

REPORT TO COUNCIL



Date: February 20, 2012
File: 6130-00
To: City Manager
From: Ian Wilson, Park Services Manager
Subject: Communities in Bloom Committee

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive for information the February 20, 2012 report of the Park Services Manager regarding the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee;

AND THAT Council rescinds the terms of reference for the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee as an advisory committee of Council;

AND THAT Council directs staff to continue work with Communities in Bloom as a staff initiative;

AND FURTHER THAT Council directs staff to report back by December 2012, regarding the on-going status of the staff committee.

Purpose:

At the January 16, 2012 regular meeting, Council approved the following resolution:

AND THAT Council defer appointment of the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee pending receipt of an update from staff on their role as an advisory committee of Council and the planning activities for the 2012 Provincial Communities in Bloom conference hosted by the City of Kelowna

Background on Communities in Bloom:

At the national and provincial level, **Communities in Bloom** (CIB) is a “non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement and promotion of green spaces in community settings”¹.

The Kelowna CIB committee was originally formed in 1996 in order to support involvement in provincial and national CIB competitions with other Canadian communities. The mandate of the committee has expanded over the years to include the support of other community initiatives related to the CIB mandate. Some recent accomplishments include:

- A number of awards to the City of Kelowna, including:
 - Mentor of the Year (2011, 2009)
 - Best Blooming Community in Canada (2007)

¹ <http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/>

- Winter Lights (2007)
- Canadian Classic (2006)
- National winner (1998, 2003)
- International Challenge (2000)
- Mentoring other Okanagan communities in recent CIB competitions, most recently Lake Country. All Okanagan communities have now participated in CIB therefore further mentoring is unnecessary.
- The Leon Avenue beautification initiative was initiated to help beautify and revitalize Leon Avenue downtown, and to engage the community in these efforts including business owners, artists, street persons and others. This project began in 2009 as a gardening project in the city boulevards with committee members and volunteers. In 2010/2011, community arts grants helped install unique street banners as well as a mural on the private building next to the Ki- low- na Friendship Centre.
- Green Thumb Awards: Since 2000, the Communities in Bloom committee has recognized individual gardens and gardeners, outstanding commercial landscaping as well as community efforts such as school gardens and Best Block.
- Community Events: In 2010 the Kelowna Garden Tour was cancelled. In order to keep that date open the Communities in Bloom committee organized a morning of gardening speakers and exhibits to showcase gardening in Kelowna. Groups involved included the Central Okanagan Community Garden Society and the Okanagan Xeriscape Association. CIB has also been involved in community events such as Arbor Day, tree planting events, and the Rutland May Days parade.
- Beauty Spot: A program to recognize boulevards, yards and gardens which are highly visible and show pride of place and community. Each month between May and September a different Beauty Spot is selected and a recognition sign is placed.

The Park Services Branch leads the CIB committee through a staff liaison, and has a dedicated annual budget of \$5,000 to support committee activities.

2012 Provincial Conference:

In March 2011, Council approved a resolution for staff to apply to host the September 2012 Provincial Conference in Kelowna, through the CIB Committee. Kelowna's application to host the 2012 conference was accepted and planning has been underway for several months with a group of volunteers and staff.

The Provincial conference typically attracts 80-100 participants from across British Columbia. The conference is an opportunity for learning, with guest speakers and educational sessions regarding community beautification initiatives. During an awards ceremony, participating communities are presented with the results of the annual CIB competition as well as a comprehensive report from the CIB judges.

The City of Kelowna previously hosted the national CIB symposium and awards in 2002, but has never hosted the Provincial conference. Based on feedback from previous events in Hope and Harrison Hot Springs, staff estimated the cost of hosting the event to be approximately \$9,000. Council recently approved this funding in the provisional budget.

Some of the benefits of hosting the conference include opportunities to: showcase Kelowna's assets and community initiatives; bring in educational speakers that would benefit staff, the CIB committee and possibly the general public; and network and exchange ideas with other communities and organizations.

Current Status and Future Recommendations:

Prior to 2011, the committee was run as an informal staff committee with a City Councillor as Chair. In 2010, staff was asked to develop a new terms of reference for the committee as a Committee of Council. Council approved the creation of a new CIB Committee of Council in January 2011.

Kelowna is committed to hosting the 2012 Conference, therefore conference planning must continue in 2012 with the assistance of volunteers and staff. Other CIB initiatives may have to be put on hold for 2012, although some work will continue on Leon Avenue to complete the installation of artwork.

Therefore staff recommends that the CIB Committee be continued as an informal committee of community volunteers, led by staff. Staff will report back after the 2012 conference, with an information update and additional recommendations regarding the on-going status of the committee.

Internal Circulation:

Office of the City Clerk
Communications

Legal/Statutory Authority - *Community Charter*

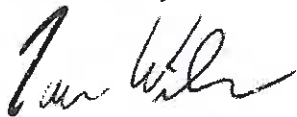
Alternate Recommendation:

Considerations not applicable to this report:

External Agency/Public Comments:

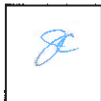
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
Personnel Implications
Financial/Budgetary Considerations
Existing Policy
Community & Media Relations Comments

Submitted by:



I. Wilson, Park Services Manager

Approved for inclusion



Joe Creron, Director, Civic Operations

cc: John Vos, General Manager Community Services
Joe Creron, Director Civic Operations