

2016 Annual Report to Council Environmental Advisory Committee

RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Advisory Committee's 2016 Annual Report be accepted as information and that the Environmental Advisory Committee continue to operate as presently constituted through 2017.

MEMBERSHIP

Citizen Members - January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016

Tanya Doran (Chair)	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Brent Korobanik (Vice Chair)	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Ken Crutchfield	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Victoria Neary	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Bill Marsh	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Sarah Pearson	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Ben Thronson	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term

Council Representation

In October 2015 Council appointed Councillor Bob Russell as the primary and Councillor Cathy Heron as the alternate representatives for the Environmental Advisory Committee.

The EAC appreciates when a Council representative can be made available for the scheduled committee meetings. The importance of this liaison has proven beneficial for this committee to bring environmental issues to Council.

City Administration Representation

Committee assistance was obtained from Leah Kongsrude, Mike Mellross, Christian Benson, Erin Isaac and Meghan Myers from Environment, Strategic Services and Environment, Corporate Strategic Services.

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 provide advice to Council with respect to environmental policies, plans and initiatives, especially where a public perspective is desirable. The original Bylaw was repealed and replaced with an updated Bylaw (35/2015) in November 2015.

Direction and assistance to the EAC were obtained through involvement with the City's Environment branch.

On January 11, 2016 Council provided the EAC with the following annual priorities:

- A. Provide advice and input on key Environmental Master Plan Projects
 - 1. Environmental Initiatives Grant Program (EIGP) Policy Review
 - 2. Recommend Environmental Initiatives Grant Program Recipients
 - 3. Sustainable Building Policy
 - 4. Stormwater Rate Model

ACTIVITIES

The Environmental Advisory Committee met 10 times during 2016, meeting monthly except in July and December. A 'special' EAC meeting was held on August 30, 2016 to review and adopt advice to Council on the Stormwater Rates Project.

T. Doran and B. Marsh conferred with Mayor, Council members and City Manager at the City's annual review of Boards, and Committees on Thursday, November 17, 2016.

Advice and Input – Progress Report

Environmental Initiatives Grant Program Policy Review

In an effort to increase program uptake, EAC had highlighted the need to review the EIGP council policy. Before completing major changes to the policy, the subcommittee opted to first provide input to administration on developing new communication strategies to improve advertising, reduce administrative requirements (length of application and report forms) and create a new visual look for the EIGP. In addition, two information sessions and a short survey were made available to previous and new applicants. T. Doran and Councillor C. Heron attended the first information session in July but EAC members were unavailable to attend the information session in September. The sessions were designed to offer assistance to applicants and help lead discussions on project ideas in addition to linking interested applicants with other partner organizations or residents. Limited feedback was received through the online survey (8 responses) and most indicated that the EIGP program was satisfactory as is.

Based on the discussion at the October 27th EAC meeting the EIGP updated communications and promotions that will continue into 2017. The necessity to review the EIGP policy and administrative procedures will be evaluated following the 2017 grant allocation.

Environmental Initiatives Grant Program Recommendations

As part of the priorities identified by Council for 2016, 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 applications was received on October 6, 2016 for the EIGP in accordance with existing Council policy C-EUS-02. The EAC reviewed 15 applications and eight applications were recommended for funding.

Relevant Motion from October 27, 2016 EAC meeting:

Moved by V. Neary

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

Community Group/Project	Proposed Grant
Trout Unlimited for promotion and presentation of Yellow Fish Road Program – funds to provide 20-30 public outreach sessions to schools and community groups. Stewardship activities with 5-10 volunteer storm drain painting events. Hold two teacher training sessions.	\$5,000
Bertha Kennedy Elementary School to purchase supplies for a micro greens greenhouse – funds will be used to purchase supplies for a micro greens initiative which grows plants with a smaller, more compact, less expensive system. The growing time is also shorter which is optimal for a classroom setting. This new system will allow for additional classes to participate.	\$1,200
Society of Friends for the St. Albert Botanic Park to purchase and install irrigation system – grant will be used to purchase and install an irrigation system for the Park's new Heritage Garden. This will align the garden with the irrigation system throughout the Park.	\$5,000
Grey Nuns White Spruce Park Working Group (GNWSPWG) for seedling planting, control Manitoba Maple, site preparation and GNWSP publication – funds will go towards planting the remainder of seedlings from the 2014 Environmental Initiatives Grant, initiate treatment of Manitoba Maple, prepare site for planting in 2018 and assist in the development of publications for the Park.	\$10,065.43*
Ecole Marie Poburan for outdoor gardens/classroom – the grant will be used to add an additional planting bed and rehabilitation of 3 existing beds. Addition of an outdoor composter.	\$2,600

St. Albert Urban Agriculture & Arts and Heritage Foundation for community food forest – <i>continue with the success of 2014 grant project, the funds will be used to complete the planting of the Community Food Forest.</i>	\$1,234.57
Grandin Village Gardeners for community garden – <i>the Grandin Village Gardeners utilized the grant in 2015 to construct and initiate a community garden. Funds from this grant provide additional beds, rain barrels and compost bins.</i>	\$4600
ESSMY Jr High School for naturalization project – <i>funds will be used to purchase native plants for the natural area at the front of the school. The planting site will be incorporated in to the student curriculum.</i>	\$3750
TOTAL	\$33,450

**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 contributes to a long term vision for the environmental benefit of the City and its residents therefore, the recommended funding amount is warranted.*

CARRIED

As part of the overall funding recommendations EAC provided the following statement to be included in the Agenda Report (AR) to City Council:

EAC recognizes the importance of the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park as a Municipal Historical Resource and as such the EAC recommends the City Council considers allocating sustainable funding outside the Environmental Initiatives Grant Program. The EAC also recognizes the volunteer work of Dr. P. Murphy and D. D’Amico for the ongoing management of the GNWSP as such additional City resources may be needed to properly manage this resource. In recent years a significant portion of the Environmental Initiatives Grant Program has been allocated to this work. In order to fund innovative and sustainable projects going forward a new sustainable source of funding should be a priority.

On November 28, 2016 Council accepted and approved the EAC recommendations.

Sustainable Building Policy

At the March 24th EAC meeting, Gilles Prefontaine, Chief Community Development Officer, provided background and processes for the development of a Sustainable Building Policy for corporate facilities. The group reviewed a draft policy and provided initial feedback. The EAC felt it was critical that a person in the organization is responsible for the implementation of the policy.

On May 26th, Gilles Prefontaine returned to the EAC to present a revised policy draft and next steps. Following this meeting EAC drafted their advice to Council for Committee approval at the September 22nd meeting (Appendix II).

Relevant motion from September 22, 2016.

Moved by B. Thronson

That the advice on the Sustainable Building Policy be approved and submitted to Council.

The Sustainable Building Policy was presented to City Council on November 14th but postponed until January 2017.

This priority has not come to completion therefore if City Council requires additional involvement from the EAC on a revised policy, the EAC will welcome this opportunity.

Stormwater Rate Model

At the March 24th EAC meeting Stephen Graham, Senior Business Analyst provided EAC an introduction to the Stormwater Rate System and recommended changes followed by group discussion. The changes to the rate system are to transition from a flat fee model to one that is based on the user pay philosophy. Based on research to date Administration is looking at stormwater rates that are related to property size since this information is readily available and it would more fairly distribute the costs to manage stormwater. Initial EAC feedback included the integration or encouragement of onsite stormwater capture strategies and a process for residents and businesses to challenge the process or rate.

On May 26th, Stephen Graham, Senior Business Analyst and Diane McMordie, Director of Finance and Utilities attended the meeting to present the update on the Stormwater Rate Model work.

The Stormwater Rate Model subcommittee drafted advice to Council that was discussed at the June 23 EAC meeting and approved at August 30, 2016 'special' meeting (Appendix III).

The Stormwater Rate Model report was presented to City Council on September 12, 2016 and recommended that further work be completed on the stormwater rate model to focus more on the percentage of permeable/impermeable surface of a property rather than just size. This aligned with the advice that EAC had provided and as the stormwater model is refined the EAC is open to further input into the updated Stormwater Rate Model in 2017.

Other Input – Progress Report

Green Power Opportunities

February 25, 2016 - presentation from Michael Trabysh & Steve Manchuk, ECO Charge. ECO Charge presented their proposal for municipalities to change out existing park lighting infrastructure to accommodate new designs with solar and wind power options.

Integrated Pest Management Plan

The IPMP review was delayed and will be included in the 2017 EAC work plan as an information item.

Natural Areas Management Plan

May 26, 2016 - presentation and updates provided by, Leah Kongsrude, Director, Strategic Services and Environment. Group discussed how the report will help guide Public Works natural area maintenance guidelines and standards, and be used to support protection and conservation of natural areas.

Updates - Progress Report

Air Quality Monitoring Station and Air Quality Health Index

April 28, 2016 – Updates on St. Albert's first air monitoring station installation, launch of new AQHI Canada app and Clean Air Day event details, Care About Air campaign. A tour of the new station was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Home Energy Audit Toolkit

As a result of staff changes and workload this project is postponed to 2017.

Capital Region Board Waste Reduction Management Plan

September 22, 2016 - updates provided by Christian Benson, Manager, Environment (previously Waste Programs Coordinator)

Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance research projects

April 28, 2016 – received update on \$300,000 of grant funding for a natural areas study, water quantity and quality studies.

Environmental Master Plan Annual Report

March 24, 2016 - received update on the 2015 Annual Report on the Environment. A six-page newspaper insert was included in the St. Albert Gazette Saturday, April 30, 2016 edition as well as posted to the City website

Local Action Plan for Energy Conservation and Reducing Greenhouse Gases

April 28, 2016 – presentation from Mike Mellross, Manager, Environment on the City's facility energy and water audit results for 10 major city buildings. Recommended Environmental Conservation Measures such as energy/heat cogeneration, heat recovery, interior and exterior light replacement and solar photovoltaic installations were reviewed. Administration will be submitting Capital Charters for several of the recommendations for Council consideration during the 2017-2019 budget deliberations.

Urban Forest Policy and Management Plan Implementation

The Plan is still under development so an update was postponed until 2017.

Stormwater Management Facilities Monitoring Program

May 26, 2016 – presentation from Sarah Cicchini, Environmental Coordinator

Discussed City's stormwater facilities monitoring and assessment schedule. Highlighted the provincial government best practices, training and education for municipalities.

Reviewed the Don't Let It Loose education campaign which focuses on the release of invasive aquatic species by the public into stormwater facilities and natural waterbodies. The City of St. Albert has the invasive fish species, Russian Carp, in one of its stormwater facilities in Erin Ridge and is spending considerable time and resources to control it.

Heritage Lakes Stormwater System Project

September 26, 2016 – presentation from Kevin Cole, Director of Utilities. Discussed the project history of two manmade creeks linked to stormwater facilities in Heritage Lake, resident concerns with sedimentation/discoloration of the creeks and administration concerns with groundwater use. K. Cole presented the proposed solution to recirculated stormwater rather than use groundwater for the creeks and answered EAC questions.

EAC ENDORSEMENT OF CITY PROGRAMS

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) would like to acknowledge the continued support and leadership of St. Albert Council for establishing an EAC to provide advice to Council and Administration on environmental matters. The EAC supports innovative programs and encourages citizen participation in environmental responsibility as an extension of the Environmental Master Plan.

The Environmental Advisory Committee acknowledges the dedication and competency of the City of St. Albert's Strategic Services and Environment staff throughout 2016 (L. Kongsrude, M. Mellross, C. Benson, S. Cicchini, E. Isaac and M. Myers) as well as their ongoing support towards the Committee. It is through the efforts of the Environment Branch, that important sustainability-focused programs are developed and put into practice in the community.

Develop 3-Year Work Plan and Review Priority Setting Process

EAC members attended a work plan and priority setting workshop on Saturday, April 23 (3-year summary in Appendix I). The purpose of the workshop was to align EAC's work plan and priorities with the Environmental Master Plan and other environmental related initiatives or projects coming up in the next three years. There are many items that EAC knows are coming up such as the Water Conservation Bylaw or the next update of the Environmental Master Plan that it was felt a longer-term work plan could help us to be more proactive in planning the work load and help identify priorities ahead of time.

2017 Priority Recommendations

These are major environmental initiatives that are being developed in 2017 that require in depth formal involvement from EAC and written advice to Council.

1. Recommend 2017 Environmental Initiative Grant Program Recipients
2. Update the Implementation Plan for the Local Action Plan for Energy Conservation and Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions
3. Update targets for the Environmental Master Plan including community greenhouse gas emissions, tree canopy cover, river water quality index, and public participation
4. Provide advice on Environmental policies within the Municipal Development Plan (if funded)

Other Input

These environmental initiatives are ongoing or in early stages of development and City administration would benefit from discussion and input from EAC but no formal written advice to Council is required:

Provide input to Administration:

- Urban Forest Management Plan
- Red Willow Park 'Northwest' Master Plan Residential
- Waste diversion targets and public education and awareness campaign updates
- Review of Road Sand Recovery target
- Water Conservation Bylaw education and awareness campaign
- Promotion of the Environmental Initiatives Grant Program
- Environmental Leadership Recognition Options

Receive information:

- St. Albert Air quality data summary or analysis from Alberta Environment and Parks
- Capital Region Particulate Matter Response Plan

- Transportation Master Plan initiatives related to Environmental Master Plan goals
- Utilities Master Plan initiatives related to Environmental Master Plan goals
- Integrated Pest Management Plan update
- Contaminated sites assessment update
- Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance Water quality and quantity studies updates
- Options related to school resources specific to the Sturgeon River

Appendix I – EAC 3-Year Priorities

ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER PLAN GOAL	2017	2018	2019
MANAGE AIR QUALITY	<p>Receive information – Air quality data summary/analysis provided by Alberta Environment and Parks</p> <p>Receive information – Capital Region PM Response Plan</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council – Idle-Free Bylaw and Fire Bylaw Review</p> <p>Provide input – Air Quality Management and monitoring</p> <p>Receive information – Air quality data summary/analysis provided by Alberta Environment and Parks</p> <p>Receive information – Capital Region PM Response Plan</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council – Environmental Master Plan update, with targets</p> <p>Receive information – Air quality data summary/analysis provided by Alberta Environment and Parks</p>
REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	<p>Provide advice to Council – Update community GHG emissions targets</p> <p>Provide input – review of GHG local action plan</p>	<p>Provide input – Update GHG local action plan</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council - Environmental Master Plan update, with targets</p>
PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS AND TRANSPORTATION CHOICES	<p>Provide advice to Council - Environmental policies within the MDP (if funded)</p> <p>Receive information - Transportation Master Plan and the Utilities Master Plan initiatives related to Environmental goals</p>		<p>Provide advice to Council - Environmental Master Plan update, with targets</p>
PRESERVE AND MANAGE TREES, PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS	<p>Provide advice to Council - Tree canopy cover target</p> <p>Provide input – Urban Forest Management Plan</p> <p>Provide input – Red Willow Park ‘Northwest’ Master Plan</p> <p>Provide input – Development of Lois</p>		<p>Provide advice to Council - Environmental Master Plan update, with targets</p>

Appendix I – EAC 3-Year Priorities

<p>REDUCE SOLID WASTE GENERATION</p>	<p>Hole Centennial Provincial Park/John E Poole wetland Provide input - Public education campaigns to meet 75% residential diversion targets Receive information – Contaminated sites assessments update</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council – Waste Bylaw review and update</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council - Environmental Master Plan update, with targets</p>
<p>PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE STURGEON RIVER WATERSHED</p>	<p>Receive Information - Sturgeon River Watershed - Water quality and water quantity study</p>	<p>Receive Information - Sturgeon River Watershed - Water quality and water quantity study</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council - Environmental Master Plan update, with targets Receive Information – Integrated Water Management Plan</p>
<p>IMPROVE WATER QUALITY OF THE STURGEON RIVER</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council - River water quality index (EMP target) Provide input – review of road sand recovery target Receive information – Integrated Pest Management Plan Receive Information - Review of programs teachers and schools are currently using specific to the Sturgeon River (gauge interest in having more resources)</p>	<p>Provide input - Discuss the need for school curriculum support materials related to the Sturgeon River</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council - Environmental Master Plan update, with targets</p>
<p>REDUCE WATER CONSUMPTION</p>	<p>Provide input - Education and awareness campaign for the Water Conservation Bylaw</p>		<p>Provide advice to Council - Environmental Master Plan update, with targets</p>
<p>FOSTER COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council – Update public participation targets</p>	<p>Provide input – Public consultation for the update of the EMP (survey a year prior to the update)</p>	<p>Provide advice to Council - Environmental Master Plan update, with targets</p>

Appendix I – EAC 3-Year Priorities

Provide input –
Identification of
communications
projects to promote
the EIGP

Provide input –
Discussion around
an Environmental
Leadership
Recognition Plan

Appendix II – Written Advice Submitted to Council Sustainable Building Policy

Advice for Council – Sustainable Building Policy

September 22, 2016

Recommendation to St. Albert Council

Recommendation

The (Environmental Advisory Committee) EAC has reviewed the draft Sustainable Buildings policy, C-P& E-12.

The Environmental Advisory Committee fully supports the leadership that the proposed policy demonstrates, including a sustainable return on investment with consideration of the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. In addition, the incorporation of both leased and owned facilities and major renovations send a market signal that aligns with climate leadership policies nationally.

The committee appreciates this policy applies to City funded projects beyond 33% of the capital costs, sending further market signals to community collaborators.

The EAC strongly recommends Council adoption of this policy as presented.

Appendix III – Written Advice Submitted to Council Stormwater Rate Model

Advice for Council – Stormwater Rate Model

August 30, 2016

Recommendation to St. Albert Council

Recommendation

Given that the stormwater rate model is a 2016 priority for the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC), the EAC has received presentations and a summary of key principles from City of St. Albert staff relating to a request of council on October 26, 2015 pertaining to a revision of the stormwater rate model.

The EAC feels that any revision of the stormwater rate model must consider the environmental loading and mitigation considerations of this stormwater system; therefore, the ideal stormwater rate system would be one based on the amount of impermeable or water resistant surfaces on a property. Accordingly, the EAC offers the following advice:

- 1) The EAC agrees that the ideal stormwater rate system should be based on the amount of impermeable or water resistant surfaces on a property, i.e., user pay model.** *Although there is currently not the proper information or resources to use this ideal system, the more impermeable surface a property has, the greater amount of stormwater leaves the property and must be collected and treated prior to reaching the Sturgeon River. This system also encourages properties, particularly commercial and industrial, to incorporate stormwater mitigation strategies.*
- 2) Administration should provide a process for utility users to request to review of existing mitigation strategies with the intent of preserving the principle of fairness and environmental stewardship.** *When the ideal system is adopted, a credit system would be beneficial to recognize utility users who make modifications to their property to reduce stormwater impacts.*
- 3) Provide for extensive public awareness and education for utility users prior to implementing a revised stormwater rate system.** *Maintain an ongoing public communication process in support of a revised stormwater rate system post implementation.*
- 4) The EAC requires clarity on the issue of exempt properties from stormwater fees and in the spirit of fairness these exemptions must be identified and further discussion be held on them as soon as possible.**
- 5) Examine implementation of stormwater rates for vacant/undeveloped properties that have limited capacity to retain**

Appendix III – Written Advice Submitted to Council Stormwater Rate Model

water on-site. *Although stormwater rates are only applied once properties have meters installed and accounts opened, the EAC feels strongly that there be separate mechanisms put in to place to recognize the impact vacant or developing properties have on stormwater infrastructure. These properties have a high risk of erosion and sedimentation which overloads the stormwater system more than developed properties.*