018, and Council review the objectives and costs of the program and consider the program's future.

DISCUSSION

Maitland Valley provides trees to municipalities at discounted rates through their MVCA Large Stock Tree Service. As part of the energy and environment initiative for the Township, North Huron has budgeted \$3,500 annually to purchase trees and distribute free to North Huron residents. In town residents were able to order one tree, and rural residents were able to order two trees. The goal of the program is to support the initiative to increase trees in the municipality and fits Goal #5 of the Strategic Plan "Our natural environment is valued and protected".

Staff are bringing this to the attention of Council now because trees are required to be ordered now for Spring 2018 distribution.

The program has challenges in that some trees are not claimed, and staff have started to deliver the trees because many residents were unable to pick them up at the designated time, did not have a vehicle equipped to transport a tree, or simply never picked up their free tree. The cost to pick up the trees from Maitland Valley and the distribution of the trees was \$1,840 in 2017. There is also additional staff time required to administer and promote the program to the public.

Some municipalities have a similar program, but the cost of the trees is passed onto the resident that is ordering the tree. North Huron needs to look at the distribution system for the trees to reduce the costs. Left over trees are planted at the Wingham Cemetery and used by staff if a tree needs to be planted in the municipality.

Staff would like the opportunity to review the program, analyze the cost benefit, and potentially look at ways to recover costs. Staff recommend suspending the program in 2018 while this information can be collected into a report for Council's consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

In 2017, 117 trees were ordered through Maitland Valley, at a cost of \$3,045.68. In 2017, 31 trees were not spoken for, in 2016, 36 trees were not spoken for.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

At a time when the Township is looking at ways to reduce expenses, this is a program that can potentially be suspended indefinitely, or reintroduced in 2019 in a way that Township costs are minimized. Staff will collect public feedback while the program is suspended to measure the public interest for the program.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Our natural environment is valued and protected.

Our administration is fiscally responsible and strives for operational excellence.



Pat Newson, Director of Recreation and
Facilities



Dwayne Evans, CAO