

Council Corner

Council explains steps taken to enforce Tofield bylaws for unsightly premises



Unsightly premises are a concern of many communities throughout Alberta, both large and small. These concerns unfortunately include the community of Tofield. Council and Administration have heard the concerns of the citizens and wanted to provide a background on the process which is involved in the unsightly premises process.

Town of Tofield By-Law Number 1308, being the "Community Standards" Bylaw contains measures of control for; Property, Public Lands, Refuse, Structures and Unsightly Premises. Should an individual be in contravention of the By-Law they are issued a Notice to Maintain Letter referencing the By-Law and affixing a date in which the identified issue is to be remedied. The typical length of time to address these concerns is one week. Should this date come to pass without the issue being dealt with, the Town will then send a Notice of Entry Letter. The

letter states the contravention to be remedied within 48 hours. If this is not adhered to, the Town retains the services of a local contractor to perform the required work. The billing will then be added to the property owner's tax role to ensure payment.

There have been concerns raised over the enforcement with the backyards of dwellings. It is understood that residents and homeowners have concerns over the states of backyards, however, at this time; it is difficult for the Town to enforce these measures. Gaining access to the backyards is often troublesome and many homes contain animals which pose a risk to the Peace Officer or to contractors. In a similar fashion,

it is difficult to enforce homes which may be missing siding, have piecemeal fences or a large collection of personal items.

To enforce these measures beyond issuing a letter to the registered owner and requesting a timeline in which to remedy the situation, would likely involve the necessity of a court appearance. This action would only be followed if we cannot successfully request our contractor to perform the fixes. The enforcement can be done if the issues pose an imminent threat to the safety of residents, in accordance with section 546 of the Municipal Government Act. Further to this, a court appearance does not guarantee success for the Town and becomes

quite costly.

The harmony of the Town as well as its aesthetic appeal is of our utmost concern, which is why a By-Law such as this is in place. The process can be somewhat time consuming and may not move as quickly as all would like. It is important to understand the process and the time frames which both are enforced and required.

In closing, the concerns are being heard, and the process is in place in which to enforce contravention. However, please note; each of us is responsible for maintaining our properties, for the betterment of Tofield.

*Respectfully,
Mayor and Council*

Honour the past...

Build the Future

The Town of
Tofield