



**Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department**

Wednesday, May 03, 2023

**Subject:** Pelham Communities in Bloom 2023 - 2024

**Recommendation:**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report # 2023-0107 Pelham Communities in Bloom 2023-2024, for information;**

**AND THAT in furtherance of the Strategic Plan's Action Item to pursue "Community Gardens/Communities in Bloom, Green Public Participation," Staff request Council's support to participate in the 2023 Miracle-Gro Best Garden Section program from Scotts Canada.**

**AND THAT Council implement the Communities in Bloom Program in 2024;**

**AND THAT Council direct staff to include a Communities in Bloom program budget of \$10,000 in the 2024 budget for Council's consideration;**

**AND THAT Council approve the draft Terms of Reference for a Communities in Bloom Volunteer Working Group for 2024.**

**Background:**

Council passed the Town's new strategic plan in the first quarter of 2023. This report is the first of many written to partially satisfy the action item "Community Gardens/Communities in Bloom, Green Public Participation" established under the Environmental & Climate Adaptation Area of Focus.

Town Staff are recommending a garden competition for the summer of 2023 and to take the steps necessary to effectively compete in the Communities in Bloom program competition in 2024. Those steps include the creation of a working group to commence in the fall of 2023.

Communities in Bloom is a volunteer and partnership-driven organization that uses a multi-tiered competitive evaluation process to foster community strength, involvement and continuous improvement. This is accomplished by nurturing

environmental sustainability, enhancements of green spaces, and heritage conservation, in cultural and natural environments encompassing municipal, residential, commercial, and institutional spaces.

### **History of Communities in Bloom:**

Established with the guidance of Britain in Bloom, Tidy Towns of Ireland and Villes et Villages Fleuris de France, Communities in Bloom held its first edition in 1995 and 29 participating municipalities were honoured at the first awards ceremonies on Parliament Hill. The program now includes hundreds of communities across the country and an international challenge involving communities from the United States, Asia and several European countries allows participants to compete internationally.

### **About Communities in Bloom Program:**

The program consists of communities receiving information and being evaluated either provincially or nationally by a volunteer jury of trained professionals on the accomplishments of their entire community (municipal, private, corporate and institutional sectors, citizens) on six key criteria: Community Appearance, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Tree Management, Landscape and Plant & Floral Displays.

### **Benefits of participating in Communities in Bloom:**

Growth in civic pride, positive sense of community, and tangible improvements generated by their efforts are immediately felt. Communities in Bloom is a community program where everyone wins. It is a resident-led, community economic development program, with a Return on Investment that is measurable, predictable and accountable.

The National Symposium on Parks and Grounds is held in conjunction with the annual national awards ceremonies, this event is a unique opportunity for elected officials, parks and grounds professionals and community volunteers to learn and share about current issues, trends and challenges not only in horticulture and gardening, but in community tourism and projects, environmental awareness, and much more. Workshops and awards ceremonies are also held in all provinces throughout the year.

The Communities in Bloom Foundation, established to support the educational aspect of its activities, is dedicated to funding, developing and disseminating education and awareness to a wide audience on the value, improvement, importance and sustainable development of green spaces and natural environment in Canadian society. The foundation also awards bursaries to students in horticulture / environment programs.

Within the context of climate change and environmental concerns, communities involved in the Communities in Bloom program can be proud of their efforts, which provide real and meaningful environmental solutions and benefit all of society.

### **How Communities in Bloom will be implemented for 2023 – 2024:**

The Town of Pelham has been selected to participate in the 2023 Miracle-Gro Best Garden Selection program from Scotts Canada. For 2023 staff will recruit volunteer community judges for the Best Garden Selection, host a nomination form for residents to submit their garden in the competition and the announcement of Best Garden Selection will be posted by August 25. Hosting the Best Garden Selection Program aims to gain interest in the Communities in Bloom initiative to recruit members and community champions for 2024. The draft terms of reference for a potential Communities in Bloom Working Group is attached to this report.

Town staff attended a Communities in Bloom information session and learned that a best practice is to form a committee involving both municipal employees and community members to start planning for competition-related work approximately 6-8 months prior to entering the program. On this basis it is recommended that an official working group be created and commence meeting in the fall of 2023.

### **Analysis:**

The purpose of this report is to establish a Communities in Bloom committee for 2024 and to request funding of \$10,000 to implement and recruit volunteers for 2023 and enhance the Communities in Bloom program in 2024.

The Town participated in the Communities in Bloom National Judging program in 2000 and again in 2004. To successfully implement the Communities in Bloom program it is recommended to establish a Communities in Bloom committee to assist with the judging component and implementation of the recommendations out of the Communities in Bloom evaluation report. See attached for a sample of the Communities in Bloom Evaluation Report & a sample judging itinerary.

### **Financial Considerations:**

For 2023, it is anticipated that \$3,000-\$4,000 will be required to implement the Miracle Grown Best Garden contest. These monies will be covered under the existing Beautification operating budget.

A budget approval of \$10,000 (2024 budget) will be requested to support with the following components of Communities in Bloom:

- Registering for Communities in Bloom program; annual subscription

- Hosting the Communities in Bloom Judges in August of 2024
- Implement recommendations from Communities in Bloom Evaluation Reports

It is anticipated that approximately \$1,000 will be required this year with the balance in 2024, which, with the direction of Council, will be built into the 2024 budget. The \$1,000 will be financed out of existing municipal operations.

### **Strategic Plan Relationship: Environmental and Climate Change Adaptation**

By focusing on environmental and climate adaptation, the Town of Pelham will prioritize actions that will continue to protect and conserve the natural heritage and resources in Pelham. Priorities of the Town in this area will provide the foundation for a clean, safe and sustainable environment for present and future generations.

### **Consultation:**

Communities in Bloom Information Session

Teresa Quinlin-Murphy, Director of Finance

### **Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:**

Communities in Bloom Committee Draft Terms of Reference

### **Prepared and Recommended by:**

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