

Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Update January 2015 – January 2016

The EAC met a total of seven times from January 2015 to January 2016. An updated Terms of Reference (TOR) was completed and approved by Council towards the end of 2015, and the EAC will move forward in 2016 under the new objectives listed in the TOR. The EAC was provided with regular updates on the Agricultural Master Plan, Development (Growth) plan for Colchester and Bremner, and the Municipal Development Plan.

1. Cosmetic Herbicides

Concerns were raised regarding the improper residential use of herbicides, which results in high concentrations entering our waterways, groundwater and soil. Many provinces and municipalities already have banned cosmetic herbicides. A presentation by Mr. Doug Davison from Recreation, Parks and Culture was completed and discussion followed regarding how the County manages “weeds” and other County initiatives such as the “Good Growing Neighbours” flyer. The committee continues to look at this concern, and is exploring a public education campaign.

2. Air Quality

In response to the Capital Region Air Quality Management Framework and study on air quality around the Capital Region, the EAC looked at ways which we can improve air quality within the County. The committee continues to look into this concern, and is exploring a public education campaign on idling vehicles. Representatives of the EAC supported the grand opening of the new Air Quality Monitoring Station in Ardrossan on Clean Air Day.

3. Beaver Hills Initiative

The EAC prepared a statement of support for the UNESCO Biosphere nomination for the Beaver Hills Moraine. The EAC continues to support Strathcona County’s involvement in the Beaver Hills Initiative.

4. Green Informational Program

As many of the items the EAC discusses often come back to a lack of public awareness and education. We can develop specific, targeted ads that would refer people back to information on the County’s website. There is a lot of great information on the website and these ads will direct people to the appropriate location and hopefully become more informed about a particular topic. We are currently working on the digital ad content and hope to see them displayed in 2016. Topics include:

- a) Air Quality
- b) Environmental Sensitivities
- c) Wood Smoke and Recreational Fire Pits
- d) Abandoned products on private property (SCRAP)
- e) Lawn Care: Water & Dandelions
- f) Rain Water Harvesting
- g) Black Knot

- h) Fall Lawn Care
- i) Apple Maggots

5. Community Gardens

The EAC is working with Shelia Flint in Transportation and Agriculture Services to develop a policy and procedure for an expansion of the community garden initiative. The EAC continues to support the idea of more community gardens within the County, and being a participant in the process. This project is currently on hold until the Agriculture Master Plan, specifically the Urban Agriculture Strategy, is integrated into administration.

6. Public Garden

Continuing with food security and community gardens discussions, the EAC proposed creating a community garden green space that showcases different types of gardening and fruit trees. This could be an educational piece, offering classes and healthy eating, possibilities of partnering with schools and community programs for adults and youths. The EAC continues to explore this initiative.

7. Urban Hen Pilot Project

Discussion of a one year pilot project for backyard hens; this initiative ties in with the local food initiative as well. Information was presented to the committee on Red Deer County and City of Edmonton's pilot project. This project is currently on hold until the Agriculture Master Plan, specifically the Urban Agriculture Strategy, is integrated into administration.

8. Backyard Bees Pilot Project

Discussion of a one year pilot project for backyard bee hives. Information was presented to the committee on the City of Edmonton's pilot project. This project is currently on hold until the Agriculture Master Plan, specifically the Urban Agriculture Strategy, is integrated into administration.