

Environmental Advisory Committee Advice – Urban Beekeeping Bylaw

Recommendation:

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) supports the establishment of a bylaw to permit and regulate urban beekeeping in St. Albert. As pollinators, bees play an integral role in plant pollination processes and survival. Plants are an integral component of the biological diversity of our living environment. The health and vigor of the urban environmental landscape that is St. Albert is reliant on plants for the role they play in contributing to community living. Urban bee keeping augments the natural bee community associated with these healthy urban environments. To that end, the EAC supports legislative action enabling members of the public, meeting defined parameters, to keep bees in St. Albert.

Provisions exist under the Municipal Government Act for Council to enact a bylaw encompassing urban beekeeping. Some preliminary work engaging St. Albert residents has revealed an expression of interest to pursue and support urban bee keeping. Provided appropriate precautions are taken to safeguard public safety and Alberta's apiculture industry, the EAC is pleased to see proactive legislation coming forward on this matter. While the EAC is aware that the final bylaw must comply with the provincial legislation, including the *Bee Act*, the *Municipal Government Act*, and other legislation as relevant, the EAC encourages Council to ensure that the final bylaw is minimally burdensome so as not to unduly discourage interested residents.

In conclusion, the EAC is hopeful that the introduction and ensuing debate of this proposed bylaw will spark a greater interest in urban beekeeping amongst the citizens of St. Albert. Additionally, should this bylaw be passed, the EAC encourages Council to support the new bylaw with a public awareness campaign to further encourage residents to take up apiculture.