



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 13, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Stewards of Cootes Watershed Fee For Service Proposal (PW16051) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Craig Murdoch Director, Environmental Services Division Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Staff was directed to report to the Public Works Committee on the feasibility, advantages and disadvantages of the Fee for Service proposal put forward by the Stewards of Cootes Watershed Organization.

Information:

On February 1, 2016, Mr. Alan Hansell, the Executive Director of the Stewards of Cootes Watershed (SCW), presented to the Public Works Committee a Fee for Service Proposal for watershed clean-up (Item 6.2).

Mr. Hansell outlined his proposal which he termed the 40/25/10 program. The program would see a service provided to the City of Hamilton for which they are seeking \$86,450 in yearly funding.

For this service, they propose to provide two 40/25/10 programs that include a total of 80 volunteer group clean ups, 50 new stewardship routes (frequently patrolled watershed corridor), and 20 resolved incidents of systemic watershed stressors (negative impacts to water quality such as litter or contaminants) annually. This work would encompass 2 watersheds – 1 in lower Cootes and the second to be as per the City's direction.

Mr. Alan Hansell addressed the Public Works Committee respecting a Fee for Service proposal for watershed clean-up with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the presentation is attached as Appendix A to Report PW16051.

Mr. Hansell's presentation outlined the historical record of clean ups that his volunteer group has performed over the last 3 years including the amount of debris that they have removed from the watersheds, the number of stewardship routes they work within, the number of issues impacting watersheds that they have resolved, financial details and sources of support, as well as a comparison between Stewards of Cootes Watershed Cleanups and City of Hamilton Cleanups. Mr. Hansell has asked the City of Hamilton to fund a portion of his activities at a sum of \$86,450 stating that his program is unique for the following reasons:

1. His group does multiple clean ups throughout the year whereas other groups tend to be only a few events each year
2. They are out each weekend from March to December
3. They will do whatever it takes to get an area pristine
4. They have the equipment, resources and training to get the job done
5. They tackle 10 systemic problems at their sources each year
6. They have the capacity to match their ambitions
7. They think big

The City of Hamilton has several programs in place that currently support volunteer efforts such as the Team up to Clean up initiative and Adopt-a-Park/Adopt-an-Alleyway program by providing tools and materials for clean ups and in kind services such as debris pick up. It should be noted that there are multiple local organizations/volunteer groups that volunteer their time to clean up City property.

The SCW's work is specific to "in water clean ups" which requires an increased knowledge in environmental impacts from working in water, specialized training, and an increase in liability as compared to a standard volunteer clean up. The Fee for Service would create a "contractor" relationship which would have budgetary impacts due to requirements for City supervision and verification of work progression / completion and compliance with Health and Safety legislation. This contractor relationship between the SCW and the City would not be in keeping with the volunteer based structure of SCW's current initiative.

The SCW is a volunteer based initiative that relies on grant money from multiple sources to support their program. The model that SCW has presented is better supported by grants and doesn't reflect a Fee for Service funding arrangement. The City Enrichment Fund introduced a Council-approved Environment program area in 2016. Its structure, guidelines and process lend itself to grant based organizations such as SCW, and at the same time provides transparency and accountability.

The City of Hamilton invests in the community by providing grants through the City Enrichment Fund. The Enrichment fund currently has six program areas and the grant program began in 2016. The Environmental Program area was specifically established in 2016 to provide opportunities for all Hamilton residents to enjoy and actively participate in initiatives that promote clean air, water, and soil while:

- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity
- Providing access to natural spaces
- Addressing the challenges of climate change

The Environmental Program encourages action-oriented initiatives that protects, rehabilitate, or enhance the natural environment, or that build the strength of the environmental sector.

We believe that SCW should apply to the City Enrichment Fund for future grant consideration. The intake of new applications for 2017 funding takes place between September 1 and November 1 2016. The City Enrichment Fund team proposes to work with SCW prior to the intake period to educate them on the Fund's guidelines and processes. If SCW follows this path, their application will be reviewed and adjudicated along with the other applications within the Environment program.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A – Stewards of Cootes Presentation to Council