

March 18, 2021

Copies sent via e-mail and mailed letter

To: Kim Wingrove, Grey County CAO – cao@grey.ca
CC: Heather Morrison, Grey County Clerk
Hibba Hussain, Grey County Planner

Re: Tree Planting on the Grey County headquarters site in Owen Sound

You may know about NeighbourWoods North (NWN) and the recent tree planting on the Grey Bruce hospital grounds. Of course, we love the beauty of trees and their multiple benefits – as are well documented. <https://nph.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ppp3.39>

A small subset of NWN has been working with the municipality in an effort to gain recognition for Owen Sound as a Tree City of the World. At some point we talked about how the city's tagline 'scenic city' is belied by the 'un-scenic' entrances to Owen Sound from Highways 6, 26 and 21. Some of this is standard city mall sprawl, but the entrance from Highway 6 is different.

The Grey County headquarters building, sited on a steep hill, is one of the first impressions a visitor arriving from the south receives. Some tree and shrub planting might frame the view of this grand building (and its signage) and soften the image – further enhancing the appearance.

Currently, most of the front facing the road is grass lawn. This would be tricky to mow on such a steep slope and, of course, lawn mowing burns fossil fuels – an activity which has to be reduced. If some native trees (and understory shrubs) were planted there, the County would be setting a symbolic example in the climate change effort.

In terms of the practicalities, we find that if the workers in a building help with planting (as some hospital workers have done), they tend to take on a kind of 'pride of ownership'. Volunteers from NeighbourWoods North would be happy to help with the planting as well. The folks at the Grey Sauble Conservation arboretum might also be willing to donate (or discount) some trees for this project.

If you are interested in the idea, you may want to consult a landscape architect for the site – but our advice would be to keep the project as simple (and uncomplicated) as possible, at least at the outset. TD Bank has been a generous donor in Owen Sound through their Friends of the Environment Foundation. If the project envisioned was beyond the Grey County means, NWN could perhaps help with the application process for such a grant.

Sincere thanks for considering this proposal. We would welcome further discussion.

Lloyd Lewis, Gord Edwards and Shawna Macivor



Lloyd Lewis: 