# Environmental Advisory Committee

## Annual Report to Council (2023)

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## RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Advisory Committee's 2023 Annual Report be accepted as information and that the Environmental Advisory Committee continue to operate as presently constituted through 2024.

## MEMBERSHIP

### Citizen Members (January 1 through to December 31, 2023)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bill Marsh (Chair) | Citizen-at-large | First of two-year term |
| Carmen Piercey (Vice Chair) | Citizen-at-large | Last of two-year term |
| Adrienne McGarrigle | Citizen-at-large | Last of two-year term |
| Scott Kilborn | Citizen-at-large | First of two-year term |
| Kevin Aschim | Citizen-at-large | Last of two-year term |
| Alan Luck | Citizen-at-large | Last of two-year term |
| Monique Vetch | Citizen-at-large | Last of two-year term |

### Council Representation

In November 2022, Council reappointed Councillor Killick as the City Council representative and Councillor Biermanski as the alternate City Council representative for the Environmental Advisory Committee for 2023.

In November 2023, Council appointed Councillor Biermanski as the City Council representative and Councillor MacKay as the alternate City Council representative for the Environmental Advisory Committee for 2024.

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 Government/Indigenous Relations & Environment Department staff:

Meghan Myers, Manager, Environment
Payton Homeak, Environmental Coordinator – Community Strategy & Engagement

## 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 Government/Indigenous Relations and Environment Department staff.

On January 10, 2023, Council provided the EAC with the following annual priorities:

1. Recommend the 2023 Environmental Initiatives Grant program and Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) recipients.

2. Provide advice on the update and review of the Sustainable Building Policy and Water Conservation Bylaw.

3. Provide advice on the development of urban biodiversity pilot education programming (i.e., native bees, coyotes, etc.)

## ACTIVITIES PROGRESS REPORT

The EAC met seven times during 2023 (January, February, March, April, May, June, September, and October). Meetings transitioned to a hybrid model for members to optionally attend in person or via Zoom.

### Priorities – Advice to Council

#### *Native Pollinator Monitoring and Education Program Pilot*

On January 26, 2023 – Payton Homeak, Environment Coordinator– Community Strategy & Engagement and Megan Evans, President, Alberta Native Bee Council, gave a presentation on native pollinators in Alberta and provided a program overview to educate residents on native pollinators. Based on discussions the Environmental Advisory Committee passed a motion recommending Council support the monitoring and education pilot program of native bees in partnership with the Alberta Native Bee Council.

#### *Community Recognition Program Nomination Review*

April 23, 2023 – Payton Homeak, Environment Coordinator– Community Strategy & Engagement provided an update on the Community Recognition Program and introduced two nominations in the Environmental Stewardship category.

Based on discussions, the Environmental Advisory Committee recommended to Council the two 2023 Community Recognition nominations from the same organization be considered as one nomination for approval on May 16, 2023.

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

The grant program was impacted by the changes to the Civic Granting Policy (C-CC-23) passed on June 20, 2023. The Environmental Initiatives Grant program has transitioned to be classified as a Level 2 Grant Program. Under the changes reflected in this policy, the EAC can continue one of the key priorities to review the annual EIGP applications, provide recommendations, and approve the applications.

On October 26, 2023, the EAC reviewed 8 applications and 7 applications were approved for funding.

Relevant motion from October 26, 2023, EAC Meeting:

Moved by M. Veitch

That the Environmental Advisory Committee approved the following Environmental Initiatives Grant Program application.

| # | Project Name (alphabetical) | Project Description: | $ Requested | $ Approved by EAC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Alberta Fish and Game Association | To create a poster series that highlights the province's wildlife and habitat, addresses environmental issues in Alberta, and educates by promoting ethical and responsible stewardship of the land and environment. The posters will focus on Alberta's natural areas and specifically, St. Albert and the Sturgeon watershed where possible. AFGA will also offer outreach to elementary schools who would like a presentation by our staff to introduce the posters and do a presentation for students. | $5000.00 | $0.00 |
| 2. | Coal Mine Road Community Garden Rainwater Capture System | To fund the supplies needed to build phase 2 of a sustainable rainwater harvesting system by capturing rainwater from the roofs of existing buildings on site. The rainwater capture project will continue to expand provide a solution having no access to water for the community gardens and | $4,095.00 | $4,095.00 |

| | | | | |
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| | | provide the opportunity to construct 3 effective and working compost systems on site. | | |
| 3. | Joseph M Demko Biodiversity Project | This project will educate students on how to support pollinators and increase This project will educate students on how to support pollinators and increase biodiversity in the community. Funds requested will purchase the supplies needed for Grade 1, 2 and Junior High students to build 60 bird houses and 10 bat houses. | $700.00 | $700.00 |
| 4. | Lacombe Park Community Garden and Connection Place | Main objective is to maintain and improve the garden, enhance food production through soil amendments and continue developing educational resources and materials on garden techniques practiced including permaculture design, growing/ cloning plants, and water capture. | $5,000.00 | $5,000.00 |
| 5. | Sister Alphonse Academy | Funds requested will create and contruct an outdoor learning space with a connection to the Indigenous ways of learning by establishing an outdoor medicine wheel garden and integrate native plants that Indigenous people embraced in the past and present and to educate students on the historical significance and medicinal properties of these plants. | $6,464.00 | $7,076.87<br><br>*Based on the quotes provided, grant funds totaled this approved amount. |
| 6. | St. Albert Backyard Gardening Group | Funds will support 2024 community events that promote organic and environmentally friendly approaches to gardening, encourages reusing and sharing materials, and | $10,000 | $7,500 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | supports people in the community with their garden projects. Events include a Seed Swap in February, Plant Swap in May, a Harvest Celebration and Perennial Swap in September and a Gardening Symposium for winter 2024/2025. | | |
| 7. | St. Albert Botanic Park - Sustainable Soil Project | Funds requested will support the second stage in remediating major deficiencies in the soil by adding compost in various park beds and gardens at the St. Albert Botanic Garden and continue to engage volunteers and educate the public on the benefits of composting. | $5,000.00 | $5,000.00 |
| 8. | St. Albert Seniors Association | Funds will support reviving the Seniors Association Backyard Garden on their property. Would like to establish a pollinator garden including variety of pollinator friendly perennials that will bloom at different stages of the season, provide monthly workshops for volunteers, and grow produce to supply to the SASA bistro for all seniors who visit the centre. | $8,790.00 | $7,500.00 |
| | | | | |
| | **Total Grant Funds Requested:** | | **$40,954.00** | |
| | **Total Grant Funds Available:** | | **$40,079.25** | |
| | **Total Grant Funds Approved:** | | **$36,871.87** | |
| | **($40,954.00) – ($36,871.87) =** | | **$3,207.38** | Funds carried over |

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Moved by C. Piercey

The Environmental Advisory Committee provided additional consideration and discussion for the following applications that exceeded $5,000 in requested funds:

Sister Alphonse Academy, St. Albert Backyard Gardening Group, and the St. Albert Seniors Association.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## EAC Input Provided to Administration

### *Sturgeon River and Natural Areas Overview*

February 23, 2023 – Melissa Logan, Environment Coordinator–Sturgeon River and Natural Areas provided a presentation on Sturgeon River and natural areas programs, and stormwater management facility assessment and maintenance program.

### *Water Conservation Bylaw*

March 23, 2022 – Payton Homeak, Environment Coordinator– Community Strategy & Engagement provided an update on the Water Conservation Bylaw. The Committee approved the changes and passed a motion advising Council to support the proposed changes to the bylaw.

## Updates Provided to EAC

### *Waste & Diversion Programs*

April 27, 2023 – Katie Burd, Waste & Diversion Programs, Supervisor, City of St. Albert, provided a presentation on the 2022 Waste and Diversion Programs.

### *Environmental Sustainability Policy Review*

April 27, 2023 – Meghan Myers, Manager, Environment provided an overview and update to the Committee on the Environmental Sustainability Policy review.

### *Sustainability Building Policy Review*

May 25, 2023 – Gage Tweedy, Municipal Energy Specialist, Environment, gave a presentation on the proposed updates to the Sustainable Building Policy.

### *2022 Environment Report Card Review*

May 25, 2023 –– Payton Homeak, Environment Coordinator– Community Strategy & Engagement provided a presentation on the updates to the 2022 Environment Report Card.

### *Environmental Projects Tour*

June 22, 2023 – The Committee took a scheduled tour and stopped at three unique locations. The Committee visited the pollinator garden and natural forested area at Coal Mine Park. Community member and Master Gardener, Dale Ford, provided an overview of the environmental impacts and pollinator enhancements of this project. The second

location was the St. Albert Compost Depot, where the Committee got to see the new addition of the diseased branches pile and how public operations staff maintains the depot. To conclude, Melissa Logan, Environmental Coordinator - Sturgeon River and Natural Areas, provided an overview of the constructed wetlands on Villeneuve Road, highlighting the historical significance and value of the site.

### *City-Wide Grants Update*

September 28, 2023 – Anna Royer, Supervisor, Grants & Business Partnerships, Recreation & Parks, provided an update on the City's Civic Granting Policy (C-CC-23). The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and principles under which civic funding in the form of a grant that may be awarded to eligible individuals, organizations, or businesses relative to the Environmental Initiatives Grant Program.

## 3-YEAR WORK PLAN

On December 14, 2022, the EAC met to complete a 3-year work plan (2023-2025). The work plan was developed to provide a longer-term picture of the EAC's workload and identify potential priority areas for the next three years. The session was facilitated by City staff from Strategic Services. Prior to the session the EAC reviewed City documents including Flourish, Corporate Business Plan, and the Environmental Master Plan. The plan was approved during the March 23, 2023, meeting and a motion was made to submit the workplan with this report for Councils review.

### 2024 Priority Recommendations

These are the major environmental initiatives that are being developed in 2024 that require in depth formal involvement from EAC:

1. Review and approve the 2024 Environmental Initiatives Grant Program and review and recommend the Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) Recipients.

2. Provide advice on the update and review of the Sustainable Buildings Policy C-P&E-12, Environmental Management of Contaminated Sites Policy C-IS-06,and Idle-Free Bylaw 16/2007.

3. Provide advice on the Climate Adaptation Implementation Strategy

The EAC greatly appreciates the support provided by City Administration in the completion of the EAC's 2024 priorities and 2023-2025 workplan. The EAC was always provided comprehensive background information before taking up key issues and making recommendations to the Council.

## 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 Environment staff throughout 2023 as well as their ongoing support towards the Committee. It is through the efforts of the Government/Indigenous and Environment, department that important sustainability focused programs are developed and put into practice in the community to ensure resilience.

# APPENDIX A

## Environmental Advisory Committee – Work Plan 2023 - 2025

Established under Bylaw 35/2015, the City of St. Albert's Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) provides strategic advice and input to Council on the development and implementation of the Environmental Master Plan and other related long-range strategies including the Green Environment Strategy. The Committee also provides input to Administration during the development of Council and administrative policies, plans and initiatives and feedback on public engagement.

Given the breadth of environmental policies, strategies, and initiatives (see references below – page 6) within the City of St. Albert, the Committee's work is invaluable. To maximize the EAC's value to Council and Administration, this plan endeavors to provide insight into the next three years of the committee's work.

There are three distinct functions performed by the EAC to meets its goals:

1. Provide Formal Advice to Council
    - Provide formal written advice to Council, typically on issues identified as priorities by Council.
2. Provide Input to Administration
    - Provide informal comments on environmental projects or issues brought by Administration.
3. Receive Information from Administration
    - New information or updates can be provided to the Committee on topics that are deemed necessary, including topics that the Committee will later be expected to provide input or advice on.

As an advisory committee in which membership changes each year and ensuring there is capacity to provide advice and expert information to new policies, strategies, and initiatives, it is expected the proposed plan will undergo changes. Nonetheless the EAC supports the value of providing insight of its likely work in the next 3 years. At the same time, acknowledging that the EAC does not act on its own, the plan will reflect what Council and Administration currently see EAC undertaking in the foreseeable future. This plan is a dynamic document that will be reviewed and updated annually while retaining the 3-year forecast that aligns with the City's three-year business planning and budget process. With that approach in mind, the first year will always contain greater detail.

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is required by the Municipal Government Act and sets out the goals and policies for all aspects of the municipality's development: population and growth management; housing and neighbourhood design; economic activities and development; parks, recreation and schools; environmental management;

transportation and infrastructure; social, health and protective services and intermunicipal and regional cooperation and planning.

Committee actions are either **provide advice to Council**, **provide input to Administration, or receive information**

| **Air** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • **Air Quality Data and Education**<br>• **Climate Change**<br>• **Reduce Energy Consumption & GHG Emissions**<br>• **Energy Efficiency Community Based Programs**<br>• **Transportation** | **Topic** | **2023** | **2024** | **2025** |
| | Air Quality Data & Education | **Provide input to Admin**<br>Air Quality Resource for residents to borrow form the St. Albert library. Test the indoor & outdoor air quality resources and review manual before launch. | | **Receive information**<br>2024 ambient air quality data (level within CRAQMF, trends, number of poor air quality days, comparison with other locales, etc.) from AEP and ACA. |
| | Idle-Free Bylaw | | **Receive information**<br>Metrics of Idle free bylaw update<br><br>**Provide Advice to Council**<br>Idle free bylaw update | |
| | Climate Adaptation Plan | | **Provide input to Admin**<br>Review and provide recommendations implementation actions | |
| | Energy Efficiency Community Based Programs | **Receive Information**<br>Provide an update on incentive programs to encourage residential property owners to implement | **Receive Information**<br>Provide an update on incentive programs to encourage residential property owners to implement energy efficiency and | **Receive Information**<br>Provide an update on incentive programs to encourage residential property owners to |

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| | | energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades. | renewable energy upgrades. | implement energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades.<br><br>**Provide input to Admin**<br>Final Report on the Home Energy Efficiency Program (2023-2025) |
| | Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals | | **Receive Information**<br>Review of implementation plan of the Greenhouse Gases Emissions Reduction Goals- | |
| | Sustainable Building Policy Review | **Advice to Council**<br>Review Policy and Updates | | |
| | Environmental Sustainable Policy Update | **Provide input to Admin**<br>Review Policy and framework to advance City and community environmental goals | | |
| | | | | |

## Land

- MDP; Development of Long-Range Community Strategies
- Preserve and Manage Trees,

| Topic | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Municipal Development Plan; Development of Long-Range strategies | **Receive Information**<br>Green Environment Strategy Update on Implementation | **Provide input to Admin:**<br>Resilient Infrastructure Long-Range Strategy: address EMP Goals | **Provide input to Admin:**<br>Mobility Choices Long-Range Strategy: address EMP Goals (Promote |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parks, and Natural Areas<br>• Waste and Diversion Programs<br>• Net Zero Accelerator Program | | Strategy and Pilot Final Report | (Manage Air Quality, Reduce Energy Consumption, reduce garbage to landfill, Reduce water consumption) | Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Transportation Choices) |
| | Planning for Millennium Park Development | | **Receive Information**<br>Completion of detailed design inclusive of public engagement, and construction for the Millennium Park site, meeting the vision for the park as “an active, multi-use park; a centre-piece of downtown" | |
| | Waste & Diversion Programs | **Receive information**<br>St. Albert Waste and Diversion Programs Update, Updates to the Residential Solid Waste Management Bylaw and Federal/Provincial changes. | **Receive information**<br>St. Albert Waste and Diversion Programs Update. | **Receive information**<br>St. Albert Waste and Diversion Programs Update. |
| | Net Zero Accelerator Program | **Receive information**<br>Provide an overview of the program, tools, services, and knowledge to develop and implement Community Energy and Emissions Plans | **Provide Input to Administration**<br>Participate in an online workshop to refine projects, policies, and workplan. | **Receive information**<br>Review Recommendations. Summary Report and next steps |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Natural Areas | **Provide Input to Administration** Review the 2023 Integrated Pest Management Plan | **Receive information** Invasive Species Risk Identification and Management Plan | **Provide Input to Administration** Natural Area Protection Policy |

## Water

- **Protect and Improve the Sturgeon River Watershed**
- **Improve Water Quality of the Sturgeon River**
- **Reduce Water Consumption**

| Topic | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Watershed Management | **Receive information** Review Keep Fish Wet Program, Stormwater management facility assessment and maintenance program | **Provide Input to Administration** Riparian Areas Restoration Program | |
| Water Quality | **Receive information** Review urban Primary Land and Vegetation Inventory assessments, Pesticide Updates | **Receive information** River water quality updates | **Provide Input to Administration** Water Quality Improvements |
| Water Conservation | **Provide advice to Council** Review of Water Conservation Bylaw | | |

## People

- **Foster Community Environmental Stewardship**
- **Community Grants**
- **Community Recognition Program**
- **Urban Biodiversity**

| Topic | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Environmental Initiatives Grant (EIG) | **Receive Information** City wide Civic Grant Program Updates effective September 2023 **Provide input to Admin** | **Provide input to Admin** EIG review and brainstorming of potential initiatives / projects | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pilot Education Program** | Environment Communications Plan | | **Provide input to Admin** Update of the Communications Plan and Programs | |
| | Community Recognition Program | **Provide Advice to Council** Environmental Stewardship Nomination Review | **Provide Advice to Council** Environmental Stewardship Nomination Review | **Provide Advice to Council** Environmental Stewardship Nomination Review |
| | Urban Biodiversity Pilot Program | **Provide Advice to Council** Native Bee Monitoring & Education Program<br><br>**Provide input to Admin** Native Bee Monitoring and Education Resources; Coyote Education Pilot | **Receive Information** Update on 2023 programming<br><br>**Provide input to Admin** Further engagement and resources to piloting the programming | **Receive Information** Update on the programming |

**REFERENCES**:

Corporate Business Plan 2018 – 2021 (includes Council Strategic Priority #6: Environmental Stewardship: Explore innovative environmental and conservation opportunities)
Environmental Advisory Committee Bylaw 35/2015
Idle Free Bylaw 16/2007
Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 15/2007
Land Use Bylaw 9/2005

Environmental Sustainability; Policy C-EUS-01
Environmental Initiatives Grant Program; Policy C-EUS-02

Cultivating Our Future – Community Sustainability Framework (2015)
Environmental Master Plan (2014)
Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (2010)
Utilities Master Plan (2014)
Transportation Master Plan (2015)
SMART City Master Plan (2015)

Capital Region Air Quality Management Framework (2009)
Capital Region Particulate Matter Response Plan (2011)
St. Albert Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Forecast and Target Report (2009)

St. Albert Local Action Plan for Energy Conservation and Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2013)
Parks and Open Spaces Management Plan (2007)
St. Albert Natural Area Conservation & Management Plan (2015)
Urban Forest Management Plan (2017)
Integrated Pest Management Plan (2017)
Grey Nuns White Spruce Park Management Plan (2014)
Solid Waste Management Systems Review (2008)
State of the Sturgeon River Watershed Report (2012)
Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Plan (2012)