

CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Fort Honey Bee - Urban Beekeeping Implementation Strategy

Motion:

That Council direct Administration to proceed with implementation of the proposed urban beekeeping strategy, and that start-up costs for the urban beekeeping strategy, not to exceed \$5,000, be funded from the Financial Stabilization Reserve.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding the impacts of implementing an urban beekeeping strategy.

Background:

Urban agriculture efforts have become increasingly popular locally, provincially and across North America. Municipalities are reviewing their current policies and practices and allowing more flexibility when it comes to implementing urban agriculture. One such example gaining momentum is the urban beekeeping movement. The City of Edmonton and the Town of High River have recently launched programs specific to permitting urban bees.

In response to a notice of motion passed on October 25, 2016, Council directed Administration to bring forward an urban beekeeping implementation strategy. This strategy was to include impacts on legislation, outline a process for implementation, and an estimate of budget and resource requirements. Administration is proposing a 2 year pilot project for Fort Honey Bee. This will allow for time to assess the program and to make any necessary changes. Should the program be deemed a success based on the estimates for resource requirements and community participation, the program will continue beyond the 2 year pilot project.

Impacts on Legislation

Under the City's Animal Control Bylaw C7-16, bees are specifically included as 'prohibited animals'. For the project, this Bylaw would have to be updated to allow for urban beekeeping through licensing and to address related enforcement actions. Should this program continue past the pilot stage, a bylaw specific to beekeeping could be considered, as was done in High River.

In addition, the Fees and Charges Bylaw would be amended to incorporate a licence fee.

Process for Implementation

As the beekeeping season starts in the spring, implementation of this program is time sensitive. As such, it would need to become a priority project for Administration over the next several months. The scope of this project includes private residential lands, as the intent is to allow for backyard beekeeping.

Finalize Beekeeping Requirements (February 2017)

The proposed draft requirements outlined in Appendix B have been based on standards used in other municipalities. These requirements have been sent to a local beekeeping group for review and comments.

Development of Application Form and Process (February 2017)

Building on the requirements, an application form and approval process would be developed. Based on a review of comparators, it would be appropriate to proceed with a licensing program specific to beekeeping. The program would be similar to business licences, which require annual renewal.

Update the Applicable Bylaws (March 2017)

As previously noted, the applicable City bylaws would need to be updated.

Training (March 2017/April 2017)

Municipal Enforcement staff would be required to attend training sessions involving general bee information and proper care of bee hives. This training does not include dealing with bee swarms. In the event there is a swarm, the property owner would be required to retain a bee expert.

Education and Program Launch (March/April 2017)

A key component of this strategy will be public education. Working with Corporate Communications, a plan to launch the program will be required. This will include determining messaging, branding and updating the City's website. Other means of communication such as newspaper ads and social media feeds may also be considered.

Tracking and Monitoring (2017 and 2018)

The program will be monitored for 2 years to address any changes which are required. Council would be provided a status update in 2018.

Estimate of Resource Requirements

Staffing resources from the following departments would be required:

Planning and Development

- Creation of an application form and approval process (20 hours)
- Finalize requirements (5 hours)

Municipal Enforcement

- Update Animal Control Bylaw (15 hours)
- Training for Officers (100 hours)

Corporate Communications

- Messaging, branding and education (25 hours)

Legislative Services

- Review of bylaws and reports (10 hours)
- Update Fees and Charges Bylaw (15 hours)

Total: 190 hours

Existing staffing can be used to implement the proposed program. No additional staffing resources would be required, providing the number of licences issued does not exceed 5 per year. The need for additional staffing can be monitored and evaluated throughout the pilot project.

Plans/Standards/Legislation:

Municipal

While the City's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan does not specifically address urban agriculture, one of the guiding principles is to "...look for ways to improve our services, keeping the leading edge in sight and being open to change."

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and Community Sustainability Plan (CSP) do not contain specific policies about urban agriculture. The CSP does include the following related action item – "*In partnership with local community organizations, promote the creation of a local food policy (CC17).*"

The impacts to municipal legislation have previously been noted.

Provincial

Pursuant to the *Alberta Bee Act*, all beekeepers are required to register with the provincial apiculturist and must comply with all associated regulations. They are also required to have a Premises Identification (PID) as per the *Alberta Animal Health Act*.

Federal

The importing of used beehives or used beehive equipment into Canada is not permitted. This restriction is outlined in section 57 of the *Health of Animals Regulations*. Honey for human consumption is regulated under the *Canada Agricultural Products Act* and the *Honey Regulations*.

Financial Implications:

Expected start-up costs for 2017 would need to be approved from a reserve and include the following:

- Initial training for Municipal Enforcement Officers - \$3,000
- Communication prints and ads: \$1,500

Corporate ongoing costs such as training for new Officers (\$500/year) would need to be considered for the 2018 operating budget.

The proposed annual Beekeeping Licence fee is \$75.

Attachments:

Appendix A: Fort Honey Bee Work Plan
Appendix B: Draft Requirements
Appendix C: Municipal Comparators

File No.:

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Approved by:	Dean McCartney Acting Director, Planning and Development	Date: January 24, 2017
Reviewed by:	Troy Fleming Acting City Manager	Date: January 30, 2017
Submitted to:	City Council	Date: February 14, 2017