

Environmental Advisory Committee 2014 Annual Report to St. Albert City Council

1. RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Advisory Committee's 2014 Annual Report be accepted as information and that the Environmental Advisory Committee continue to operate as presently constituted through 2015.

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 in 2009 and currently includes seven citizens at large and one member of council as voting members, and one representative each from Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, 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 Environment branch.

On March 3, Council provided the EAC with three priorities for 2014:

- A. Environmental Master Plan - 5-year update
- B. Water Conservation Bylaw
- C. Water Conservation Rates

3. MEMBERSHIP

Citizen Members - January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| • Ken Crutchfield | Citizen-at-large | First of two year term |
| • Brent Korobanik (Chair) | Citizen-at-large | Last of two year term |
| • Tom Mumby (Vice-Chair) | Citizen-at-large | Last of two year term |
| • Victoria Neary | Citizen-at-large | First of two year term |
| • Paul Radchenko | Citizen-at-large | Last of two year term |
| • Bill Marsh | Citizen-at-large | First of two year term |
| • Tanya Doran | Citizen-at-large | First of two year term |

Non-Voting Participants - January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| • Derek Alexander | Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development |
| • Ludmilla Rodriguez | Alberta Health Services |
| • Wendy Vanderwel | Post-Secondary |

Council Representation

Gilles Prefontaine was the Council representative with Tim Osborne as the alternate.

In October Council appointed Gilles Prefontaine with Sheena Hughes as the alternate to the Environmental Advisory Committee as Council representatives for 2014/2015.

City Administration Representation

Committee assistance was obtained from Leah Kongsrude and Meghan Myers from Corporate Strategic Services and Environment. Mike Mellross joined the Environment branch in October 2014 as the Manager Environment.

4. ACTIVITIES DURING 2014

On February 21 2014, the Chair (B. Korobanik) and Vice Chair (T. Mumby) met with the Mayor (Mayor N. Crouse), Council's EAC representative (Councillor G. Prefontaine) and City Administration (L. Kongsrude, Director, Strategic Services and Environment), to establish Council's priorities for the EAC in 2014. Priorities were as follows:

- A. Environmental Master Plan (5-year update)
- B. Water Conservation Bylaw
- C. Water Conservation Rates
- D. Recommend Environmental Initiatives Grant Program recipients

The Environmental Advisory Committee met nine times during 2014, meeting monthly except in July, August, and December. The Committee also went on a tour of the City's environmental projects the evening of September 30, 2014.

The EAC Chair and K. Crutchfield met with Mayor, some Council members and City Manager at the City's annual review of Boards, and Committees on October 2, 2014.

Progress - Council's Priorities for the EAC in 2014

A. Environmental Master Plan (5-year update)

The Environmental Advisory Committee continued with the 5-year update to the City's Environmental Master Plan (EMP) initiated in 2013. The EAC completed its review and update after considering input from the Public Opinion Survey and workshops held with public and staff. EAC submitted its recommendations to Council who approved the updated plan on May 5, 2014.

The EAC recognizes the importance of the City having a blueprint in the form of the EMP to guide the city in achieving its environmental objectives. The EMP is a dynamic document that through its regular updates remains relevant to the City's environmental goals.

The key findings of the EAC included (1) the reaffirmation of the EMP as the primary guidance document for the City achieving its environmental outcomes and (2) the adoption of the revised goals and targets for the period of 2014-2019.

As an outcome to the various community outreach efforts and feedback, the EAC identified a fourth strategic element of the EMP; People. Consequently a ninth goal recognizing the role the community plays in achieving the environmental outcomes was recommended by the EAC to Council. The goal states *foster community environmental stewardship*.

Relevant Motion from February 27, 2014 EAC meeting:

Moved by K Crutchfield

That the advice of the subcommittee on Environmental Master Plan Update be approved, subject to minor revisions discussed, as presented for transmittal to Council.

CARRIED

The written advice on the Environmental Master Plan Review is presented in Appendix I and was included in the Agenda Report to Council for the March 24, 2014 Council meeting. City Council was given 60 days to review and comment on the EMP with the final version approved on May 5, 2014.

B. Water Conservation Bylaw

A key recommendation from the Water Conservation Efficiency Productivity Plan was to develop a Water Efficient Bylaw (renamed Water Conservation Bylaw) for new developments. EAC worked on the guiding principles for the draft bylaw and were approved by City Council in September 2013.

The EAC continued work on the Water Conservation Bylaw at five meetings throughout 2014. In preparing for the bylaw City Administration discussed the scope and details of the bylaw with other City departments and new information concluded that a Water Conservation Bylaw may not be the most effective way to reach the City's water conservation targets.

Relevant Motion from May 22, 2014 EAC meeting:

Moved by V. Neary

That the EAC's position statement on a Water Conservation Bylaw be approved, and ratified for presentation to Council on June 23, 2014.

CARRIED

The written advice on the Water Conservation Bylaw is presented in Appendix II and was included in the Agenda Report to Council for the June 23, 2014 Council meeting.

On July 7, 2014, Council directed Administration to continue to develop Water Conservation Bylaw and include outdoor water use restrictions.

As a result, an EAC subcommittee worked on guiding principles for inclusion in the Water Conservation Bylaw. The Water Conservation Bylaw will be reviewed by City Council in 2015.

C. Water Rates

Another key recommendation from the Water Conservation Efficiency and Productivity Plan was to adopt escalating block rates on residential utility bills. Limited progress was made in 2014 on this priority due to the recent review and changes to the utility fiscal model. EAC received an update at their November meeting and discussion on this priority will continue into 2015.

D. Environmental Initiatives Grant Program recommendations

In addition to the priorities identified by Council for 2014, 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 five applications was received in October 2014 for the EIGP in accordance with existing Council policy. The EAC reviewed all applications and five applications were funded in part or whole.

Relevant Motion from October 23, 2014 EAC meeting:

Moved by T. Mumby

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

| Application Number | Project | Proposed Grant |
|--------------------|---|-----------------|
| 14-01 | Grey Nuns White Spruce Park Working Group – to re-establish the age class of the forest by growing genetically matched seeds to be planted in Spring 2016 | \$8,500* |
| 14-02 | Robert Rundle Elementary School – for an environment club project that includes placement of bird feeders and planting of trees in the forested area by their school. Outcomes of the project will be monitored through scientific experiment with the students. | \$444 |
| 14-03 | Bertha Kennedy Elementary School – for the school's Healthy Bobcat initiative the funding will provide students a location to refill their water bottles. | \$1,550 |
| 14-04 | 50 + Club – for the purchase and placement of labeled waste containers throughout the facility for the collection of three waste streams. This will reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill and increase the diversion of the facility. | \$830 |
| 14-05 | J. J. Nearing Elementary School – Greenilicious Environment Club project for the installation of a Living Wall in the community space of their school. | \$2,500 |
| | TOTAL | \$14,324 |

CARRIED

*Although the Environmental Initiatives Grant Procedure indicates that "funding for each project shall not exceed \$5,000, unless Council, by resolution, approves funding in excess of \$5,000", the EAC believed the application by Grey Nuns White Spruce Park Working Group represents a long term vision for the Park and benefits the City and its residents therefore, the recommended funding amount is warranted.

Other Topics for Discussion in 2014

As a suggestion by Councillor Prefontaine, the EAC added a standing agenda item to each meeting titled 'Get to Know Your Committee Member'. Each Committee member was scheduled to discuss their professional and personal background in approximately five minutes.

The EAC received presentations from the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park Advisory Committee on the recently approved Management Plan. In addition, EAC received a presentation from researchers from NAIT on their project work in the Sturgeon River Watershed.

The EAC had an opportunity to review the Urban Forest Management Policy prior to the policy being presented to Council for approval. A subcommittee worked with City Administration to provide preliminary comments on the draft policy with advice to City Council (as per their request).

Relevant Motion from October 23, 2014 EAC meeting:

Moved by K. Crutchfield

That the draft recommendation on the Urban Forest Management Policy be ratified for presentation to Council, subject to minor revisions as discussed.

CARRIED

The written advice on the Urban Forest Management Policy is presented in Appendix III and was included in the Agenda Report to Council for the December 1, 2014 Council meeting.

Members of the EAC were engaged with the community visioning project "Cultivate Our Future". K. Pilkington, Sustainability Coordinator and Project Manager, presented the public engagement plan for the project.

The EAC received regular updates throughout the year on the City's Air Quality Monitoring Station and progress on the Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance municipal partnership.

Generally speaking the EAC was active in several significant projects which required additional hours to review discuss and contemplate. However, the Committee worked well together and it was our members' dedication and commitment to the various priorities, issues and topics that we encountered throughout the year which allowed the EAC to have a successful 2014.

5. PROPOSED YEAR 2015 EAC ACTIVITIES

In 2015, 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.

Priority Recommendations

2015 EAC Priorities should be related to:

1. Provide advice and input on key Environmental Master Plan Projects

- Environmental Policy Update
- Water Conservation Bylaw

- Investigate Water Conservation Block Rates

2. Environmental Initiatives Grant Program

3. Environmental Advisory Committee Bylaw Review

Other Input

These environmental initiatives are ongoing or in early states of development and Environment would benefit from discussion and input from EAC but no formal written advice to Council is required.

- Transportation Master Plan*
- Sustainable Building Policy Backgrounder*
- Urban Forest Management Plan*
- Waste Program Policy
- River Water Quality Index
- Greenhouse Gas Local Action Plan recommendations – Energy Management in City facilities
- Grey Nuns White Spruce Park Implementation Plan

These initiatives are underway and Environment would like to keep EAC updated on their progress.

- Smart City Master Plan*
- Natural Areas Assessment*
- Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance research projects*
- Environmental Master Plan Annual Report Goals and Targets
- Air Quality Monitoring Station Development
- Stormwater Sedimentation and Erosion Control Projects (Grit Separators) – Review
- Environmental Liabilities Assessment
- Community Sustainability Plan

EAC considers the environmental initiatives marked with asterisk (*) as priorities under Other Input in this report.

6. EAC ENDORSEMENT OF CITY PROGRAMS

The Environmental Advisory Committee would like to acknowledge the continued support and leadership of St. Albert Council for establishing an Environmental Advisory Committee to provide advice to Council and Administration on environmental matters. The City's innovative programs that encourage citizen participation in environmental responsibility as exemplified through the creation of the Environmental Initiatives Grant Program, advocacy for low flow water appliances, rain barrels, recycling yards etc, St. Albert's leadership in advancing the Sturgeon River Watershed Partnership is particularly worthy of note. The willingness of Council to examine Water Rates to achieve the outcomes set out in the Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity Plan 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 and Sustainability staff (Leah Kongsrude, Meghan

Myers, Kalen Pilkington, Jeff Yanew, and Mike Mellross) as well as their ongoing support towards the Committee. It is through their efforts that make the City of St. Albert's environment program stand out.

Appendix I – Written Advice Submitted to Council Environmental Master Plan Update

Environmental Master Plan – UPDATE

February 27, 2014

Recommendation to St. Albert Council

2014 – Environmental Master Plan

Recommendation: With reference to the 2009-2013 Environmental Master Plan, the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) recommends:

- a new framework for presenting the City of St. Albert environmental planning and policy outcomes to residents by describing linkages with other corporate plans and directions.
- adoption of revised goals and targets in a document to be titled “2014 Environmental Master Plan” for the period of 2014-2019.

Background:

The City of St Albert Environmental Policy states: “*The City of St. Albert is committed to maintaining a healthy natural environment and ensuring its sustainability for future generations.*” The 2008-2013 Environmental Master Plan (EMP) was prepared as the guidance document to identify planning and policy outcomes as well as governing environmental management by the city. At a corporate level, the EMP is integral to aligning environmental operations with the City’s Corporate Planning Framework (Economic Development, Transportation, Recreation, Social, Utilities, Culture, Smart Growth). The guidance document sets specific goals and targets for a range of environmental matters. Targets are set at 5 year intervals however it endeavors to forecast direction 10-15 years into the future. The planning interval of 5 years is used to ensure the plan is relevant and considers changing community values and trends. The original 2009-2013 Environmental Master Plan identified air, land and water as strategic elements and aligned eight goals and 16 measurable targets.

Since its release in 2009, the City has reported annually to residents on the progress in achieving the measurable targets set out in the 2009-2013 EMP.

Council identified a review and update of the EMP as one of its 2013 priorities for the Environmental Advisory Committee. In March 2013, the City began its review of the Environmental Master Plan, with a Community Environmental Survey conducted by Banister Research and Consulting that sought input from 800 citizens covering a range of demographics and neighborhoods. The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) established a sub-committee to review and make recommendations. In preparing its report to Council, the EAC considered the results of the Community Environmental Survey, two public workshops, informal public feedback arising from displays at the Lifestyle Expo, city staff engagement with St. Albert high school classes as well as internal City staff workshops organized by the Manager of Environment and Sustainability. As a consequence of that input, EAC identified the addition of a fourth strategic element - people. Consequently, in addition to retaining six of the original eight goals in their current form, the EAC altered two of the goals to emphasize the Sturgeon River watershed and its water quality. Management and control of hazardous materials was seen more as a target than a goal to achieving positive outcomes to the dominant interest of the Sturgeon River watershed and water quality. A ninth goal relating to the critical role of the community in achieving environmental outcomes was added. In large part the ninth goal recognizes efforts covering a wide range of activities that the city, community and individual

Appendix I – Written Advice Submitted to Council Environmental Master Plan Update

citizens were already undertaking in terms of environmental stewardship. By emphasizing community involvement St. Albert is re-enforcing the shared responsibility.

The consensus of opinion arising from the November 28, 2013 EAC meeting called for nine goals with measurable targets. Those nine goals include:

- Manage air quality
- Reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote sustainable neighbourhoods and transportation choices
- Preserve and manage trees, parks and natural areas
- Reduce solid waste generation
- Protect and improve the Sturgeon River Watershed
- Improve water quality of the Sturgeon River
- Reduce water consumption
- Foster community environmental stewardship

A February 27, 2014 EAC meeting reviewed the revised document. The revised document describes linkages of various other corporate plans that contribute to St. Albert achieving its environmental goals.

Appendix II – Written Advice Submitted to Council Water Conservation Bylaw

Water Conservation Bylaw Recommendation – Update

May 22, 2014

Recommendation to St. Albert Council

Recommendation: With reference to the Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity Plan (WCEPP), the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) does not recommend pursuing a water conservation bylaw at this time. The EAC does recommended continuing targeted education programs focused on reducing water consumption.

Should St. Albert Council pursue a water conservation by-law, the EAC recommends an outdoor water use by-law. An outdoor water use by-law would focus on decreasing usage during the peak consumption season. An outdoor water usage by-law could include parameters such as:

- Dates in effect (e.g. May 1st to September 30th)
- Time of Enforcement (e.g. Outdoor water usage can be done between 6pm and 9am daily)
- Exceptions (e.g. New sod or seeded lawns, hand held hose, can or bucket for activities such as water lawns, gardens, washing cars, and recreation)

If an outdoor water usage by-law is desired the EAC could define further parameters and finalize a recommendation.

Background:

The EAC reviewed options for a water conservation by-law first focusing on low flow fixtures. However, after researching this option it was determined that the majority of new builds utilize low flow fixtures and the addition of a by-law would not necessarily reduce our water usage. After reviewing water usage numbers for the City, the EAC found that the increase of water consumption over the summer months (<20%) is not significant enough to warrant the recommendation for a by-law. The EAC agrees that targeted education could effect a positive change in St. Albert resident's water consumption behaviors. For example, the education programs directed at newer neighborhoods where they are establishing landscaping could focus on xeriscaping, utilization of low water use grass covers, alternative yard landscaping approaches to diminish water use. Similarly, older neighborhoods would be encouraged to adopt practices that provide good ground cover and water retention while diminishing water use.

Appendix III – Written Advice Submitted to Council Urban Forest Management Policy

Advice for Council – Urban Forest Management Policy

Recommendation:

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) recommends City Council approves the Urban Forestry Management Policy. The EAC also recommends City Council support the expedited development of an Urban Forest Management Plan to provide support for the associated policy. It would also be the recommendation of the EAC that the Plan be developed in coordination with City Administration and the EAC.

Overview

The City of St. Albert drafted the Urban Forest Management Policy in response to Goal #4 of the Environmental Management Plan (EMP):

Goal #4: Preserve and manage trees, parks and natural areas

Targets:

- Determine existing tree canopy and set future target
- Protect top three priority natural areas in the undeveloped areas of St. Albert

Residents of St. Albert continue to rank parks, open spaces and trail systems as the most important factors contributing to their overall quality of life. The benefits of a robust urban forest are recognized as; improvements to air quality, reduce soil erosion, slow and reduce stormwater runoff, helps to mitigate carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as well as contribute to ecosystem biodiversity. The City (through the EMP), also acknowledges in order to monitor, measure and manage the effectiveness of susceptibility of the urban forest system information regarding the urban forest is required. The Urban Forest Management Policy is an initial step which supports forest maintenance within the urban centre, however a Management Plan for the urban forest is required in order begin to achieve the targets coupled with goal #4 of the EMP.