



Heritage Landscapes and Aesthetics in the Commons

April means Earth Day. What a wonderful opportunity to appreciate and celebrate the heritage landscapes right here in Brentwood.

Ambling either west or east along what might have been 55th Avenue NW affords some of most amazing local views. From the west, ascending alongside Whispering Woods, Nose Hill Park's Many Owls Valley becomes manifest. Cresting this same rise from the east near Brisebois Drive, along the greenbelt behind both Bannerman Drive and Breton Close, one is rewarded with a direct line of sight to the Rockies.

Alarmingly, in December 2010, a huge utility shed was plunked in the Utility Right of Way (ROW) at the end of the parking lot by Dr. Coffin School. Yes, the school is short of storage, and the new snowblower was too big for the existing parking lot shed. But, what of the treasured views? What about compromised access and safety on the ROW for emergency and utility vehicles?

Community concerns were conveyed to the school, and the Principal quickly struck a Shed Committee, inviting additional stakeholders to join discussions about safety, security, accessibility, and visibility. In a query to our City Councillor's office about ROW rules, we were helpfully

directed to Development and Building Approvals Department, and then to the Inspectors Office, whom we invited into our collaborative conversations.

Unfortunately, it transpired that the school needed to remove the shed or apply for a permit. It seems our invitation to converse had devolved into a complaint, which the system could address only through a costly application process.

We reconvened, reaching consensus on a new location. The offending shed was removed, and replaced by two sheds on the east side of the school. Although reducing recreational area, the sheds are easily accessible, visible for neighbourhood watch, dark red to blend into the brick building, and do not impair anyone's line of sight to our glorious horizons.

Despite systemic glitches in dialoguing with Inspectors, these inclusive conversations are an inspirational model for respecting all concerns when addressing our valued community heritage.

Environmentally yours and Happy Earth Day,

Polly Lee Knowlton Cockett

Dr. Sonja Hagemann

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