

LGLA Scenario

Mayor (Lee) Skilled Communicator

Rick Brown, who has done three different developments in the District, applies to rezone one large single-family lot into two smaller lots in a well-established neighbourhood. This request is consistent with the District's Official Community Plan. Council has also directed staff to improve processing time on simple applications.

With this in mind, Amanda, a young and new area planner, quickly processes the application so that she can get the rezoning report on the next Council agenda. As part of the off-site services, she negotiates with Mr. Brown, the developer, that the District will build new sidewalks along the property's frontage which is consistent with Council's Healthy Build Community and pedestrian safety policies in the OCP.

Mr. Brown's site plans did not show that there are several large mature trees where the sidewalk is planned. Right after the Rezoning Bylaw receives three readings of Council, the neighbours call Amanda and advise her that they do not want the trees removed and that they will stand in the way of any bulldozer. Amanda is in a difficult situation because, although the OCP policies support the rezoning and the construction of sidewalks, she also recognizes that this would lead to the removal of mature trees. Further, the application is well along in the process and the retention of the trees was not negotiated in the off-site services.

Rick Brown does not want to meander the sidewalk around the trees because it will cause time delays and cost more because underground services will need to be relocated. He is a seasoned developer and knows that the District is between a rock and a hard place on this one. One of his staff already got in a shouting match with a neighbour over the trees. The neighbour is getting ready to go to the media over the mismanagement of the development application.

Skilled Communicator's preparation (Mayor Lee):

Of course, you've heard from Rick Brown and the neighbours. You'd like to talk to the CAO about this.

1. Name the possible issues (key messages):
 - Mutually satisfactory agreement – all parties: Developer/Neighbours/District
 - Discovering possible options: what can the District contribute – (Public Works labour) and what can the developer contribute?
 - Future goodwill (happy neighbours; future developer projects – more taxes)
 - Protect reputation of both the District and the developer
 - Public interest to retain mature trees whenever possible

Actual conversation:

2. Start with a positive statement about the situation: "I know you always handle tricky planning applications really well."
3. Purpose statement: "I wanted to talk to you today about Rick Brown's application and hear your game plan."
4. Pull the CAO into the conversation.

ISSUE: "What's going on here?"

"What are the issues from your point of view?"

"What is your understanding of ...?"

"What's the main issue as you see it?"

SOLUTION:

"What would be a possible solution that would work for both of us?"

"What else could we do to improve the situation?"

ACTION PLAN:

"What kind of a plan would we need to make this happen?"

"What else would we need to do?"