

Reforming Grass and Weeds Bylaw in Prince Edward County (2023)

Prince Edward County (PEC) began the process of reforming their Grass and Weeds Bylaw to support lawn naturalization. This process required engaging the community to hear what the public thought of the proposed draft bylaw. In March 2023, a month-long lawn naturalization consultation survey was conducted which heard from 157 residents about their concerns, suggestions and perspective on lawn naturalization in practice and in policy. On April 13th 2023 a Committee of the Whole meeting was held to hear deputations, public comment and further discuss the adoption of the draft grass and weeds by-law during the April 25th Council Meeting.

Deputations were opened by Nina-Marie Lister, Director and founder of Ecological Design. Nina-Marie commended the action of PEC to reform their Grass and Weeds policy to support naturalization.

“Hope lies in the garden, at home in our yards: PEC’s draft bylaw offers our community both hope and opportunity to do something tangible, something positive and healing that builds connections and supports biodiversity and climate resilience.” - Nina-Marie Lister

In this deputation, Nina-Marie recommended ways in which the draft bylaw could further support biodiversity and the right to express environmental values. These recommendations included that the height restriction of 20 cm be eliminated to support biodiversity and advising that the language of “allowing” be adjusted to reflect the right that property owners already have to naturalize their yards.

Nina-Marie’s complete deputation can be accessed [here](#).

Additional comments from resident and landscape architect Victoria Taylor advised expanding naturalizing efforts to public lands, and removing the subjective, non-scientific term weeds from the draft bylaw. Lise Bois, from the PEC Garden Club expressed a need for this bylaw reform to be accompanied by public education to support residents interested in the naturalization process.

The Committee of the Whole considered public feedback, comments and deputations and accepted the language change to remove the word allow from the draft bylaw. The Committee also agreed to consider working with the Environmental Advisory Committee for future educational opportunities on yard naturalization. The counselors also asked municipal staff to consider the operational budgeting implications of extending the draft bylaw to include public lands and to bring the findings to the 2024 budget deliberations. On April 25th the PEC Municipal Council passed the draft Grass and Weeds Bylaw with reformed language.

You can access this new PEC Grass and Weeds Bylaw [here](#).