

Submitted to:

CPS Committee, City of Calgary

RE: Edgemont LEAF

By

Residents of Edgemont Against Leaf Levy

April 6, 2016

To City of Calgary Clerk

This email serves as a vote AGAINST the upcoming tax levy in the community of Edgemont for the landscaping beautification program.

There are a number of concerns that I have with the proposed program, but will just present one here to keep things short.

The job market in Calgary is extremely gloomy and I am sure there are people in all professions who are wondering about their job security given the economic downturn. I think the Mayor has done his part in keeping our property tax increases to the bare minimum given the circumstances, and I think it is wrong of our community to be enforcing a tax hike on its residents at this point in time.

My own husband was laid off January 2015. While he has worked various jobs (I estimate around 15 temp jobs) over the past year to keep some income trickling in, it is nothing like what his prior professional position paid. In addition, the company where I have worked for 24 years, has announced the closure of the whole facility, resulting in 700 job losses, and once I am laid off at the end of the month, there will be even less income coming into our home.

We consider ourselves hard working individuals, however with 4 children, two of which are in university, money is extremely tight.

I am not looking for sympathy, however talking to others in the community, it is a rare family that has not been hit in some way by this economic downturn.

I do not feel enough information was presented when the PRO leafers came around to our home. They came by 4 times, each time using pressure tactics to have us sign their PRO leaf campaign, however I refused as I felt they were not prepared and able to answer the questions I had to my satisfaction. While I do agree that there are parts of Edgemont that appear tired, I think much of this is the result of renters, or other homeowners who have no pride of ownership. I do not think flowers on blvds or existing green spaces is going to do anything to make these parts of our community look better.

What I would like to see if this whole process put on hold. If after ALL THE INFORMATION is provided to homeowners, the LEAF program is implemented, then I will accept the decision, however given the reversal of fortune for many in our city, combined with people making decisions without being fully informed, I am sincerely hope that you will hold off on this levy until we can ensure a fair process has been put in place to ensure this is in the best interests of all the residents of Edgemont.

Thank you for taking my view into consideration as you decide on whether or not to move forward with this tax levy.

Janet Cordery
111 Edgeland Rd NW
Calgary AB T3A2Y3
(403) 241 7679

~~Through~~ I ^{had} signed the petition for beautifying Edgemont community as I believe it is beneficial for the community.

However I would like to state that it was not clearly stated that this "petition" signing was going straight into ~~a~~ effective "law" with the city and city taking up the work.


So I have decided to sign the petition against this move because ① I believe the due process was not fully followed, there is sufficient discontent to justify re-evaluating this process - a better clearer method need to be used to come to final decision -

- ② Also I would prefer any money collected for this be given to ECA to do the work in the community instead of the city.
- ③ And it cannot be a 5-year non-negotiable, non-cancellable agreement, even if this was applied.

Based on a few of these points, I have decided to sign the "against" petition.



WITNESS


JACOB SIMON
2016-02-20.

P9324.



POTS SIT EMPTY FOR 8-9 MONTH OF THE YEAR



EMPTY POTS ARE DANGEROUS IN THE BOULEVARDS IN THE WINTER. EDGEMONT'S COMMUNITY SIGN WAS HIT TWICE IN THE BOULEVARD AND HASN'T BEEN REPLACED FOR 2 YEARS.



Stephen Webster <sjwebster29@gmail.com>

leaf levy

john.arlene.perdue <john.arlene.perdue@gmail.com>
To: Stephen Webster <sjwebster29@gmail.com>

15 December 2015 at 08:46

I believe our name was signed on the petition and would like it removed. We did not understand the prices could be changed or continued after the date signed up for. We do not agree with the added tax and feel very misinformed about it. We do not agree with a door to door sign up sheet for a tax increase. We have never seen this done before and did not understand what was being signed. It is our policy not to sign anything at the door due to the subtle high pressure and misinformation which is exactly what I feel occurred. We think this type of tax procurement is a slippery slope and want off the slippery slope as we know where it is going. It could also leave a person liable to paying the tax forever when selling your house and neglecting to disclose it.

Thank you
Arlene Perdue
John Perdue

this information noted above can be shared

Sent from my Samsung device
[Quoted text hidden]

Dear Community Council,

It concerns me that photos depicted in the March issue of the Inside Edge (page 17) are intended to advertise and promote the LEAF model (Scenic Acres green grass medians) but in actuality the photos illustrate an initiative that is outdated and does not complement an environmental perspective. When we see lush green grass growing in dry arid Calgary, our thoughts should go to the fuel for the power mowers, the toxic emissions, the fertilizers and pesticides and the high amounts of water consumption. In these present times of climate change which includes water rationing due to droughts (1); extreme weather; mass die-offs of bee colonies (2) and toxins showing up in the blood streams of fetuses (3), there needs to be more conversation and education about the high cost of traditional gardening. Green luscious grass and pretty annual flowers no longer serve a community in a positive way but demonstrate an antiquated perspective that requires a new modern way of thinking. We should not be comparing ourselves to communities like Scenic Acres and The Hamptons as they demonstrate a growing concern from environmentalists and scientists that we need to change the ways we treat our land.

I think it is wonderful that our community is taking time for an initiative to bring back more beauty to our neighbourhood and I sincerely applaud the volunteers who have invested so much time and energy with the hope of bettering their community. Such spirit for community is so needed in these complicated times of economic transition. However, I truly believe that we need to change the current conversation and focus on how we can be BETTER than our neighbouring communities.

We could set an example for other communities in Calgary by:

Developing sustainable gardening techniques with the planting of zone hardy perennials that do not require extra watering or synthetic herbicides or fertilizers.

Developing alternative methods than grass to fill in boulevards such as: zone hardy decorative grasses and low lying bushes, tree mulch and/or rocks.

Seeking assistance from a professional permaculturist offering insight to sustainable eco-friendly design: setting our community apart and offering a model for other communities.

This type of progressive earth-friendly attitude could help our community to stand out in the eyes of communities around us and the entire city. This is 2016, not 1995; let's start thinking and talking about the environmental implications of an old fashioned notion of developing expensive resource needy weather sensitive gardening over functional, eco-modern and sustainable design.

Let's change the conversation!

I would be proud to volunteer my time for earth conscious community initiatives.

Jennifer Wiebe (5 year home owner in Edgemont)

“Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.”
Chief Seattle

<http://globalnews.ca/news/2020512/water-use-restrictions-implemented-in-capital-region/>

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0070182#authcontrib>

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/weed-whacking-herbicide-p/>

CONGRATULATIONS EDGEMONT

Two-thirds of property owners have chosen to transform Edgemont into a LEAF Community




The petition brought residents closer together and created meaningful dialogue between neighbors.

"You are giving your community a gift"
— Sarah Walker, Parks Supervisor

Vision for LEAF

- Enhance daily quality of life for residents
- Raise Edgemont's desirability as a place to live
- Create pride of ownership in our public spaces
- Partner with the City of Calgary for smooth implementation




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Meet your Horticultural Specialist



City Parks Department appoints an Edgemont LEAF horticultural specialist who:

- Guides residents through a LEAF implementation
- Creates work plans
- Manages day-to-day operations
- Oversees work completion




Randi Kelley

Background	Beliefs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Calgary Parks supervisor • 10+ years of experience in various City departments including Urban Forestry, Parks maintenance and Integrated Pest Management • Holds diploma in horticulture and is nearing completion in a degree in Science majoring in horticulture • Working towards International Society of Arboriculture certification • Active member of the Calgary Horticultural Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong love of gardening • Incorporate principles of low water use and sustainability • Innovation in horticulture is key • Unique and tailored program reflects Edgemont's personality • Work collaboratively with all stakeholders




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- Presented in Community Newsletter as a "DONE"
- Unrealistic "Vivid Floral & Dramatic Floral Presentation"
- DUPLICATE Pay City for Goods & Services already covered In our Property Taxes

- No RFP or Offer for Tender
- LIMITED, COOKIE CUTTER Program
- No Community Sign, No Fence Repairs, No Snow Removal, No Items on Residents Wish Lists
- Exaggerated promises of increased property value And enhanced quality of life

Work in Progress

Initial Enhancement Locations – Year 1



- First year's program will focus on a vivid and dramatic floral presentation
- All phases of Edgemont included
- Enhancements limited to public property
Several enhancements are not public property

Cement Pot Considerations

- Concrete quality
- Cost
- Longevity
- Maintenance
- Aesthetics
- Hail damage effects
- Diversity in shapes






- Color
- Varied sizes
- On-hand spaces
- Winter look




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Work in Progress (con't)

What to Expect	First Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawns • Enhanced Mowing • Median Rejuvenation • Tree Well Maintenance • Enhanced Tree Care • Weed Management • Street Bed Maintenance • Integrated Pest Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced maintenance schedule • Flowers! • Bright and beautiful displays - large flower pots around the community filled with beautiful flowers • Median Care • Apply IPM practices to treat medians for broad leaf weeds • Tree well maintenance • Edge and mulch tree wells
What Not to Expect	Second Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign Repair • Large Flower beds in Medians • Road-way Maintenance • Snow removal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on enhancements of the First Year, add • Flower beds • Median rejuvenation (top dress, re-seed, fertilize) • Continue IPM plan for weed control • Collaborate with Urban Forestry to add to Edgemont tree canopy



Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Our goal is to "Use an ecological approach to vegetation and pest management that strives to reduce reliance on pesticides as well as integrate preventative measures and alternative control technology"

- Uses various options to increase turf health
- Treats prohibited noxious weeds
- Sprays for broad leaf weeds in turf
- Sprays a non-select herbicide in shrub beds in tree wells

IPM Spraying Procedures

- Plants will not be sprayed unless threshold levels have been met
- Sprays fields are top priority for child safety
- Post signs at the entrances of the community at least 3 days ahead
- Yellow warning signs will be present and should be respected for 60-day term

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Sent April 1, 2016

Dear Mayor & Councillors,

After reading the emails below, I believe it's unethical or even illegal for the city to adopt the so called "LEAF Petition".

First of all, as the emails indicated clearly, the "LEAF Petition" was deemed to pass 67% vote by using all kinds of sneaky methods, including breach of all kinds of rules and regulations.

Secondly, as a resident owning multiple properties in Edgemont, why I can only cast 1 vote? Does that mean I only need to pay tax on 1 property? Or if city insists (unethically & illegally) owners to pay for LEAF, do I only need to pay for 1 portion? There is a famous saying – "No taxation without representation". For example, Canadian property laws all say clearly, a condo owner's voting rights is to the portion of his/her unit factor, i.e. anyone owns 2 units will have double the voting rights as another person owns only 1 unit.

As residents, we're not asking much from the city, please just stick to your own rules, laws and regulations, instead of manipulating them for special group's own interests. The only ethical and legal option here, is to void the invalid LEAF Petition.

Regards,

Simon Joe

Broker, B.Eng, M.Eng

HomeRebate Realty

99 Edgeview HTS NW, Calgary, AB T3A 4W8

Jan. 2, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of myself and other residents (especially seniors) of Edgemont, who are living on a low or fixed income, I would like to express my concerns about the LEAF program, and the process involved in bringing it about.

I voted "no" on the petition since I felt that it is yet another bite out of my income.

I now realize that many of us were not fully aware that this levy can be increased yearly, which causes further concern. Since there is quite a disparity in economic status in Edgemont, why are we all paying the same fee? What seems like a minimal amount to some, could affect others adversely.

Why are other communities able to have LEAF with lower fees per household and no increase.

When Sean Chou came to my door during the municipal election campaign, he assured me that he would advocate for seniors. When I spoke with Sean he stated that

I had been mis-informed about the increase in fees.

I have also spoken with Stephen Webster with the RECALL group, and registered a complaint with the City of Calgary.

We all need to get on the same page and get accurate information to everyone to ensure the process is properly carried out.

Sincerely,

R. McWhiter

"Hi, Dolores,

My wife (Fang Ye) cannot recall on which date she requested her signature removal. It was not the next day after but several days after. She met a lady at the Community Centre, who asked my wife to leave name and address on a piece of paper and promised to remove my wife's signature afterwards. The lady's name was unknown though.

We knew those people were not trustworthy.

Thanks for help.

Best regards,
Fei Ma"

179 Edgemont Estates Drive NW

FEB 08, 2016

Instantly I agree to pay money to support LEAF.
as the lady knocked my door and said ~~we~~ we need to make
Edge mont Community. more beautiful. Later I realized that
the money we are going to pay. will not be reasonable for
the service we will receive. at the same time; some
service should be covered by city not residents. in
addition, the calculation is not transparent. why it's \$80
per household?

WITNESSES 2 Bruckshanks
2 Bruckshanks

R/O.

Devil Raj
Raj

To Calgary city Council,

The City of Calgary allow property owners a fair process to enhance their communities through local improvements. However, this fairness is undermined when a specific group seeks to use this municipal process to advance their own interests. The residents supporting LEAF have used the petition to local improvement to seek approval for the enhancement program and levy a tax on all residents of Edgemont to pay for it. While LEAF claims “overwhelming” support for the initiative this was only achieved through a petition which failed to safeguard the public.

While residents could sign the petition at the Edgemont Community Association office, most signature were obtained by canvassers. The canvassers seeking signatures supporting LEAF were all in favour of the levy. Undoubtedly, they all had an interest in having the measure passed. In their advocacy supporting the initiative lapses in judgment are evident. For example, it was common for canvassers to state that property values would increase as result of the program, that the Edgemont community was in decline and that the costs to the homeowner were minimal. In addition, signatures were obtained by over zealous canvassers. Numerous instances of coercion, excessive persuasion and misrepresentation occurred. For example, there are instances where canvassers would not leave after being told that the homeowner would not sign, that they remained obstinate and returned - sometimes as much as four times - to the same residence.

The extent to which this process is blemished is evidenced by the number of homeowners now wishing to rescind their support of the petition. To this date (November 2015), 25 homeowners wish to remove their names from the petition.

In conclusion, the LEAF petition should be nullified as insufficient measures took place to safeguard the public and to preserve the integrity of the process of local improvements.

Sincerely,

Joseph Kurucz

My husband and I are present home owners, meaning that we take pride in our home and have been working tirelessly to reno our home since we moved in 18 months ago. When we were first approached by volunteers for the Leaf Program, they were polite asked if we wanted to sign the petition and when we said we weren't sure, they left us with some info and asked that we email them our vote.

We were not given all of the necessary information, some of which is just now being made public. Upon further review, we decided to respectfully vote not in favour of the Leaf Program. This is where our pleasant experienced ended.

We were approached again and when we said we had already voted no, the two women said to my husband "Really?". We were then approached a third time, this time by the guy who founded the project and we said we had already voted, and we had requested to not be bothered again to which he responded "Well you know you're going to have to pay it when it goes through, you know?".

After this I made a call to a woman named Lorraine who is/was the head of the community association or the head of Leaf. I explained the situation and that we did not appreciate being approached a second time with condescending attitude about our vote. She apologized and said it wouldn't happen again and they would be sure to mark our house as "already voted".

We then received a form in the mail left by the fourth set of volunteers asking us to vote yes. I called and spoke with Lorraine again and she apologized when I explained that I was not appreciative of neither the repeated visits or snarky attempts to convince us to vote yes. I grew up in a time when NO meant NO and it wouldn't have been ok for someone to keep harassing, pestering, bullying you into doing something that you didn't want to do. Today I proudly signed the No Flower Petition and would encourage all my fellow Edgemontians to do the same.

Respectfully,

Jenn Gerlitz

403-804-2425

jenn@jenngerlitz.com