ELM Newsletter Report: End of October Final Version

Buckle up, It is Winter

Another summer has come and gone, and we are just wrapping up the sixth season of the Enhanced Landscape Management (ELM) program. Despite the heat, the drought, and one hailstorm we had lovely bountiful baskets of flowers for the summer and bright flower beds. At the time of writing the wind was roaring through Edgemont as our winter display contractor was putting up displays. Those were delayed a bit as the rain storm out west meant that some supplies from Vancouver were held up as roads were rebuilt.

During this season more work was done on the existing flower beds, and some of the smaller beds near signs and bus stops. ELM took over the maintenance of the Top of The Hill sign and plan on doing some changes there, adding some pots and flowers and cleaning up the bed and the bench.

The ELM team and our consultant, Shari, got together with Wayne and Geraldine of Able Landscaping and selected the flowers for the planters and beds next year. With the greenhouse business recovering from covid manpower shortages we are hoping for better quality and a wider range of flowers for next summer. We are going to be adding perennials to some of the beds to add height and interest and reduce annual plant purchasing costs.

On the management side we are creating subcommittees within the ELM project team to better manage the program and spread out the work. There is a fair amount of work to manage this large program. Over the last six years the program has delivered over 3.7 million dollars on landscaping and landscape maintenance in our community.

The program and associated spending are watched and controlled by multiple levels of scrutiny. Our consultant gets quotes for the work and ensures it has been done properly before approving the expense. The ELM chair then checks and countersigns and our treasurer and bookkeeper record the transactions and disburse the checks after money is transferred from the city. The city itself reviews all of our expenses and approves them and runs their own set of books for the project.

ELM has an annual budget of about $627,000, of which $447,000 comes directly from the lot levy and the remainder from the standard city grant for a community of our size. The lot levy is spent entirely within our community and is used for all the flowers and flower beds, the winter displays and the extra mowing and trimming. Without ELM there would be no displays, few beds, and mowing would be severely cut back. We renewed our mandate for another five years last season and will have another public reaffirmation vote in 2026.

Upon review the ELM committee recommended that the lot levy be kept the same for the coming year and the board approved of the decision. Now that we have purchased all the pots we will ever need and made most of the additional beds we wanted in the community we can focus on repairing some older beds, cleaning up some parks, bringing in more perennials, and improving the health of our turf with aeration, fertilization, and targeted weed control.

We are not allowed to plant or work with trees as that is the purview of the Urban Forest Division but can trim shrubs. We continue to work with Urban Forest to add trees and keep the ones we have healthy, not an easy task in windswept Edgemont. If you need to contact us about a concern please email to askelm@edgemont.ab.ca/

Rick Wierzbicki