

# **CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN**

## **Notice of Motion – Urban Bees**

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### **Motion:**

Council direct Administration to bring forward an Urban Bees implementation strategy, to include impacts on legislation, process for implementation, and estimate of budget/resource requirements, for Council consideration by the end of the first quarter of 2017.

### **Purpose:**

To consider the notice of motion from Councillor Randhawa related to Urban Bees.

### **Background:**

Several municipalities in the Capital Region and in other parts of North America are exploring their policies and procedures regarding allowing rural agricultural practices in urban areas, which have generally been prohibited until now. This includes further research and policy development regarding the keeping of livestock for the purposes of producing food for personal consumption. Such livestock can include hens, bees, rabbits and other small breed livestock.

Some municipalities in the Capital Region are undertaking, or preparing to undertake, the inclusion of Urban Bees in their bylaws and policies.

In 2015, a presentation was given to Council on developing an Urban Bees Program. The presentation was received as information, however no direction was given to Administration to follow-up or investigate implementing such a program in Fort Saskatchewan.

### **Administrative Overview:**

There are a number of items to be considered from a governance, administrative, and operational perspective when moving forward with a project such as Urban Bees. These include:

1. Approval, implementation, and education:
  - a) Criteria outlining who is eligible, location of the residence, size of the yard, and citizen's ability to care for the animals.
  - b) Application and approval processes.
  - c) Education on practices for the proper care and management to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the animals, in addition to minimizing the impact on the surrounding residences.
  - d) Evaluation process to determine the success of the program.
  - e) Communication and media campaign.
2. Processes for notification and appeals:
  - a) Criteria for notifying neighbors including the radius to be used, and if full or partial consensus is needed of those neighbors.
  - b) Criteria for appeals and responding to complaints by neighbors.
  - c) Determination if approval is a one-time occurrence or on an on-going basis.
  - d) Clarify if the approval is based on the occupant of the property, owner or renter, or can the use continue even if the property is sold.
3. Regulations and enforcement:
  - a) Process for ongoing inspections of approved properties.
  - b) Understanding the role of Municipal Enforcement and/or Planning and Development in the enforcement of the bylaws and policies.

- c) Review and amendment of the Land Use Bylaw, Community Standards Bylaw, and Animal Control Bylaw.
  - d) Investigation of provincial or federal regulations.
4. Costs and resources:
- a) Understanding of the impact to City departments, which includes Planning and Development, Municipal Enforcement Services, Infrastructure Management, and Legislative (Legal) Services.
  - b) Expectation on the cost recovery goals balanced with the financial impacts to the organization. This includes setting application fees, inspection fees and penalties.
  - c) Although complaints for most City programs are few, there are a number of examples where those few have taken substantial staff time. In many cases these deal with neighbors' disputes often related to the interpretation of whether a bylaw has been contravened, and the expected course of action. These complaints should be anticipated and factored into work plans and enforcement priorities.
5. Impacts to neighboring citizens:
- a) Understanding the impacts to surrounding neighbors. Noise, smell, cleanliness and health risks must all be managed in addition to ensuring the hives are well kept and their appearance is managed.
  - b) What role do neighbors play after an approval is received.

While some of the research and preparation for a pilot project can be gleaned from the documents made available by other municipalities, there is need to tailor the project to the City's various bylaws, administrative practices, and organizational structures. The time and expense of implementing such a project should not be underestimated.

### **2014 – 2017 Strategic Plan**

The 2014-2017 Strategic Plan is a higher level planning document providing direction to our organization and in some cases outlining specific strategies. In the first quarter of 2015 Council reviewed and reaffirmed the content and direction of the Strategic Plan. This review provided an opportunity to make mid-term adjustments, which in turn would lead to operational work plans being adjusted to accommodate that new strategic direction. Some of the major initiatives included as part of the Strategic Plan are:

- £ Transit Pilot Project;
- £ Organic Waste Pilot;
- £ Recreation and Parks Master Plan update;
- £ business / industry attraction;
- £ future municipal growth study;
- £ affordable housing opportunities and infill development;
- £ intergovernmental stakeholder relationship development; and
- £ development of strategies for future financial requirements.

All of the initiatives listed on the previous page have been integrated into department work plans and budgets. Developing an Urban Bees strategy had not been identified, and as such, has not been included within current work plans or the upcoming Budget Deliberations.

**Financial Implications:**

The financial impact of undertaking an Urban Bees Program will be evaluated if this motion passes. This may involve the use of external expertise.

**Internal Impacts:**

Resources from a number of departments will be needed to analyze and build a program tailored for Fort Saskatchewan.

**Alternatives:**

As Urban Bee programs are fairly new to the Capital Region, however there are a number of programs already in development, Council may wish to delay moving forward to better understand the full impact of such a program. As well, this would allow Council time to discuss the inclusion of an Urban Bees Strategy as part of the next strategic planning process.

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File No.:

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