

Environmental Advisory Committee Annual Report - 2006 to St. Albert City Council

1. RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Advisory Committee's 2006 annual report be accepted as information and that the Environmental Advisory Committee continue to operate through 2007.

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 both the City administration and Council with respect to environmental policies, strategies and initiatives especially where a public perspective is desirable. The committee membership includes three citizens at large, one member of council, a representative of Alberta Environment, a representative of the Capital Health Authority and one representative from a post secondary institution. All but the last position was filled in 2006.

Direction and assistance to the EAC was obtained through involvement of the City's Office of the Environment (OE) and occasional attendance of a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

As this was the first year of operation of the EAC, heavy reliance was placed on the Office of the Environment to identify potential areas of focus for the committee. Effort was made to establish effective methods to provide an interface with the general public with modifications to the City's web site and the trialing of some public meetings to obtain input on a couple of environmental issues. The committee received City staff presentations and updates related to a wide range of environmental matters. A tour of St. Albert enabled committee members an opportunity to view a number of sites of special significance.

2. MEMBERS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2006

• Nicholas Batchelor	Citizen-at-large	Last of one year term
• Frank Vagi	Citizen-at-large	Last of one year term
• Dan Stoker	Citizen-at-large	First of two year term
• Rasel Hossain	Alberta Environment	First of two year term
• Ludmilla Rodriguez	Capital Health Auth.	First of two year term
• Neil Korotash	Councillor	First of two year term
• Vacant	Academic	One year term

• Christine Brown (Alternate)	Councillor
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Committee assistance was obtained from Leah Jackson and Meghan Myers of the Office of the Environment. Jeannie York and Rachel Vincent of Legislative Services provided coverage of our minutes. Guy Boston provided representation of the Senior Leadership Team.

3. ACTIVITIES DURING 2006

The Environmental Advisory Committee met 11 times during 2006, meeting monthly except in January. No other meetings with Council or the Senior Management Team were deemed necessary.

Key Issues and Items Regarding Support to Council or Administration

Following the terms of reference for the committee, only one issue prompted a need for the committee to participate in public consultations at the wish of Council and that was related to the **Old Landfill and Sewage Lagoons Site Management Alternatives**. The committee received presentations from the OE on this topic. The committee reviewed and assisted with the planning of public meetings and provided input into the Site Management Action Plan that went to Council.

The committee provided input to Council regarding support for the White Spruce Forest Nomination to the **Heritage Tree Project**.

The committee reviewed the **Parks Bylaw** (a priority item of Council for 2006) and provided some suggestions for inclusion to Legal Services when the bylaw is revised.

The committee provided suggestions to improve the **Office of the Environment Web Page** with a special focus on public contact.

The committee provided encouragement and member participation in an effort by the OE to obtain public input into the creation of a new set of staff **Beaver Management Guidelines**, a need precipitated by public reaction to beaver removal. The OE gathered public input from a workshop which also involved wildlife experts. With committee member participation on a working committee involving Public Works staff, the OE and an EAC representative, public input was used to create a set of operational guidelines that were subsequently endorsed by the EAC. These guidelines will be used to guide field staff in beaver management for a one year period with review and possible modifications of the guidelines in the fall of 2007.

The committee provided suggestions to improve and to standardize the **'Update on Environmental Initiatives'** draft publication being prepared by the OE which will serve as a follow-up to the 2003 State of the Environment Report.

Relevant Motions Made and Carried

(EAC22-2006) That the City assume a leadership role in developing a common understanding with Sturgeon and Parkland Counties and other municipalities in determining which elevation line (on the floodplain map) to utilize for floodplain boundaries. CARRIED

(EAC26-2006) That the Environmental Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference be amended by adding to Section 3, Roles and Function, the following: "In carrying out its responsibilities, the Committee will give due consideration to the balance between environmental, economic and social aspects." CARRIED

(EAC31-2006) Moved by D. Stoker

That the Beaver Management Guidelines dated October 2006, as amended, be endorsed. CARRIED

(EAC35-2006) Moved by N. Batchelor

That the Environmental Advisory Committee recommend to Council that the membership of the EAC be increased from three to five citizens-at-large. CARRIED

Other Issues and Presentations

- Reviewed the **EAC Terms of Reference**.
- Reviewed **Methods to Obtain Public Input** to assist the EAC and the City with environmental issues: public meetings; email; City Lights; City web site.
- Received information on the **Sturgeon River Watershed Stewardship Group**.
- Received information on the **Big lake Task Force** and the detailed 1 - 100 year flood plain assessment.
- Received information on the City's **Rain Barrel Program**.
- Requested / received from Legal Services information on **Volunteer Waivers** for volunteering done by the general public for City-related projects.
- Received updates on the **West Regional Road**.
- Received information on an **Inspectors Direction, Environment Canada**, related to the former landfill site and Riel Park.
- Received information on **CAMRIF** (Canada Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund).
- Responded to public concerns related to **Marshlands Flooding** near Riel Park through a field inspection by a committee representative and brought to the attention of the OE.
- Received information on **REEP** (River Edge Enhancement Project).
- Received information from Glenn Tompolski, Director of Public Works and Roger Belley, Parks Coordinator on the **Parks and Open Spaces Management Plan** (POSMP) process involving a Corporate Working Team and the development of a Work Plan.
- Requested participation in the POSMP process prior to finalization of the draft plan.
- Received information on renovations to the **BLESS Platform** and offered advice to the OE to turn this into a good news story.
- Received updates on construction planned for **Grit Interceptors**.
- Received information related to **Lois Hole Provincial Park** development.
- Received a presentation on the **City of Edmonton Environmental Advisory Committee** by Mark Brostrom, Office of the Environment, City of Edmonton.
- Received information on the **Landfill Culvert Removal**.
- Participated in a **Bus Tour** of St. Albert to some of the most significant issue areas.
- Received a presentation by the OE on the **Stormwater Management Plan**.
- Received a presentation by the OE on the **Former Public Works Yard and Salt Contamination**.
- Requested / received information from the OE on **Focus Edmonton 30 Year City Plan**.
- Received an update on the **Riel Park Redevelopment**.
- Received information and provided suggestions related to a **State of the Environment Report** being prepared by OE.
- Received an information update on **Ted Hole Park**, a Council priority item for 2006.
- Received information on **Council Advocacy for Lois Hole Provincial Park**, a Council priority item for 2006.
- Received an information update on the **Noise Bylaw**, a Council priority item for 2006.
- Received an information update on the **Rotary Park**.
- Received an information update on damage by illegal snowmobile operation on the Riel Lagoon rehabilitation site and Lois Hole Provincial Park along with City plans to deal with the problem.
- Received an information update on stormwater management related to the northern portion of the Riel Recreation Park.

4. YEAR 2007 EAC ACTIVITIES

In 2007, it is anticipated that the Environment Advisory Committee will continue to provide input and advice as requested from Council especially related to issues where public consultation is necessary.

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

- Liaison with City departments
- Presentations or recommendations to Council
- Parks and Open Spaces Management Plan (Work Plan)
- A revision of the Noise Bylaw (Council priority carry-over from 2006)
- A revision of the Parks Bylaw (Council priority carry-over from 2006)
- Review and preparation of the Tree Bylaw (Council priority for 2007)
- Review and possible revision of Beaver Management Guidelines
- Rotary Park Implementation
- Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park Development
- Development of a Strategic Environmental Plan for the City of St. Albert

5. CONGRATULATIONS EXTENDED TO CITY

The Environment Advisory Committee wishes to congratulate the City in its innovative programs that encourage citizen participation in environmental responsibility as exemplified in the Rain Barrel Program initiated in 2006. Efforts to openly involve and encourage public input as demonstrated by the new web site and email solicitation on environmental issues must continue to be applauded.