

CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Beaver Hills Initiative Letter of Support

Motion:

That Council provide a letter of support to the Beaver Hills Initiative - Biosphere Reserve nomination.

Purpose:

To support the Beaver Hills Initiative's nomination to have the Beaver Hills area designated as a Biosphere Reserve under UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) "Man and Biosphere" Program.

Background:

The Beaver Hills Moraine is a 1,595 km² area located east of the Capital Region that spans across Strathcona County, Leduc County, Camrose County, Beaver County, and Lamont County. The Beaver Hills area includes Elk Island National Park, Miquelon Lake Provincial Park, the Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, and the Strathcona Wilderness Centre. This unique biological area is extensively treed, and consists of hummocky terrain rich in native wetlands and aspen dominated Boreal mixed wood forest habitat.

The Beaver Hills Initiative (BHI) was initiated in 2002 to address development pressures in close proximity to the boundaries of Elk Island National Park. It is a multi-stakeholder collaboration comprised of local governments, Federal and Provincial agencies and other organizations with interests in the area.

In 2009, BHI began preparing a nomination for Beaver Hills to be designated as a Biosphere Reserve through UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Program. An area designated as a Biosphere Reserve demonstrates excellence in the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development practices at a regional scale. If designated, Beaver Hills would become internationally recognized as a member of a global network of 631 Biosphere Reserves in 119 countries (16 in Canada).

Prior to submitting the completed Biosphere Reserve nomination to UNESCO, the nomination must be endorsed by the authorities and agencies responsible for the protected areas, as well as elected local governments that are representatives of the communities located within the area.

The BHI is seeking the City of Fort Saskatchewan's support in its Biosphere Reserve nomination. This would include a letter of support for the Biosphere Reserve nomination. The Beaver Hills Initiative's intent is to have their Biosphere Reserve nomination completed and ready for endorsement by May 2015.

Plans/Standards/Legislation:

The City of Fort Saskatchewan Community Sustainability Plan 2014 Update reflects the vision of the community for the next 30 years. One of the sustainability principles identified in the document is Stewardship of the Environment. This includes the commitment to the preservation and enhancement of natural ecosystems.

Alternatives:

- 1) That Council provide a letter of support to the Beaver Hills Initiative - Biosphere Reserve nomination.
- 2) That Council not provide a letter of support to the Beaver Hills Initiative - Biosphere Reserve nomination, and advise how they wish to proceed.

Attachments:

1. Appendix A - Letter of Support for the Beaver Hills Initiative (BHI)- Biosphere Nomination
 2. Appendix B - Beaver Hills Initiative- Biosphere Reserve Nomination
 3. Appendix C - Beaver Hills Initiative PowerPoint Presentation
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Prepared by:	Matthew Siddons Current Planner, Planning & Development	Date: February 13, 2015
Approved by:	Troy Fleming General Manager, Infrastructure & Community Services	Date: February 18, 2015
Reviewed by:	Kelly Kloss City Manager	Date: February 18, 2015
Submitted to:	City Council	Date: February 18, 2015