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**7.1**

## Environmental Advisory Committee 2021 Annual Report

Presented by: Anshuman Khare, EAC Chair (2021)

### RECOMMENDED MOTIONS:

1. That the Environmental Advisory Committee Annual Report for 2021 provided as an attachment to the January 17, 2022 agenda report titled "Environmental Advisory Committee 2021 Annual Report", be received as information.
2. That the Community Living Standing Committee recommend to Council that the Environmental Advisory Committee's Proposed 2022 Priorities as set out in the Committee's 2021 Annual Report be approved.

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Bylaw 35/2015, requires that an annual report be submitted to Council. The EAC 2021 Annual Report provides a summary of the Committee's activities during the year and also presents the EAC's proposed priorities for 2022.

### ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

N/A

### ALIGNMENT TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Environmental Strategy and Policy Development

- In partnership with related agencies, environmental strategies, policies and actions are developed to protect the environment.

Environment Grants Management

- Management and coordination of applications and approvals of the Environmental Initiatives.

### ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL (OR COMMITTEE) DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

The EAC Bylaw 35/2015 requires that an annual report be submitted to Council.

On January 25, 2021, EAC presented their annual report for information and Council approved the following priorities:

- Recommend 2021 Environmental Initiatives Grant Program and Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) Recipients
- Provide advice on the development of the Green Environment Strategy
- Provide advice on the Parks Bylaw review
- Provide advice on Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)/ Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP) bylaw and program development

## **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

The 2020 Annual Report provides a summary of the EAC's activities during the year. The proposed priorities were discussed by the EAC at their November 25, 2021 meeting and are provided for Council's consideration. The 2022 proposed priorities for the EAC are:

1. Recommend 2022 Environmental Initiatives Grant Program and Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) Recipients
2. Provide advice on the development of the Clean Energy Improvement Program
3. Provide advice on the development of the Climate Adaptation Strategy
4. Provide advice on the update and review of the Environmental Advisory Committee Bylaw and Sustainable Building Policy

The EAC 3-year work plan (2019-2021) was developed with Committee members and Environment staff. The work plan was developed to provide a longer term picture of the EAC's work load and identify potential priority areas for the next three years. The 3-year work plan expired in 2021 and Administration will work with the EAC to schedule a 2022-2024 strategic work plan session in 2022.

## **STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT**

The EAC approved their 2021 annual report and proposed 2022 priorities at their November 25, 2021 meeting.

The EAC includes seven representatives from the public and one Councillor. Non-voting representatives from various agencies, by invitation of the Committee, attend meetings and provide input and subject matter expertise. The EAC has a webpage on the City website which includes links to the EAC bylaw, the minutes of meetings and links to their Annual Reports.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Financial:

None at this time.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time.

Program or Service:

The 2022 priorities are aligned with the scheduled work of the Environment Branch. If the priorities are significantly changed from what is proposed, this could impact the programs and services provided by the Environment Branch.

Organizational:

None at this time.

## **ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED**

If Council does not wish to support the recommendation, the following alternatives could be considered:

Alternative 1.

Do not accept the recommended Environmental Advisory Committee priorities.

- Remove or add priorities with input from Council.

Report Date: January 17, 2022

Author: Meghan Myers

Department: Human Resources, Safety and Environment

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Diane McMordie (Interim)

Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts (Interim)

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# Environmental Advisory Committee

Annual Report to Council (2021)

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## RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Advisory Committee's 2021 Annual Report be accepted as information and that the Environmental Advisory Committee continue to operate as presently constituted through 2022.

## MEMBERSHIP

### Citizen Members (January 1 through to December 31, 2021)

Anshuman Khare (Chair)	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Sherman Hanowski (Vice Chair)	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Heidi Cossey	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Bill Marsh	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Adrienne McGarrigle	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Steve Lord	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Allison Lefebvre*	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Karlee Searle**	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term

\*Resigned February 24, 2021

\*\*Appointed April 6<sup>th</sup> to finish the last year of Allison Lefebvre's Term

### Council Representation

On October 21, 2019, Council approved a governance restructure as a two-year pilot project. As a result, the Council representative (and one alternate Council member) for Citizen Committees (i.e. EAC) will serve as an *ex officio* non-voting member.

In November 2020, Council appointed Councillor Hansen as the City Council representative for the Environmental Advisory Committee until November 2, 2021.

In November 2021, a new elected Council appointed Councillor Killick as the City Council representative and Councillor Biermanski as the alternate City Council representative for the Environmental Advisory Committee for 2022.

The EAC appreciates that 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 provided by Human Resources, Safety & Environment Department staff:

Payton Homeak, Environmental Coordinator – Community Strategy & Engagement, Human Resources, Safety & Environment (June – December 2021)  
Meghan Myers, Acting Manager, Human Resources, Safety & Environment  
Christian Benson, Manager, Environment (January – June 2021)  
Kate Polkovsky, Director, Environment & Utilities (January – June 2021)  
Ryan Stovall, Director, Human Resources, Safety & Environment (September – December 2021)

## 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.

Direction and assistance to the EAC were obtained through the City's Human Resources, Safety, and Environment Department staff.

On January 25, 2021, Council provided the EAC with the following annual priorities:

1. Recommend 2021 Environmental Initiatives Grant Program and Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) Recipients
2. Provide advice on the Environmental Master Plan (Green Environment Strategy) update
3. Provide advice on the Parks Bylaw review
4. Provide advice on Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)/Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP) Bylaw and program development

## COVID-19 Impacts

Specific impacts to the EAC workplan are described in the *Activities Progress Report* section of this report.

## ACTIVITIES PROGRESS REPORT

The EAC met nine times during 2021 (January, February, March, April, May, June, September, October, November). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the meetings were hosted virtually through Zoom.



## Priorities – Advice to Council

### ***Environmental Initiatives Grant Program (EIGP) Recommendations***

Due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EIGP received a low number of submissions on the October 7, 2021 application deadline. In consultation with the EAC, Environment staff extended the application deadline to November 12, 2021. The one-time extension for submission of applications was received on November 12, 2021 for the EIGP in accordance with existing Council Policy C-EUS-02.

On November 25, 2021 the EAC reviewed five applications totalling \$19,912 in requested funds. The EAC will present their recommendations to Council on January 17, 2022.

Relevant motion from November 25, 2021 EAC meeting:

Moved by B. Marsh

That the Environmental Advisory Committee recommend to the Community Living Standing Committee that the following EIGP applications be approved:

Applicant (alphabetical)	Project Description	Grant Allocation
BLESS -Big Lake Environment Support Society	Funds would be used to assemble photos and materials to print an animal pocket-sized guide, this would be the last installment of the Big Lake Wetlands pocket guide series.	\$2,250.00
Braeside Pop Up Neighbourhood Garden	Funding would support a neighbourhood pop-up garden. The group intends to use space to host an educational community workshop to increase awareness of growing food and build long-term community relationships.	\$5,000.00
Lacombe Park Garden and Connection Place	Funding would support phase two, to maintain and establish the Lacombe Park Community garden by continually building an accessible, permaculture	\$5,000.00

	garden which was started in 2019.	
Friends of Leo Nickerson School Enhancement Society	Funding would support a long-term naturalization project. The funds would be used to purchase native trees to re-establish a previous natural boundary along Cunningham road in the Leo Nickerson schoolyard. This project will provide a learning opportunity for all students at Leo Nickerson.	\$5,000.00
Riverlot 56 Naturalization Project	Funds will support a long-term community naturalization project to enhance the forest at Riverlot 56. This project will engage the community to volunteer and offer a learning opportunity for students to develop solutions to increase the success rate of this type of naturalization planting through the Pursuits Program at William D Cuts School.	\$2,662.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$33,200.00</b>	<b>\$19,912.00</b>

#### CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

As part of the overall funding recommendation EAC provided the following statement to be included in the Agenda Report to City Council:

The EAC has noted section 8d. of the [Administrative Procedures Policy C-EUS-02](#) and acknowledges that the Riverlot 56 Naturalization Project will take place outside of the St. Albert boundary. The committee recognizes the importance of Riverlot 56 as a natural recreational area and its overall benefits to residents in the community. Given the high level of community involvement and support from the City of St. Albert Public Operations department, the EAC recommends this is an eligible project for City Council to consider.

### ***Community Recognition Program***

There were no nominations received for the environmental stewardship category of the Community Recognition Program.

### ***Green Environment Strategy***

June 24, 2021 – Meghan Myers, Acting Manager, Environment, presented on the overall scope of the Green Environment Strategy including the principles and policies of the City's Municipal Development Plan Green Environment goal. The committee reviewed the Green Environment principles and provided additional feedback that supplemented the key questions highlighted in the What We Heard Report. This report is published on the Green Environment Strategy Project on the Cultivate the Conversation [webpage](#).

### ***Parks Bylaw Review***

November 25, 2021 – Manda Wilde, Senior Project Manager of Parks Development, City of St. Albert, gave a presentation on the draft Parks bylaw and led the committee in a discussion. Anne Royer, Senior Advisor of Grants and Partnerships, City of St. Albert, and Melissa Logan, Environmental Coordinator of Sturgeon River & Natural Areas, City of St. Albert, provided support to the discussion.

The discussions from this meeting is summarized in the What We Heard Report that is published on Parks Bylaw Cultivate the Conversation [webpage](#).

### ***Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP) Bylaw and Program Development***

January 28, 2021 – Meghan Myers and Christian Benson provided an update on St. Albert's CEIP. On February 25, 2021, the committee reviewed draft CEIP backgrounder information to Council and approved the following motion.

#### **Moved by S. Lord:**

That the Environmental Advisory Committee recommend to Community Living Standing Committee to pass a Clean Energy Improvement Tax Bylaw under Part 10, Division 6.1 of the Municipal Government Act and a motion to authorize the CAO to take the necessary steps to establish a Clean Energy Improvement Program, in order to give interested and qualifying St. Albert property owners the opportunity to make clean energy improvements to their properties (thereby reducing St. Albert's carbon footprint) for which the costs initially fronted by the City are paid or reimbursed over time through an annual special purpose property tax levy.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **EAC Input Provided to Administration**

### ***City Grant Program Review***

March 25, 2021, Anne Royer, Senior Advisor of Grants & Partnerships, gave a presentation on the Corporate Wide Grant Review and asked the attendees questions for discussion and feedback.

### ***Water Conservation Bylaw 22/2015 Review***

March 25, 2021 – Meghan Myers, Environmental Coordinator, Environment, introduced the Water Conservation bylaw and attendees provided feedback for review.

On April 22, 2021, the EAC reviewed email response from M. Myers on potential changes to the Water Conservation Bylaw discussed at the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. Administration provided the Committee with a red-lined version of the bylaw for consideration.

### ***Sustainable Building Policy Review***

May 27, 2021 – Christian Benson gave a presentation on the City's Sustainability Building Policy and its application to City projects. Administration provided the EAC with a red-lined version of the policy on September 23, 2021, to review and provide feedback.

September 23, 2021 – Meghan Myers and Cassie Kupsch provided an overview of the policy changes based on EAC comments.

## **Updates Provided to EAC**

### ***Sturgeon River Watershed Management Plan***

February 25, 2021 – Leah Kongsrude, Executive Director, North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance presented on the role of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, background on the Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance (SRWA), work completed to date in the Sturgeon River Watershed, Sturgeon River Watershed Management Plan document and next steps for the SRWA.

### ***Smart Water Meters Program Update***

April 22, 2021 – Brian Brost, Manager, Utilities, & Terra Shmyr, Financial Operations Controller, Revenue Services & Utilities, gave a presentation on the transformation of St. Albert's water meters and the post implementation application of the online water monitoring system.

### ***Waste & Diversion Programs***

May 27, 2021 – Olivia Kwok, Waste & Diversion Programs, Supervisor, City of St. Albert, provided a presentation on Waste and Diversion Program updates.

### ***Municipal Development Plan (MDP) - Flourish***

June 24, 2021 – Jessi Fry, Planner, Planning & Development Services and Lyndsay Francis, Planner, Planning & Development Services, introduced St. Albert's new MDP known as Flourish: Growing to 100K. This foundational document will guide the development of the Green Environment Strategy.

### ***Environmental Projects Tour***

Due to the continuation of COVID-19, the EAC Environmental Projects Tour was planned to take place on September 8, 2021, however due to the current COVID restrictions the tour will be postponed until 2022.

### ***Air Quality in the Capital Region***

September 23, 2021 – Cassie Brown, Air Quality Specialist, Alberta Environment and Parks and Farron Bibby, Air Quality Technologist, Alberta Environment and Parks provided information on air quality data and trends from 2020 and early 2021 within the City of St. Albert and the Capital Region.

### ***Environmental Management System Update***

October 28, 2021 – Kristen Glass, Environmental Management Supervisor, Environment, provided an update on the City's Environmental Management System programs and outcomes including the 2021 internal and external audit results with the Environmental Advisory Committee.

### ***Municipal Energy Management Program Updates***

November 1, 2021 – On behalf of Cassie Kupsch, Municipal Energy Specialist, Meghan Myers, Acting Manager, Environment, emailed the presentation on the Municipal Energy Management Program updates to the Environmental Advisory Committee. Updates included facilities projects, Energy Management Assessment updates, amount of grant funding accessed, total estimated operational cost savings, GHG reductions, employee engagement and future projects.

## 3-YEAR WORK PLAN

EAC will complete a 3-year work plan for 2022-2024 at the beginning of 2022.

### 2022 Priority Recommendations

These are the major environmental initiatives that are being developed in 2022 that require in depth formal involvement from EAC.

1. Recommend 2022 Environmental Initiatives Grant Program and Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) Recipients
2. Provide advice on the development of the Clean Energy Improvement Program
3. Provide advice on the development of the Climate Adaptation Strategy
4. Provide advice on the update and review of the Environmental Advisory Committee Bylaw and Sustainable Building Policy

The EAC greatly appreciates the support provided by City Administration in the completion of the EAC's 2021 priorities and workplan. The EAC was always provided comprehensive background information before taking up key issues and making recommendations to the Council. There are, however; two suggestions we would like the Council to consider:

- EAC should consider keeping a better record of discussions during open sessions (such as the Roundtable) so that ideas brought forward by the citizen members are recorded and acknowledged in the minutes of the meeting. This will ensure these ideas are properly followed-up and acted upon if warranted.
- Presentations from bodies that make annual presentations, should include a progress report of the previous year and a one year outlook to give better context for the presentation.

## **EAC ENDORSEMENT OF CITY PROGRAMS**

The EAC would like to acknowledge the continued support and leadership of St. Albert Council for establishing the 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 EAC acknowledges the dedication and competency of the City of St. Albert's Utilities and Environment staff throughout 2021 as well as their ongoing support towards the Committee. It is through the efforts of the Human Resources, Safety, and Environment, that important sustainability focused programs are developed and put into practice in the community to ensure resilience.