

# Environmental Advisory Committee 2012 Annual Report to St. Albert City Council

## 1. RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Advisory Committee's 2012 Annual Report be accepted as information and that the Environmental Advisory Committee continue to operate through 2013.

## 2. OVERVIEW

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) was established through Bylaw 29/2005 to advise Council on issues related to the environment. The purpose of the Committee is to assist City Administration and advise Council with respect to environmental policies, strategies and initiatives, especially where a public perspective is desirable. The Committee membership was adjusted through an amendment to Bylaw 29/2005 and currently includes six citizens at large and one member of council as voting members, and one representative each from Alberta Environment, Alberta Health Services and a post secondary institution as non-voting participants.

Direction and assistance to the EAC were obtained through involvement with the City's Office of the Environment (OE).

On March 19, Council provided the EAC with three priorities for 2012:

- i. Sturgeon River Report – Final Report and Recommendations
- ii. Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan
- iii. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Action Plan

## 3. MEMBERSHIP

### Citizen Members - January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012

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|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| • Edith Asselin    | Citizen-at-large | Last of two year term  |
| • Ken Crutchfield  | Citizen-at-large | First of two year term |
| • Brent Korobanik* | Citizen-at-large | Last of two year term  |
| • Tom Mumby        | Citizen-at-large | Last of two year term  |
| • Neill Thompson** | Citizen-at-large | First of two year term |
| • Tyrel Watchell   | Citizen-at-large | First of two year term |

\* served as Chair

\*\* served as Vice-Chair

### Non-Voting Participants - January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| • Rasel Hossain      | Alberta Environment     |
| • Ludmilla Rodriguez | Alberta Health Services |
| • Wendy Vanderwel    | Post-Secondary          |

## Council Representation

Malcolm Parker was the Council representative with Wes Brodhead as the alternate.

## City Administration Representation

Committee assistance was obtained from Leah Jackson, Meghan Myers, and Kalen Pilkington of the Office of the Environment. Rachel Vincent, Linda Kuprys and Betty Gaskarth of Legislative Services recorded the minutes of the meetings and provided advice on legislative matters and protocol.

## **4. ACTIVITIES DURING 2012**

The Environmental Advisory Committee met eight times during 2012, meeting monthly except in July, August, September, and December. Due to problems establishing quorum, the September meeting was canceled. The EAC Chair met with Council at the City's annual board meetings on October 12, 2011. No other meetings of the full committee with Council or the Senior Leadership Team were deemed necessary. The Chair (B. Korobanik) met with the Mayor (Mayor N. Crouse), Council's EAC representative (Councillor M. Parker) and City Administration (G. Boston, General Manager of Planning and Engineering and L. Jackson, Environmental Manager), to establish Council's priorities for the EAC in 2012.

### Progress Made on Council's Priorities for the EAC in 2012

#### i) Sturgeon River Report – State of the Watershed Study

Goal #7 of the Environmental Master Plan (EMP) is to protect and maintain the Sturgeon River Watershed. The State of the Sturgeon Watershed Report was completed in April 2012 by Aquality Environmental Consulting. The report was reviewed by an EAC subcommittee and advice was provided for Council's approval. The health and vitality of the Sturgeon River Watershed has been a priority of Council and this Plan serves as an inter-municipal conversation starter.

The purpose of the report was to summarize the current knowledge of the Sturgeon River Watershed and to comment on its environmental integrity. The report helps to depict the more complete picture of the health of the Sturgeon River Watershed. A short summary document was developed to serve as a 'coffee table' version of the longer, technical document.

Fifteen indicators of ecological health were graded as good, fair, poor, or insufficient data and used to assess the overall condition of the watershed, which received a rating of fair. The report listed several recommendations, with the most immediate being the establishment of an inter-municipal Sturgeon River Watershed Group who will take action in collaboration with the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance. Other recommendations include:

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Establish a municipal Sturgeon River Watershed Group (who will participate fully with the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance)

Promote watershed education and outreach programs (Shoreline Cleanup, Yellow Fish Road, Cows and Fish, Project Webfoot)

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Harmonize Inter-municipal Planning (wetland preservation, riparian area and floodplain protection, stormwater best management practices)

Encourage and support Sturgeon River watershed research to address data gaps (NAIT, University of Alberta)

Promote sustainable urban development (higher density developments, improved transit systems, reduced dependence on vehicles, preservation of natural areas)

Undertake a drained wetland inventory for future restoration projects (involve partners such as Ducks Unlimited Canada)

Identify and prioritize environmentally sensitive areas in watershed for protection

Implement Sub basin recommendations from North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance Integrated Watershed Management Plan

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The State of the Sturgeon Report was released and approved at the May 28<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. The next steps include sharing the report with municipalities, schools, and other stakeholders within the watershed. A summary document and digital version of the report was made available to the public on the City's website, as well hardcopies of the report are available at the St. Albert Public Library. The City of St. Albert will also begin work with the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance to meet with other municipalities and develop a terms of reference for the Sturgeon River Watershed taskforce/technical committee.

*Relevant Motions:*

(EAC5-2012) Moved by T. Mumby

That the advice to Council prepared by the Sturgeon River Sub-Committee be approved for inclusion in the agenda report when the final report is presented to Council for approval on May 28, 2012.

ii) Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan

Goal #8 of the Environmental Master Plan is to reduce water consumption. The Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity Plan (WCEPP) aligns with Alberta's Water for Life Strategy which sets forth goals centered around protecting our water supplies. One of the key strategies of this initiative is to create water conservation and efficiency plans for all water using sectors. This echoes requests from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to develop WCEPP according to population and participation rates.

The WCEPP is a long-term plan that links the water conservation targets from the City's Environmental Master Plan (EMP) with current and proposed water conservation measures to achieve the set targets. It provides an in-depth review of historical water usage as well as a complete picture of current usages. The plan also outlines St. Albert's potable water and wastewater systems, environmental initiatives, and the areas most in need of improvement. The WCEPP was created with the input from numerous stakeholders including the Environmental Advisory Committee. There was the formation of a Water Efficiency & Conservation Plan Sub-committee within the EAC to review the report and prepare advice for Council.

The outcomes of the WCEPP were a set of short to long term recommendations including:

Strategy	Short to Medium term			Long term
	2012	2013	2014	2015
Residential toilet rebate program				
SCADA System Upgrades				
Sturgeon Reservoir Upgrade				
Water Efficient by-law for new developments				
Sanitary Sewer Bylaw – Incorporate rain harvesting in the fee schedule				
Escalating Block Rates – Plus outdoor water restrictions and water use graphs on utility bills				
LEED-Silver equivalent policy for new City buildings with emphasis on water and energy conservation				
Develop ICI programs: Schools				
City Spatial Water Consumption Analysis Use results to develop targeted education and outreach initiatives for higher water users				
Develop ICI Programs: Industrial and Commercial – Investigate partnerships, produce web and print information				
City Building Water Audit – Incorporate with City Facility Energy Audit Update Anticipated initiative from Greenhouse Gas Reduction Local Action Plan				

The Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity Plan was presented and approved by Council on August 27, 2012.

*Relevant Motions:*

(EAC4-2012) Moved by E. Asselin

That the advice to Council prepared by the Water Conservation Sub-Committee be approved for inclusion in the agenda report what the final Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity Plan is presented to Council for approval.

iii) Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Action Plan

Goal #2, of the City's Environmental Master Plan, is, in part, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2010, the City completed the first two of five milestones under the Partners for Climate Protection program which is funded by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Municipal Fund. Funding was applied for and secured through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Green Municipal Fund in the amount of \$15,000 to complete Milestone 3 (Greenhouse Gas Corporate and Community Local Action Plan) through Partners for Climate Protection. This amount was matched by

council for a total of \$30,000. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was put out in July 2012 in which one proposal was received; however it did not meet the minimum requirements. The RFP was then reissued in October 2012 where one proposal was received. Based on evaluation of the proposal using the rating matrix, the Pembina Institute in collaboration with Centre for Sustainability Whistler, met the minimum requirements.

The contract is in the process of being signed and a kick-off meeting being arranged. The EAC will be involved in an interactive workshop as well as reviewing and approving the final report. The workshop with EAC is tentatively scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup> 2013. The final report review and ratification by the EAC is expected in June 2013.

iv) Environmental Initiatives Grant Program

In addition to the priorities identified by Council for 2012, the EAC continued with its other major function, namely reviewing applications submitted under the City's Environmental Initiatives Grant Program (EIGP) and providing funding recommendations to Council. A one time submission of 15 applications was received in October 2012 for the EIGP in accordance with existing Council policy. The EAC reviewed all applications and 10 applications were funded in part or whole.

*Relevant Motions:*

(EAC10-2012) Moved by T. Mumby

That the Environmental Advisory Committee recommend to Council that the following Environmental Initiatives Grants be awarded:

<b>Elmer S. Gish School</b> – To replace a grassed area with a native plant Naturescape including bird and bat houses for educational purposes.	<b>\$2,600.00</b>
<b>Elmer S. Gish School</b> – To help fund the purchase of recycling bins for classrooms to help encourage paper recycling.	<b>\$92.40</b>
<b>Bellerose High School EcoAction (Environmental Club)</b> – To contribute to the Bellerose Legacy Project by providing funding for the purchase of native tree and shrub species for planting in Lacombe park to help naturalize the area while leaving a lasting legacy from the graduating students.	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
<b>Albert Lacombe Green Thumb Gardeners (Environmental Club)</b> – To purchase starter kits for an indoor garden project that will then be transplanted to the outdoor Earthboxes which are harvested at the end of the season to create soup and salad for students.	<b>\$1,105.00</b>
<b>Paul Kane High School Social Justice League (Environmental Club)</b> – To purchase a water bottle easy-fill water fountain station that will encourage the use of tap water.	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
<b>St. Albert Catholic High School Party Green (Environmental Club)</b> – To contribute to the Leaving a Legacy program by providing funding for the purchase of native trees and shrubs for planting along the Sturgeon River to both leave a legacy for the graduating students and provide naturalization along the river's edge.	<b>\$2,322.50</b>
<b>J. J. Nearing Team Green (Environmental Club)</b> – To fund the Grade Six leadership team in visiting other St. Albert schools to promote the curbside organics program which they piloted last year.	<b>\$1,500.00</b>
<b>Sturgeon River Research Project (NAIT)</b> – To fund a pilot project for NAIT to work alongside three ST. Albert high schools to investigate the first year establishment rate of native plants planted in numerous City of St. Albert 2012 naturalization projects.	<b>\$4,800.00</b>

<b>Ecole Muriel Martin</b> – To fund the completion of the outdoor community classroom by constructing a greenhouse, three raised vegetable gardens, native plant species, and wildlife shelters (bird and bat houses).	<b>\$5,000.00</b>
<b>Bertha Kennedy Catholic Community School</b> – To purchase supplies to grow vegetables indoors and funds to purchase EarthBoxes for an outdoor raised garden.	<b>\$1,800.00</b>
<b>AVAILABLE FUNDS: \$29,300.00</b>	<b>TOTAL APPROVED \$22,219.90</b>

Other Issues Before the EAC in 2012

- Worked with the Office of the Environment to establish a work-plan to schedule and manage the committee’s activities in 2012
- Received information on the City’s progress towards achieving the goals set in the Council’s priorities (2012);
- Received quarterly reports from the Office of the Environment on e-mail correspondence from residents on topics of environmental relevance;
- Creation of two sub-committees on the State of the Sturgeon Watershed Report and the Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity Plan
- Received a presentation from a NAIT Student Group on REEP and Carrot Creek Riparian Assessment update
- Received a presentation from OE on Watershed Management Plan, Water Quality Monitoring Program overview, Sedimentation and Erosion Control Program overview, and Former Landfill and Public Works Yards Remediation Programs overview
- Received a presentation from Christian Benson, of Public Works, with a status report on the Solid Waste Program and a 1 year review of the program
- Received a presentation from Jeff Yanew, of OE, with an update of the progress of ISO14001 implementation at Public Works
- Received updates at monthly meetings about the process of several city initiatives and events such as Toilet Rebate Program, naturalization events, and the installation of an Air Quality Monitoring Station
- Received a presentation from St. Albert Catholic High School’s Grade 11 Biology Class on the Sturgeon River. Members of EAC participated on a question panel.
- Helped further develop relationship with SADAC
- Discussed possible EAC priorities for 2013 with Council at the annual board meeting on October 11, 2012.

**5. YEAR 2013 EAC ACTIVITIES**

In 2013, it is anticipated that the Environmental Advisory Committee will continue to provide input and advice, as requested from Council, especially related to issues where public consultation is necessary. The EAC anticipates that it will continue to work closely with the Office of the Environment in evaluating the City’s progress towards achieving the stated targets and goals for the Environmental Master Plan (2009).

Proposed 2013 EAC Priorities are:

- Focus on 5 – Year Update of Environmental Master Plan
- Provide advice and input on key Environmental Master Plan Projects
- Recommend Environmental Initiatives Grant Recipients
- Review Environmental Initiatives Grant Process





In addition to the above, issues, topics and other needs that may require specific involvement of the EAC could include, but are not limited to:

- Participate and advise on the development in the Corporate and Community Greenhouse Gas Local Action Plan;
- Continue work on water conservation bylaw, policy, and rate structures;
- Continued work on issues relating to the health and economic development of the Sturgeon River Valley and Watershed;
- Work in association with SAEDAC to consider opportunities for the Sturgeon River Vision and Sturgeon River Watershed Initiatives;
- Advise and provide input regarding the Air Quality Monitoring Station;
- Continued work on issues relating to the Sediment Control Projects and remediation projects along the Sturgeon River;
- Provide support for the Natural Areas Inventory and Assessment;
- Provide input into the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan;
- Work on other priorities that are identified by Council;
- Provide input into the Community Survey on Environmental Issues;
- Liaison with City departments on matters of environmental importance.

These accessory topics are ongoing or in the early development stages and input from the EAC will be provided on request from OE or when selected as a Council priority.

## **6. EAC ENDORSEMENT OF CITY PROGRAMS**

The Environmental Advisory Committee endorses the City's innovative programs that encourage citizen participation in environmental responsibility as exemplified through the creation of the EIGP and successful implementation of the Refuse, Organics & Recycling collection program. The EAC applauds the City of St. Albert for initiating the State of the Sturgeon Watershed Report and the Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity Plan as key documents leading to protection of the watershed and the reduction of water consumption. These programs show leadership by engaging the public to be active participants in a more efficient and productive community based lifestyle.

The Environmental Advisory Committee acknowledges the dedication and competency of the City of St. Albert's Office of the Environment staff (Leah Jackson, Megan Myers, Kalen Pilkington, Jeff Yanew, Linda Kuprys and Rachel Vincent) as well as their ongoing support towards the Committee. It is through their efforts that make the City of St. Albert's environment programme stand out.

## **Appendix I – Written Advice Submitted to Council State of the Sturgeon Watershed Report**

April 23, 2012

### *Recommendation*

The EAC considers the State of the Sturgeon River Watershed Report to be complete according to the goals set out in the Final Terms of Reference, dated April 26, 2010. The objectives and list of deliverables listed in that document have been met.

The EAC recommends that the City adopt the final report as the benchmark against which the future activities and changes in land and water management practices aimed at protecting and maintaining the health of the Sturgeon River can be assessed and developed.

It is important that the City understand the following key aspects of this report.

1. The report deals with the Sturgeon River watershed, of which the river running through St. Albert is only a small part. It is necessary to understand the report in terms of its full geographical extent.
2. This is a 'state of' report which compiles existing data, research and information regarding the watershed. It does not attempt to look at what future actions need to be taken, it simply acts as a benchmark against which future actions can be considered.

The report contains a section entitled 'Conclusions and Recommendations.' The next step in the process is to move to action. The EAC recommends that Administration work with the EAC to develop a list of focused and attainable recommendations for future actions that are based on this section of the State of the Sturgeon River Watershed Report.



## **Appendix II – Written Advice Submitted to Council Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Plan**

April 21, 2012

### *Recommendation*

#### **Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity Plan**

Earlier this year, the Office of Environment provided the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) with a draft of the Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity Plan (WCEP) Plan and a table of proposed water conservation initiatives developed from reviews of best practices and other Alberta municipal water programs.

At the March 22, 2012 meeting, EAC members took part in a mini workshop session to prioritize the water conservation initiatives the City should pursue as part of the WCEP Plan. The initiative proposed fall under four main categories: regulatory tools, economic and financial tools, utilities management and operational tools, and education and outreach tools.

The highest priorities identified by the EAC during the workshop were the following:

- Water Efficient bylaw
- Escalating block rates
- Targeting ICI programs
- Outreach program – special events
- Outdoor water reduction – odd/even days after 6pm

As part of the workshop the following were also noted as important points to consider:

- EAC felt that it is important to continue with the current residential education efforts and other conservation efforts – the water conservation initiatives that are already in place should continue (i.e. rain barrel program).
- EAC would like more done on the ICI programs specifically with respect to school and big water users (larger audience).
- EAC felt that the City needs to use the champions in the community to promote water conservation messaging (i.e. Hole's).
- Although the City Environmental Master Plan targets LEED Silver designation for all new building, the City will need to ensure that when pursued it is achieved with emphasis on both water and energy conservation. It was also suggested that the cost could be decreased for such project if City adopted the design principles from the LEED certification without obtaining the certification.
- The future of Alberta will invariably include wastewater re-use, therefore it was mentioned that the City should include 'purple pipes' in their development planning so the infrastructure is in place with the plumbing code is updated in the next 2 – 5 years.
- None of the items as part of the utilities management and operational tools category were highlighted since it was deemed that these are part of Best Management Practice for a Utility provider and were already funded by the Operations Department. The preventative maintenance activities are crucial

## **Appendix II – Written Advice Submitted to Council Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Plan**

since in most urban center, the losses from the distribution network typically accounts for the largest losses in the system.

In summary, the EAC has reviewed the resulting reports and has the following advice for Council:

- Overall, the EAC recommends that Council adopt the report and that it be used as a strategic vehicle to encourage water conservation by the corporation of the City of St. Albert by the community. This advice is consistent with the goals expressed within the Environmental Master Plan (EMP).
- The EAC believes that the various targets expressed within the report are reasonable and achievable within the timeframe described.
- The EAC believes that multiple approaches are necessary to meet the reduction targets described in the report. All means described in the report (regularly tools, economic and financial tools, utilities management and operational tools, and education and outreach tools) must be contemplated and, providing they do not provide an unreasonable financial encumbrance to residents, publically funded operations or businesses, implemented as necessary to achieve the stated goals. Emphasis should be placed on seeking the maximum return in efficiency (and thereby greatest reduction in water consumption) for public money that is spent on the various programs. Equally, any regulatory considerations should aim to maximize return in water efficiency for the least financial obligation to the community.