



~~ITEM 01  
DIRECTOR'S REPORT NO. 15  
COMMISSION MEETING 92/08/05~~

RE: CUTTING PRACTICE ON MEADOW AND GRASS AREAS IN UNDEVELOPED PARKLAND

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to Municipal Council for information purposes.

ITEM	4
MANAGER'S REPORT NO.	52
COUNCIL MEETING	92/08/10

REPORT

BACKGROUND:

At the 1992 June 29 meeting, Municipal Council inquired as to our grass cutting practice on undeveloped parkland areas including Deer Lake Park and the Glider Association landing strip.

REPORT:

Since the early 1980's approximately 150 acres of manicured turf areas have been reverted to meadow. These areas receive minimal maintenance. The general practice has been to cut this grass and other vegetation twice a year, once in late June and once in the early fall. Because of the heavy growth a flail type hammer knife or large rotary mower is used to cut and mulch the grass. Cutting twice a year prevents the woody vegetation, salmonberry, blackberry and Red Alder trees from becoming established, but also reduces the herbaceous wild flowers. The twice a year cutting also allows staff to remove unwanted garbage before it becomes unsightly. The primary motivation for implementing this reduced mowing schedule was to reduce annual maintenance costs.

A local resident criticized the mowing of the meadow area below the Art Gallery in Deer Lake Park when the buttercups and other wildflowers were in full bloom. Because this area has well established turf with few openings where woody vegetation can establish, staff will experiment with eliminating the June mowing and monitor the effect of only cutting this area once a year in the early fall.

The meadow and marsh area in Deer Lake Park between Royal Oak Road and the lake has been eliminated from our mowing program with the exception of a strip that is used by the model glider association. The grass cutting in this area is done by members of the association. Last year they requested and were given permission to expand the landing area so they can accommodate both take-off and landing activity at the same time. The model glider activity requires a large open area, however there is no noise and this small scale program seems to have little negative impact on the wildlife in the area. The landing strip is surrounded by natural vegetation that provides ideal habitat for birds and other wildlife. At this time there is no alternative location for the model gliding program.

Staff and the Environment Waste Management Committee are reviewing the pros and cons of expanding the low maintenance meadow program to include some boulevards, ravine edges, road verges and other corridors that could provide natural habitat linking the larger natural park areas.