

## Canvassers Were Trained To Deliver an Informed and Respectful Message about LEAF

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CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

- We strongly believe that all home owners received accurate, detailed information in a respectful manner so that they could make an informed decision regarding the LEAF program that's because a training program and package was developed for all canvassers.
- Approximately 50 of the 100 canvassers received training by myself (I am a Management Consultant and Corporate Trainer and a long term resident and home owner in Edgemont). These canvassers attended a two hour training session which was offered over a 3 day period in March 2015. The training provided an overview of the Leaf program, highlighting the program's main features including discussing a special tax levy of \$7/month which would occur in 2016 if the program was accepted. The training provided key messaging for the canvassers and provided detailed information so that canvassers could adequately answer any questions homeowners might ask. The training also stressed the importance of respecting the homeowner's decision: whether they decided to sign or not sign the petition. The training essentially suggested canvassers ask 3 questions: 1) Are you the home owner? 2) Do you know about the LEAF program? (canvassers were instructed to talk about landscaping enhancement and to discuss the special tax levy of \$7/month 3) Would you like to sign the petition? ... (or did they want more information?)
- A video was produced which demonstrated how a canvasser should approach a homeowner; in a positive and respectful way and gave an example of a workable script when describing the Leaf program; including the fact that a special tax levy would be assessed if they voted yes for the Leaf program. The video was shown during the training session and was also posted on You Tube...so that all canvassers could review it.
- A PowerPoint was produced for the training session and was sent to all canvassers, including those who were unable to attend the training session or who were newly recruited.
- As well, all canvassers received a 'canvassing binder' which included all the materials from the training program and also provided extra resources for answering questions and to provide the homeowner with any additional information they may need to make an informed decision. The following were included in the binders:

I'm Jeff Edwards, a 17 year resident of Edgemont and the Volunteer Coordinator and member of the Board of Directors for the Edgemont Community Association.

I would like to thank all the volunteers in the room. The support you see today is representative of the great volunteers we have in Edgemont.

I'm here representing the dozen members of the ECA board confirming our support for the LEAF program. You will have received a letter from our president stating our full support for LEAF.

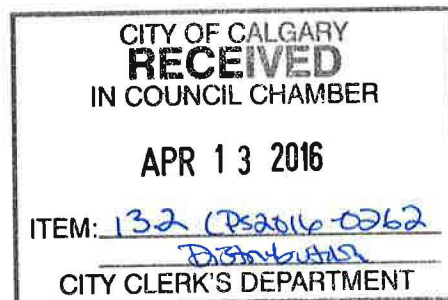
I'm also the pastor of a church that meets in the Edgemont Community Centre and partner in the Chinese church that meets in the same location.

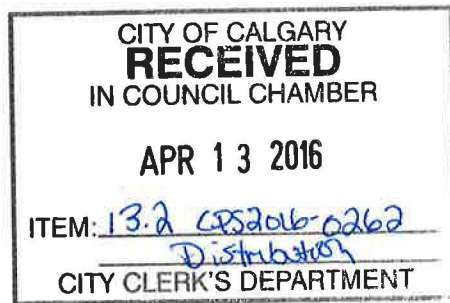
In all my different roles, I have only heard support and anticipation for the LEAF program. Not until I met a couple of Recall people at the ECC did I hear any negative opinions about this initiative.

Our neighbourhood is very excited about this beautification program, and we highly recommend that this by-law be read and passed by City Council.

Thank you.

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We started to organize the work into two main categories, needs assessment and volunteer organization. In the fall of 2014 we held an Open House to inform Edgemont homeowners of the conceptual plan to establish a LEAF program, get their input, and recruit volunteers.

We divided Edgemont using the 26 Electoral boundaries and our goal was to initially have 52 volunteer canvassers (two per area). I was very inspired as the list of volunteers grew with so many different talents and skills and people who genuinely cared about the community of Edgemont. In addition to the volunteer canvassers we now had a group of amazing volunteers who provided communications, training, language interpretation and database development and management. Some of them are here today and will be speaking. We also had a very diverse group of volunteers, both culturally and demographically that's when I came to realize that this project was more than the beautification of Edgemont, it was all about building community. The needs assessment team met many times to conduct walkabouts throughout Edgemont to develop a draft plan that would ensure equal beautification throughout the community.

On April 11, 2015 the petition for the Edgemont LEAF was launched at a kickoff event at the Community Centre and volunteers enthusiastically embraced the challenge and we were off and running.

It soon became contagious as within two weeks of the kickoff our volunteer list grew to well over 100 and by June we had 3,379 signatures, well on our way to reaching the required 66.7% approval rate of all homeowners in Edgemont which we exceeded by the deadline. Although a daunting percentage, it was the dedication and tireless efforts of over one hundred volunteers who made this goal achievable.

The success of the LEAF initiative is due to all of the volunteers and homeowners who supported this vision. LEAF will be an ongoing process which will give Edgemont residents pride of community for many years to come.

In addition, the work will be directed by the community and, if the work done does not meet our requirements, we can select other suppliers. The community retains control of the program.

A committee has been established to work with the service provider, in this case the City Parks department, on the design and overall plan to enhance and maintain the common spaces. I believe the entire community will benefit from the clean-up and the new shrub and flower beds. Edgemont will no longer be the 'dowdy sister' among the Northwest communities, and the beautification will encourage the residents to continue to improve and enhance their own properties as they are able. In addition, in the longer term, the program will also serve to enhance community pride for all residents as Edgemont will again be seen as a very desirable community in which to live.

Let me also speak to the funding. The Edgemont LEAF levy will be \$7.00 per homeowner per month, or \$84.00 per year. As a retiree on a fixed income I recognize there is an impact due to this levy. However, I feel it is small in comparison with the benefits it will bring to the community. It is smaller than many surrounding communities, and can only grow along with inflation each year, so there should be no concerns about massive future increases.

Finally, I'd like to comment on the significant community support for LEAF.

The Edgemont LEAF initiative had a high bar to reach to show community support. Over 66.7 % of Edgemont homeowners had to support the initiative, and that target was exceeded. This is a substantial achievement given that the norm for passing legislation is 50%+1, and we all know that many politicians are elected with far less than the support of 2/3 of their constituents. This significant show of community support cannot be emphasized enough.

The community support was hard-won by a team of dedicated volunteers. I say 'hard-won' not in the sense that there was coercion or bullying of the residents, but that there was a dogged determination to get a definitive response from all the Edgemont homeowners. And the fact that it was required from the homeowners, not merely the residents, was no mean feat. Many individual homes and condominiums in Edgemont are rented and the owners, whether resident in Calgary, or Canada, or elsewhere, had to be contacted for their decision.

This was no small task, and speaks to the level of commitment to the LEAF team.

To conclude, I believe the Edgemont LEAF initiative has support of the majority of the Edgemont homeowners, there is a very dedicated support team within the community to shepherd the initiative in the coming years to ensure that we achieve the enhancements we have been promised, and we will see Edgemont return to the vibrant and desirable community it once was.

Thank you.

