

22

**DEPUTATION – MR. SAVINO QUATELA
WITH RESPECT TO THE ENCROACHMENT BY-LAW**

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

- 1) That the deputation of Mr. Savino Quatela, Grand Valley Boulevard, Maple, and Communications C4, dated October 1, 2012, and C8, be received; and
- 2) That a report be provided prior to the summer hiatus on alternate options to the current complaint basis policy of Enforcement Services and Building Standards.

MR. SAVINO QUATELA

134 GRAND VALLEY BLVD

MAPLE ONT. L6A-3K6

c A

Communication

CW: November 6, 2012

Item: Dep b)

RECEIVED

OCT 01 2012

CITY OF VAUGHAN
CLERKS DEPARTMENT

JEFFREY A. ABRAMS B.A.L.L.B. CITY CLERK
CITY-OF-VAUGHAN

2141 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE

VAUGHAN, ONT. L6A-1T1

REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION-DEAR SIR, I AM REQUESTING
THE OPPORTUNITY TO be heard AT COMMITTEE OF THE
Whole OCT-16-2012 PLEASE CONFIRM THE DAY
AND TIME THAT I WILL have MY DEPUTATION,
I PREFER YOU SEND IF VIA EMAIL AT

SAVINOQUATELA@YAHOO.CA WITH A hard copy
TO FOLLOW by CANADA POST

SUBJECT MATTERS CHALLENGE

ENCROACHMENT, OF CITY OF VAUGHAN

BY-LAW-2242005 I WILL PROVIDE

WRITTEN 14 PAGE OF MATERIAL PLUS

MORE THEN 30 PHOTO TO EACH COUNCILLOR

SINCERELY

Savino Quatela DATE OCT. 1-2012



Communication: C4
Committee of the Whole – November 6, 2012
DEPUTATION: 6

The City Clerk's Office has received a petition with respect to the summary wording below. The total number of signatures on the petition are: 61

We in the undersigned petition support and like the landscaping work of Savino Quatela located at 134 Grand Valley Blvd Maple ON and we accept this simple landscaping encroachment.

A copy of the entire petition document containing a total of 4 pages is on file in the office of the City Clerk.



VAUGHAN

Enforcement Services

Aug 14, 2012
Extension
W/ Sept 21, 2012
[Signature]

Registered Mail

July 26th 2012

Quatela, Savino
 Quatela, Antonia
 134 Grand Valley Blvd
 Maple ON L6A 3K6

Sept 4, 2012
Additional time
needed to
Oct 16, 2012 allow
to prep time for
deputation.

NOTICE

Dear Sir/Madam:

RE: Plan 65M3389 Lot 61 being 134 Grand Valley Blvd., City of Vaughan

On July 11th 2012 a site inspection was conducted on the above noted property. The investigation indicated a contravention of City of Vaughan By-law 244-2005, as amended, the particulars of which are as follows:

ENCROACHMENTS PROHIBITED

3 a) Whether deliberately or inadvertently no Person shall erect, place, or continue, or cause to be erected, placed or continue, an Encroachment of any kind on Public Lands, or Easements in favour of the City, except where permitted to do so in accordance with this by-law.

3 b) In addition, where deliberately or inadvertently no Person shall Alter or cause to be Altered, an Encroachment of any kind on Public Lands or Easements in favour of the City, except where permitted to do so in accordance with this by-law

It has been observed that stone and shrubs have been placed on City of Vaughan property

You are therefore directed to comply with the provisions of the City of Vaughan By-law 244-2005 within 30 days of the receipt of this notice, more specifically:

Either:

1. Remove the encroachment being the stone and shrubs and restore the area back to its original condition being grass:

Or:

2. Apply for and obtain an Encroachment Permit

Failure to comply with this notice may result in the commencement of legal proceedings against you.

Further, where a Notice issued under subsection 13(a) is not complied with within thirty (30) days of the date of the Notice, the City may on behalf of the owner, remove, fill in or close up the Unauthorized Encroachment and restore the Public Lands to their former condition at the Expense of the Owner, such expense to be removed in full in the manner provided in Section 14 which states all Expenses incurred by the City in connection with the enforcement of this by-law shall be paid within thirty (30) days of their billing date, and in the event of failure to pay the entire amount within the said thirty (30) days, at the discretion of the City, the outstanding balance of the invoice may thereafter be added to the tax roll as the of the year in which the Expenses were billed.

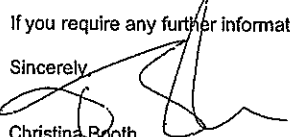
YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY FURTHER NOTICES IN THIS REGARD.

Savino Quatela
OCT-3-12



If you require any further information in this regard, please do not hesitate to call our office.

Sincerely,


Christina Booth
By-law Enforcement Officer
(905) 832-8505 Ext: 8682

christina.booth@vaughan.ca

Copy to Building Department

Sumino Ousdetto
OCT 3-12

Re: 134 Grand Valley Blvd, Speculated Encroachment Violation

4

I, Savino Quatela, inform this department of bylaw that I have chosen to challenge your request and will request a deputation at City Council which will include proof and evidence of many, many "encroachment violations" identical to those of mine in my own neighborhood. If this by law is to be interpreted in fashion that finds my home to be a violation than all those others should be considered a violation as well. The whole Municipal Council has the power and duty to correct this and they should do so.

I have a petition with the names addresses and signatures of 50 multicultural residents that "support and like the landscaping work of Savino Quatela located at 134 Grand Valley Blvd Maple ON and ... accept this simple landscaping encroachment."

Also, please find for your consideration a list of addresses in my immediate neighborhood that appear to have what you refer to as an "encroachment violation". So that it is clear, this is not a complaint that I am launching nor am I suggesting that an investigation of these addresses be made. I ask that the list be kept confidential and used only to verify my claim that there are many, many instances where the landscaping that I have completed has been found to be acceptable. I will dispose of the list after conclusion of the investigation of my homes inquiry.

This list which I had little time to put together includes:

Del Francesco Way, #'s 2, 6, 8, 20, 22, 26, 28, 38, 40, 12, 42, 50, 56, 72, 98, 100, 11, 23, 25, 37, 39, 41, 43, 55, 57, 59, 63, 6, 89 & 91

Manda Drive, #'s 15, 29 & 2

Pietro Street, #'s 12, 20, 25, 11 & 15

Discovery Trail, #'s 79 & 91

Grapvin Drive, #'s 2, 6, 8, 16, 10, 12, 18, 22, 26, 28, 25, 41 & 51

Bullrush Drive, #'s 25, 53 & 65

Timberwolf Crescent, #'s 15, 41, 51, 101, 109, 1, 17, 28, 36 & 35

Cormorant Crescnet, #'s 15, 14, 18, 27, 35, 43, 39, 47 & 59

Gina Drive, #'s 39, 41 & 45


Redfinch Crescent, # 83

Wildberry Crescent, #'s 52 & 6

I believe, along with my neighbors, that the voice of the people and of reason should be heard and should prevail.

Thank you for your consideration.

Most Sincerely,

 04-3-12

Savino Quatela

Re: 134 Grand Valley Blvd, Maple ON, Encroachment

Dear Mayor, Mr. Bevilacqua and Members of Council of City of Vaughan,

My name is Savino Quatela and I live at 134 Grand Valley Blvd. Earlier this year I had some landscaping done. These are the reasons why I had no choice but to make changes to my homes landscaping:

1) Health Issues

- a. Heart – Maintaining all of the lawn needs a lot of work. I am a senior and this work takes a lot of energy under the worst weather conditions. Every year is getting hotter and hotter and being a senior and working under the sun in the summer is very dangerous especially for someone like me with high blood pressure.
- b. Respiratory Complications –As a senior, high pollen can mean more than sneezing, coughing and rubbing eyes. As you get older it can mean breathing with difficulty or respiratory infections as has been the case for me over recent years.
- c. Allergies – I'm allergic to grass and weeds and when I was younger it was a hardship but manageable. This is no longer the case, handling grass and weeds makes me physically sick.

2) The province banning pesticides of weeds that came into effect April 22nd 2009, Earth Day, left little choices for seniors and the maintenance of their lawns. The benefits of eliminating toxins into our systems are many. However, we do have a problem with weeds out of control in the City of Vaughan. I'm confident if you are to ask the Director of Public Works as to the status of weed control they would reply that the resources needed to control this problem are very very short of what is needed.

3) Our drinking water should be for that, drinking, cooking and bathing, not for watering grass, trees, flowers, vegetables or washing the car. There are other ways to water these things like grey water systems. The problem is that using regular tap water or investing in grey water costs money and someone living on old age pension simply can't afford it.

Savino Quatela OCT 3-12

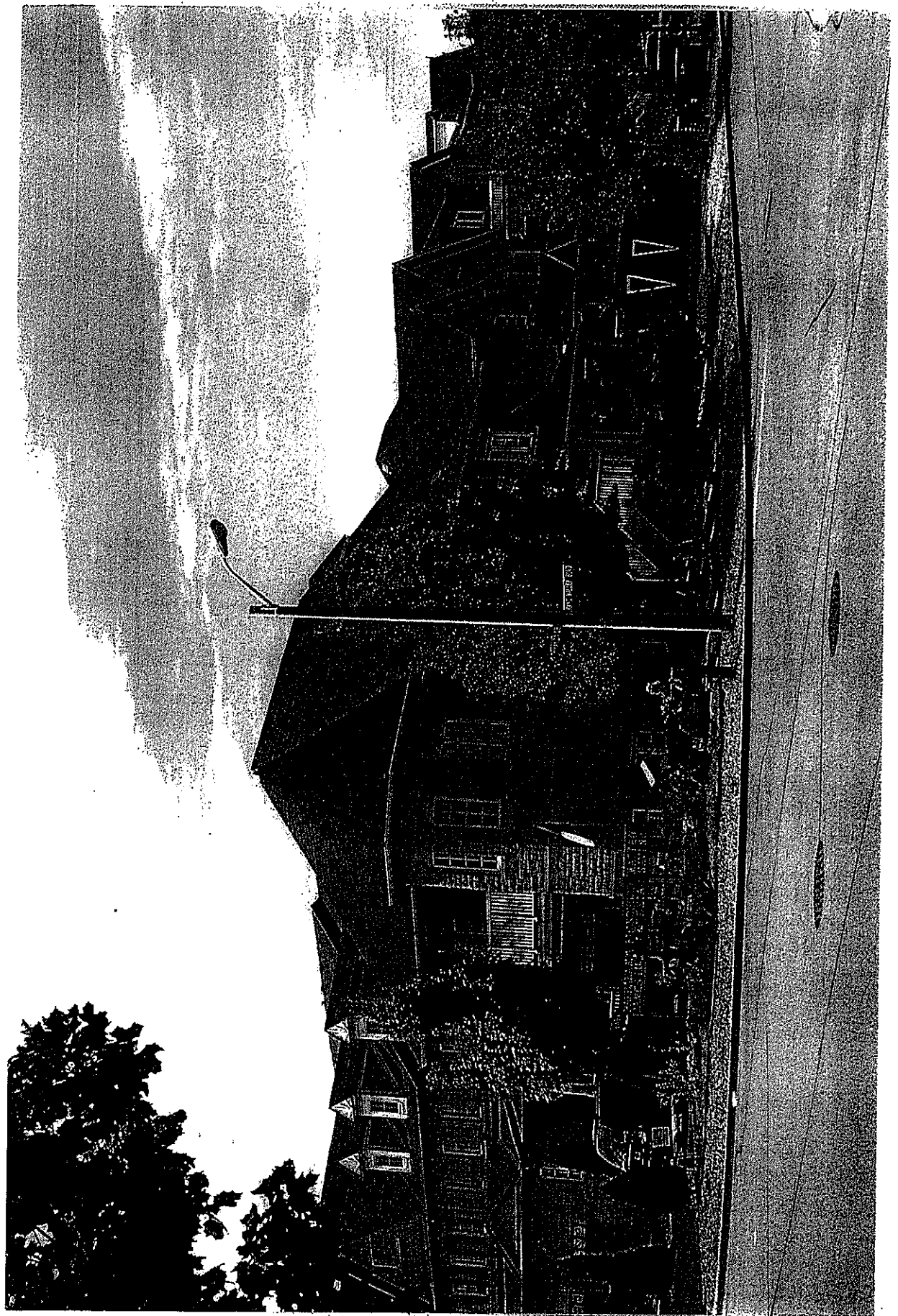
I'm 68 years old and the financial cost of maintaining my land and the city's land was far too much. I have been paying physically and financially for many years to maintain the city's property. I simply cannot afford to continue to do so physically or financially. My wife and I are seniors and maintaining the grass and controlling the weeds presents us with dangerous consequences to our health and fixed income. We had no choice but to go with very popular environmentally sound and low maintenance choices.

I look forward to seeing some action from this council on this by law issue.

Sincerely


Savino Quatela

OCT 3-12



QUATELA
134 Grand Valley B.L.V.
MAPLE, ONT.
L6A 3K6

0 CT-3-12 S. Q.

(7)

Vaughan Citizen Sunday Oct 25 2009 12

Councillors to take encroachment issues to city hall for residents

Concave who spent about \$500 to modify the retaining wall for the driveway and driveway at the city sent the neighbours violation notice in April stating that encroachment on any and on public land is not permitted. As a result residents had to days to restore the area back onto original condition. In this instance grass residents were also given a second option to submit an application for the city encroachment agreement which allows for use of any type of property for landscaping and other purposes. Being the application cost resident Anna Balkaran \$600 and it does not guarantee approval.

This is a unique situation, but I think the city is going to find a solution. People who live on this street beautify their homes and spend a lot of money.

Under the current policy you cannot have any encroachment without an agreement. I agree on this street and I think it's to the municipality. The councillors remained neutral to the group's concerns but made no promises other than agreeing to suspend the property violations until the matter can be heard before council.

For those part residents welcomed the opportunity to finally meet with Vaughan councillors and maintain hopeful decision will be made in their favour. This is a unique situation but I think the city is going to find a solution. People who live on this street beautify their homes and spend a lot of money. They are upset about this encroachment bylaw. In saying that they do not want to spend another dime. Resident Angelo Del Beluz said the date for the public hearing to discuss the matter has yet to be scheduled.

Angelo Del Beluz, 40, lives in the area. He said he has been in the area for 10 years and has been in the area for 10 years. He said he has been in the area for 10 years and has been in the area for 10 years.

When you pass laws, one size fits all does not work all the time. We cannot break the law all we can do is try to bend the law now into what we intended it to be. This was never the intent of the encroachment law for this area because of

the way it was physically designed by Divona and. If the policy can be modified it could allow for moderate landscaping in areas similar to the subdivision around St. Patrick Avenue. Mr. Rosan said.

Savino Quattrone
Oct 3-12

SPECIAL FEATURE



AS APHOTO:SIDERO WITTEVEN
Allan Goldstein and daughter Andrea, 7, suffer from allergies and say they can't abide the dandelion weeds in Beverley Glen Park running rampant. Here near Wilshire Elementary School, daughter Brianna, 10, and family dog Blue don't mind romping through the weeds.

Dandelions not dandy for all

Warm spring, lack of snow melt let weeds thrive while turf grass struggles, parks and forestry director says

BY KIM ZATOUN
@kimz@cbc.com

Allan Goldstein would put his child in the middle of a horde of

And he certainly won't let her play in the dandelion

The Thornhill dad believes sending his allergy-prone daughter into Beverley Glen Park would be just about as dangerous, even the knee-high weeds taking over the neglected neighbourhood green space.

And he's mad as a hornet about it. "I don't care if they have to use old-fashioned push mowers. We pay for these parks to be beautiful. Either we can use them or not. And if we can use them, then I want a

reduction in my taxes. The province's cosmetic pest-control ban came into effect on Earth Day, April 22, 2009, an effort to reduce the potential toxic effects

DANDELIONS Page 17

Savino Amato

OK 3-12

Dandelions weeds or flowers?

on families and pets. Since they're municipally owned and has turned progressively yellow — bright dandelion yellow — and not everyone is pleased by the sight.

Mr. Goldstein took his dog blue to the local park or romp but after a few steps in the grass he turned around and left the golden retriever sniffing the baseball diamond instead.

The problem is getting worse and worse. The dandelions are simply multiplying. This particular park was shaded last year.

Warne Fraser, Vaughan's director of parks and forestry operations, says that grass weeds grew higher this year.

The warm spring and lack of snowmelt from a mild winter caused a shortage of water in the soil, she said. This caused weeds to thrive and the turf to struggle.

As well, several years of a pest-free environment created conditions that allow dandelions to slowly but surely compete with grass, she said.

Joey Kapman also isn't happy with the result and she's noticed other neighbours similarly disgruntled, watching parents drag their children from the weed stalks while wondering out loud why the city is doing something about it.

Mr. Kapman, who can no longer run around the park, she sympathizes.

Mr. Kapman says, "I don't know what you're doing, but what you're doing is not working."

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Richmond Hill staff mow town grass once a week, road allowances every couple of weeks, and twice a week for sports fields, according to parks supervisor Jim Henderson.

In Richmond Hill, at least, he said residents appear to be more tolerant, accepting that the dandelion invasion is a three-week phenomenon that will soon pass.

Valerie Burke, a Thornhill-Markham councillor, also sees attitudes changing.

"I guess it doesn't look all that great but it's not a very long time for the good of our health were going to have to put up with this period. Obviously, we want our community to look nice but we have to look at the overall picture."

The only thing the town could do is more mowing, but does everyone want us to put more resources into that for this small window of time? And then there's the greenhouse effect of mowing.

Thornhill-Vaughan Councillor Alan Sherman said he, too, is hearing fewer complaints. He received one e-mail about the issue this year, the least amount ever, he said.

The pesticide issue hits close to home for Mr. Sherman. Having battled cancer himself, he is especially keen to get one group of chemicals out of our eco-system and environment. It's a very very small price to pay.

Before the province instituted the ban, he said, a local veterinarian reported the number of animals with nose cancer had escalated tremendously and it was attributed to chemicals sprayed on lawns.

While municipalities may not have budgets for safer weed-disposal, such as corn gluten meal, there are more affordable tactics, said Mr. Wood with York Environmental Alliance.

Mowing more often when dandelions are blooming will prevent them from going to seed, she said. Allowing the grass to grow longer in the non-blooming season will shade the weed growth. When public property has bare patches, it should be overseeded right away, and rather than the less-hardy Kentucky bluegrass, she suggests perennial ryegrass or fescue.

And when you find yourself irritated by dandelions, she suggests taking a lesson from children.

"You see them picking them to make chains and bouquets. They don't see them as weeds. They see them as pretty yellow flowers."

GOOD TO KNOW

Ministry of Environment recommends:

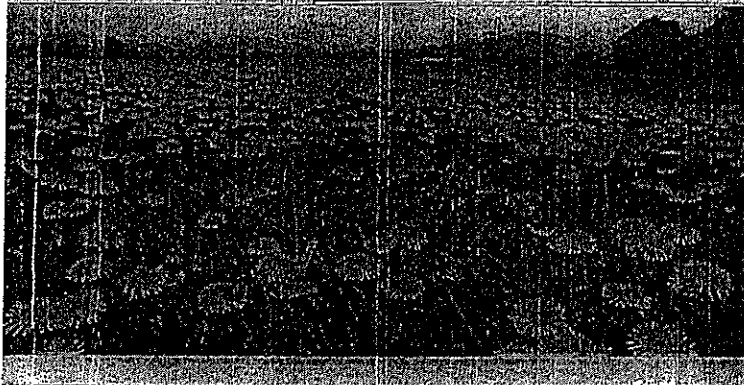
Aerate (the mechanical removal of plugs of dirt from the lawn so that air, water and nutrients can reach the roots) in spring and fall.

Overseed regularly and dress seed in the early spring and late fall. Mowing the seed will control seed pressing with the mowers improves the soil. Add grass seed to bare patches after weeding.

Keep the lawn between 6 and 8 cm (2 1/2 to 3 inches) high to shade weeds.

Leave lawn clippings to feed grass naturally after each mow.

Savino Ansteth
Oct 3-12



Natural weeds could be part of your diet

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
latchfo@vaughan.com

ON your mind is your salad bowl? Even without it, Karen Stephenson admits, her friends and family have her some questionable looks when she began educating them on what can be included in your diet.

We have been conditioned that weeds need to be destroyed, she said. The fact is, we have been removing a food source that offers vitamins and minerals.

With the job market still reeling from the recession, more people seeking financial assistance and more job cuts, needing the local food pantry it doesn't make sense to tell these plants that could make the food system more stable right here at home.

The word "weed" seems to have this negative connotation associated with it, she added. When I find a patch of edible weeds, I cultivate, work around and embrace it.

People need to be open minded because there is an incredible amount of wild edible plants that have been labeled as weeds that have nutritional value.

Ms. Stephenson is a writer, but her passion for wild edible food has led her to enroll in the fall pharmacy education program.

Before you go out picking these plants, you have to be 100 per cent sure in identification, she stressed, adding some of the edibles have nasty cousins that could make you ill.

There are plenty of reasons to learn more about wild edibles. They are free, genetically stronger than other food, most are drought resistant, most are more nutritious than hybridized store produce and you get exercise by picking your own.

The local resident will head her first group walk about during the annual Spinfest event at the Sharon Temple National Historic Site Saturday.

Here are the five common wild edibles that can be found locally.

Alfalfa: An overlooked wonder food containing vitamins such as trace elements of B-7, said to help prevent cancer, vitamins K, C and E, as well as copper and iron. Identified by clusters of 10 to 20 purple flowers and three-part leaves clustered along the stem.

The leaves and young shoots can be eaten raw or cooked, and can be dried to make teas or soups. The seeds can be ground into powder and mixed into baked goods to improve nutrition.

Broadleaf plantain: This perennial plant packs a punch with vitamin C and all of the B's, calcium and magnesium. It is identified by its green, oval to egg-shaped leaves that grow in a rosette pattern and long-pointed green flowers grow from the base containing seeds.

The entire plant is edible, although the leaves are bitter. Blanching before adding them to a salad softens the leaves. They can be frozen for later use in sautés, soups or stews.

Chickweed: Is a small plant that boasts vitamin A, B and C and calcium, magnesium, iron and selenium. It is a common plant with small, white, star-shaped flowers and oval leaves with pointed tips.

The leaves are best added to a salad or on a sandwich. When adding the plant to a cooked dish, stems and flowers can also be used.

Lambs quarters: The annual wild edible that tastes earthy, similar to chard, is found in shady areas with poor soil. One handful of the leaves contain more than the required vitamin A daily intake. It can be identified by its dusty look when in a large patch and light green diamond leaves that are pale on the underside. It pro-

San'sis Quist
Oct. 3-12

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUN

Item 42, Report No. 51, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted Council of the City of Vaughan on June 23, 2003.

c 8
Communication
CW: Nov 6/12
Item: Dep 6) #21

42

**ENCROACHMENT POLICY
CITY ROAD ALLOWANCE**

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of Councillor Jackson, dated June 16, 2003:

Recommendation

Councillor Linda D. Jackson recommends:

THAT staff be directed to report back to a Committee of the Whole meeting in the Fall of 2003 with a review and recommendations for an Encroachment Policy governing the permitted use of city road allowances.

Purpose

To regulate the permitted uses of city road allowances.

Background - Analysis and Options

There is currently no policy regulating/specifying what alterations and/or construction is permitted/prohibited on city road allowances. There are many examples throughout the City of Vaughan of such alterations as: landscaping (including plantings and paving), walkways, etc.

Conclusion

An Encroachment Policy would clearly define what the City can/cannot enforce with respect to permitted use of city road allowances.

Attachments

None

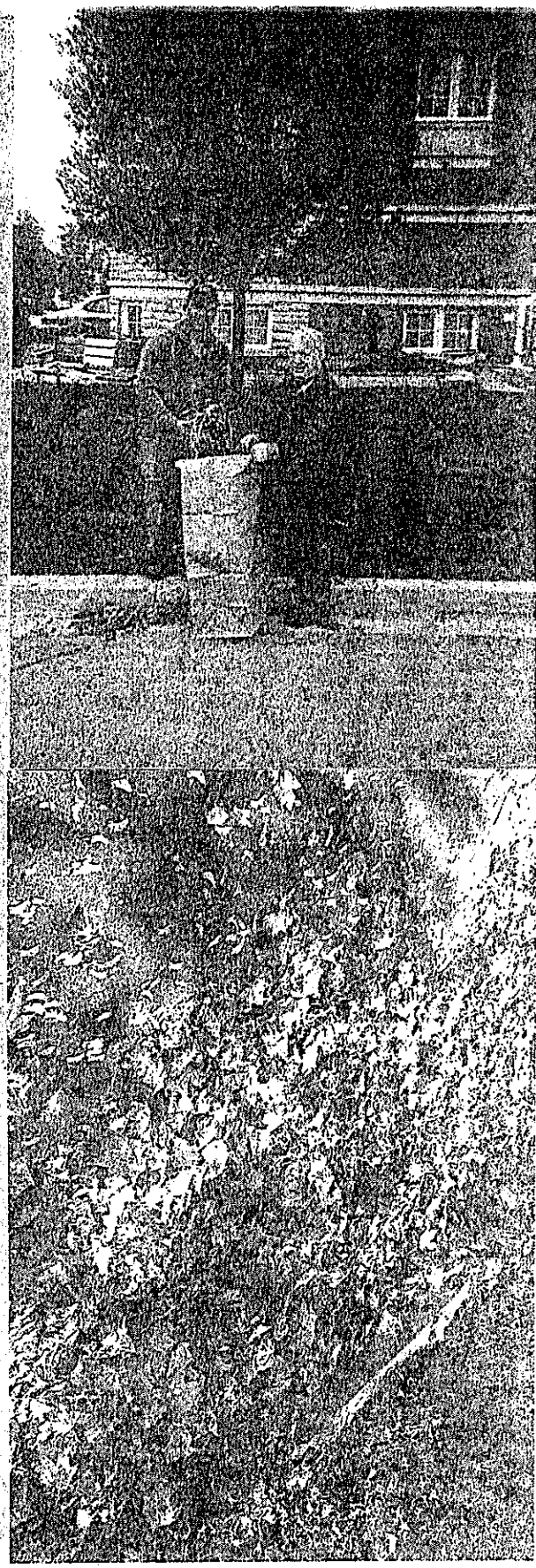
Report prepared by:

Mirella Compagno, Council Administrative Assistant

Mr. Savino & Antonietta
QUATELA
134 Grand Valley B.L.V
MAPLE, ONT.
L6A 3K6

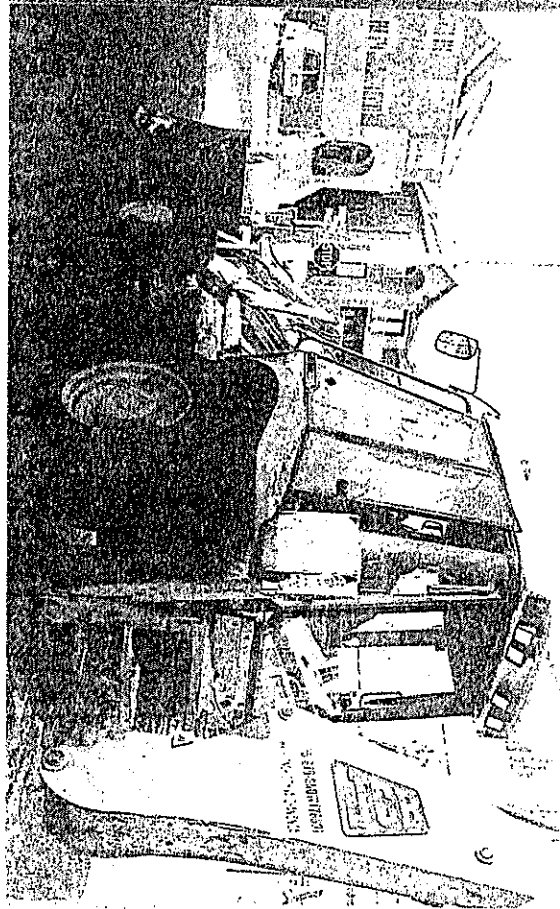
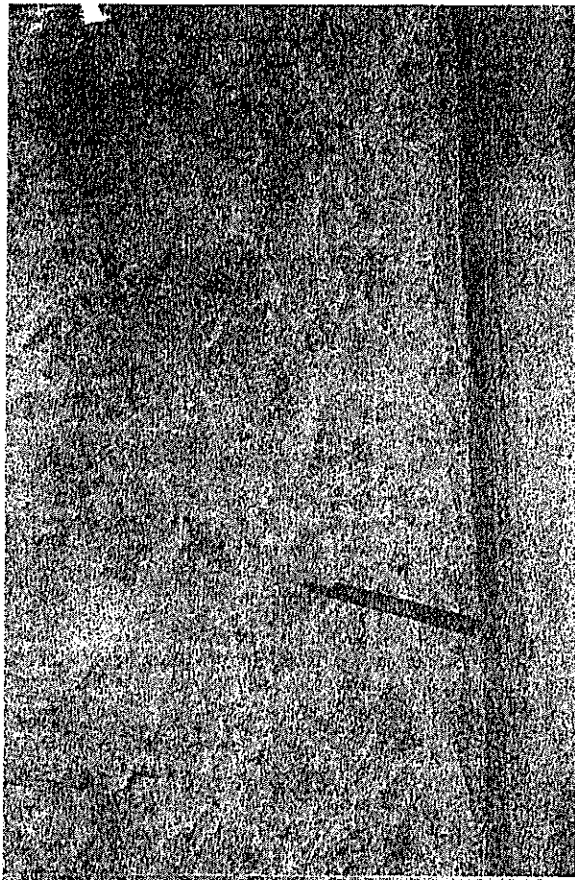
NOV-6-2012

S.Q.



Mr. Savino e Antonietta
 QUATELA
 134 Grand Valley B.L.V
 MAPLE, ONT.
 L6A 3K6

NOV-6-2012 S.Q.



Mr. Savino e Antonietta
 QUATELA
 134 Grand Valley E.L.V
 MAPLE, ONT.
 L6A 3K6

NOV-6-2012 S.Q.

Councillors to take encroachment issues to city hall for residents

From page 1.
Conte, who spent about \$500 to modify the retaining brick wall bordering her lawn and flower bed.

The city sent the neighbours violation notices in April, stating that encroachments of any kind on public lands are not permitted. As a result, residents had 30 days to restore the area back to its original condition. In this instance, grass. Residents were also given a second option of submitting an application for the city's encroachment agreement, which allows for use of city-owned property for landscaping and other purposes, filing the application cost resident Anna Balkaran \$200 and it does not guarantee approval.

If I have to make any adjustments to my property it will cost me a lot because I have natural concrete. So I will have to hire a contractor to break that. I cannot

This is a unique situation, but I think the city is going to find a solution. People who live on this street... beautify their homes, and spend a lot of money.

Angelo Del-Bel-Belluz
Homeowner

do it myself. Mr. Balkaran said taking his chances with the encroachment agreement was the more cost-effective approach. Furthermore, applicants must obtain and maintain an insurance policy in the minimum amount of \$2 million and name the city as an additional insured party.

Over the spring and summer months, the handful of St. Francis Avenue residents opted for amend-

ing their landscaping to acceptable city standards, approximately five feet away from the sidewalk. However, the changes did not fall within the city's orders to comply letter, leaving residents in the same predicament.

Under the current policy you cannot have any encroachment without an encroachment agreement. It does not matter what changes you made, if you do not have an agreement in place, the city can tell you to put the grass back, said Regional Councillor Gino Rosati, who visited the neighbours with East Woodbridge Councillor Bernie DiVona on Wednesday.

The councillors reiterated that while the bylaws are rigid and allow for no flexibility, the Vellore area is facing issues under a municipal code that does not adequately reflect the more modern Wood-

bridge subdivision. What happened here is unusual and in this case it does not make sense to us," Mr. DiVona said.

In theory, what is being suggested to you is there is greater risk to the general public because of that encroachment from my perspective, there is no risk to anyone on this street and there is no risk to the municipality," he added.

The councillors remained receptive to the group's concerns, but made no promises other than agreeing to suspend the property violations until the matter can be heard before council.

"When you pass laws, one size fits all does not work all the time. We cannot break the law all the time. We do try to bend the law now into what we intended it to be. This was never the intent of the encroachment law for this area because of

the way it was physically designed," Mr. DiVona said.

If the policy can be modified it could allow for moderate landscaping in areas similar to the subdivision around St. Francis Avenue, Mr. Rosati said.

For the most part, residents welcomed the opportunity to finally meet with Vaughan councillors and remain hopeful a decision will be made in their favour.

"This is a unique situation, but I think the city is going to find a solution. People who live on this street, they beautify their homes, and spend a lot of money. They are upset about this encroachment bylaw. In saying that they do not want to spend another dime," resident Angelo Del-Bel-Belluz said.

The date for the public hearing to discuss the matter has yet to be scheduled.

SPECIAL FEATURE



STAFF PHOTO/SIGERD WITTEVEEN

Allan Goldstein and daughter Andrea, 7, suffer from allergies and say they can't abide the dandelion weeds in Beverley Glen Park running rampant there near Wilshire Elementary School. Daughter Brianna, 10, and family dog Blue don't mind romping through the weeds.

Dandelions not dandy for all

Warm spring, lack of snowmelt let weeds thrive while turf grass struggles, parks and forestry director says

BY KIM ZARZOUR
kzarzour@yrnig.com

Allan Goldstein wouldn't put his child in the middle of a hornet's nest.

And he certainly won't let her play in the local park.

The Thornhill dad believes sending his allergy-prone daughter into Beverly Glen Park would be just about as dangerous, given the knee-high weeds taking over the neglected neighbourhood green space.

And he's mad as a hornet about it.

"I don't care if they have to use old-fashioned push mowers. We pay for these parks to be built. Either we can use them or not. And if we can't use them, then I want a

reduction in my taxes."

The province's cosmetic pesticides ban came into effect on Earth Day, April 22, 2009, an effort to reduce the potential toxic effects

See DANDELIONS, page 17.

Dandelions weeds or flowers?

From page 1

on families and pets. Since then, municipally owned land has turned progressively yellow — bright dandelion yellow — and not everyone is pleased by the sight.

Mr. Goldstein took his dog Blue to the local park for a romp, but after a few steps in, he says he turned around and let the golden retriever sniff around the baseball diamond, instead.

The problem is getting worse and worse. The dandelions are simply multiplying. This particular park was half as bad last year.

Marjie Fraser, Vaughan's director of parks and forestry operations, agrees turf grass weeds grew higher this year.

The warm spring and lack of snowmelt from a mild winter caused a shortage of water in the soil, she said. This caused weeds to thrive and the turf grass to struggle.

As well, several years of a pesticide-free environment created conditions that allow dandelions to successfully compete with grass, she said.

Jody Klapman also isn't happy with the result, and she's noticed other neighbours similarly disgruntled, watching parents drag their children from the weed stalks while wondering out loud why the city isn't doing something about it.

A runner who can no longer cut through the park, she sympathizes.

"You don't know what's underneath. You don't know what you're stepping in."

Thornhill resident Harold Milstein is also not impressed.

"We should make the dandelion the official flower of Vaughan," he said.

Mr. Goldstein wonders why the city can enter properties to deal with noxious weeds, yet dandelions in public parks are exempt.

"This is all a perfect example of politicians implementing something without first thinking it through... The cost to repair these parks is now going to be massive as the sod is going to have to be completely replaced."

Thornhiller Gila Martow is miffed that golf courses and farms, which cover much of the land use in Ontario, are exempt from the cosmetic ban, leaving parks to resemble "weed farms with a few blades of grass."

If the city can't use weed inhibitor, re-seed constantly or re-sod every few years, she said, then it should consider AstroTurf.

The city has considered pesticide-free solutions, Ms Fraser said, but they are costly and do not have a long-term impact on future weed growth.

Ms Klapman has another suggestion: cut the grass more often.

"We wouldn't notice the weeds as much if they just mowed it down more. I think they should just hop on those mowers and get mowing."

Vaughan cuts grass on municipal property on a two-week rotation, Ms Fraser said, making it impossible to catch the dandelion flowers before they turn to seed.

Richmond Hill staff mow town grass once a week, road allowances every couple of weeks, and twice a week for sports fields, according to parks supervisor Jim Henderson.

In Richmond Hill, at least, he said, residents appear to be more tolerant, accepting that the dandelion invasion is a three-week phenomenon that will soon pass.

Valerie Burke, a Thornhill-Markham councillor, also sees attitudes changing.

"I agree it doesn't look all that great but it's not a very long time. For the good of our health we're going to have to put up with this period... Obviously we want our community to look nice, but we have to look at the overall picture."

The only thing the town could do is more mowing, but does everyone want us to put more resources into that for this small window of time? And then there's the greenhouse gas effect of mowing."

Thornhill-Vaughan Councillor Alan Shefman said he, too, is hearing fewer complaints. He received one e-mail about the issue this year, the least amount ever, he said.

The pesticide issue hits close to home for Mr. Shefman. Having battled cancer himself, he is especially keen "to get one group of chemicals out of our eco-system and environment. It's a very very small price to pay."

Before the province instituted the ban, he said a local veterinarian reported the number of animals with nose cancer had escalated tremendously and it was attributed to chemicals sprayed on lawns.

While municipalities may not have budgets for safer weed discouragers, such as corn gluten meal, there are more affordable tactics, said Fiona Wood with York Environmental Alliance.

Mowing more often when dandelions are blooming will prevent them from going to seed, she said. Allowing the grass to grow longer in the non-blooming season will shade the weed growth. When public property has bare patches, it should be overseeded right away, and rather than the less-hardy Kentucky bluegrass, she suggests perennial rye or fescue.

And when you find yourself irritated by dandelions, she suggests taking a lesson from children.

"You see them picking them to make chains and bouquets. They don't see them as weeds. They see them as pretty yellow flowers."

GOOD TO KNOW

Ministry of Environment recommends:

Aerate (the mechanical removal of plugs of dirt from the lawn so that air, water and nutrients can reach the roots) in spring and fall.

Overseed by regularly adding grass seed in the early spring and late fall. Mixing the seed with compost or top-dressing with triple mix improves the soil. Add grass seed to bare patches after weeding.

Keeping the lawn between 6 and 8 cm (2 1/2 to 3 inches) high to shade weeds.

Leaving lawn clippings to feed grass naturally after each mow.



Natural weeds could be part of your diet

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
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Your back yard is your salad bowl.

Newmarket's Karen Stephenson admits her friends and family gave her some questionable looks when she began educating them on what can be included in your diet.

"We have been conditioned that weeds need to be destroyed," she said. "The fact is, we have been removing a food source that offers vitamins and minerals."

With the job market still reeling from the recession, more people seeking financial assistance and more clients needing the local food pantry, it doesn't make sense to kill these plants that could make the food system more stable right here at home.

"The word 'weed' seems to have this negative connotation associated with it," she added. "When I find a patch of edible weeds, I cultivate, work around and embrace it."

People need to be open minded because there is an incredible amount of wild edible plants that have been labeled as weeds that have nutritional value.

Ms Stephenson is a writer, but her passion for wild edible food has led her to enrol in a herbal pharmacy education program.

"Before you go out picking these plants, you have to be 100 per cent sure in identification," she stressed, adding some of the edibles have nasty cousins that could make you ill.

There are plenty of reasons to learn more about wild edibles — they are free, genetically stronger than other food, most are drought resistant, most are more nutritious than hybridized store produce and you get exercise by picking your own.

The local resident will head her first group walk about during the annual Spiritfest event at the Sharon Temple National Historic Site Saturday.

Here are the five common wild edibles that can be found locally:

Alfalfa: An overlooked wonder food containing vitamins such as trace elements of B17 said to help prevent cancer, vitamins K, C and E as well as copper and iron. Identified by clusters of 10 to 20 purple flowers and three part leaves scattered along the stem.

The leaves and young shoots can be eaten raw or cooked and can be dried to make teas or soups. The seeds can be ground into powder and mixed into baked goods to improve nutrition.

Broadleaf plantain: This perennial plant packs a punch with vitamin C and all of the Bs, calcium and magnesium. It is identified by its green, oval to egg-shaped leaves that grow in a rosette nature and long-pointed green flowers grow from the base containing seeds.

The entire plant is edible, although the leaves are bitter. Blanching before adding them to a salad softens the leaves. They can be frozen for later use in sautés, soups or stews.

Chickweed: Is a small plant that boasts vitamin A, B and C and calcium, magnesium, iron and selenium. It is a common plant with small, white, star-shaped flowers and oval leaves with pointed tips.

The leaves are best added to a salad or on sandwiches. When adding the plant to a cooked dish, stems and flowers can also be used.

Lambs quarters: The annual wild edible that tastes earthy, similar to chard, is found in sunny areas with poor soil. One handful of the leaves contain more than the required vitamin A daily intake. It can be identified by its dusty look when in a large patch and light green diamond leaves that are pale on the underside. It produces tiny green flowers in clusters.