

**Delegation to City of Hamilton General Issues Committee - April 7 meeting**

Thank you for permitting me to delegate today on behalf of Nature Canada's Bird Friendly City Hamilton/Burlington team. My name is Barry Coombs and I'm co-chair of the team and a Ward 1 resident.

We are a fairly new team but we already enjoy the partnership and support of most of the key members of the Hamilton conservation community. Some of the Councillors present today will recall my delegation to the February 16 meeting of the Planning committee. Since then, I've sent emails containing additional information to all of the Councillors on the Planning committee and to the Planning department. I've also emailed an introduction to our project to the rest of Council and to the office of the Mayor.

Our team fully supports the Biodiversity Action Plan and thanks the Hamilton Naturalists' Club, Environment Hamilton, their partners and city planners for their efforts in it's development.

The primary goal of our team is to certify Hamilton as a Bird Friendly City by May 14, 2022, which is World Migratory Bird Day. We believe that our goals are completely consistent with the goals of the Biodiversity Action Plan. Biodiversity involves more than just a healthy bird population but birds are, without doubt, a key element of a biodiverse and biophilic city.

I've read the document prepared and presented by the Planning and Economic Development department and will comment on two items.

*Page 7 - For these reasons, Hamilton has rich biodiversity -there are over 1,000 plant species, 96 bird species, 43 mammals, 100 butterflies, and 87 fish species that have been identified in the City.*

On Page 7, it is stated that 96 bird species have been identified in the city. This is an understatement. Bob Curry, in his authoritative and comprehensive Birds of Hamilton book, affirms that precisely 400 species of birds have been recorded in the Hamilton Study Area to date! Granted, the HSA encompasses more space than the City but the figure of 96 species doesn't accurately summarize the number of bird species affected by human activity in Hamilton. In 2020 alone, I observed and recorded 207 species in Hamilton and other local birders recorded many more.

*Page 8 - Information will assist in the review of Urban and Rural Official Plan policies and to identify if any additional policies are required; •Identification of 'quick-wins' for biodiversity that can be done without major work plan or budget implications.*

On Page 8, the document asks for 'quick-wins' for biodiversity that can be done without major work plan or budget implications. We have a suggestion that I would like to make at this time. The interior lighting of buildings at night draws millions of birds to their deaths across North America every year. A quick-win would be for Hamilton to join the Audubon Society's Lights Out program. As an example, buildings throughout Philadelphia voluntarily turned off their lights at night on April 1 of this year and will continue to do so until May 31. They will repeat the process from August 15 to November 15. Thirty-three other American cities, as well as Toronto, have Lights Out programs. Chicago started their program in 1999.

The Philadelphia initiative has the backing of the City's Office of Sustainability and sees participation from both private and public sectors. At the very least, the City of Hamilton could turn off the lights of all municipal buildings during these spring and fall migration periods, starting now. This would be a 'quick-win' and a significant cost-saver on electrical bills. I've been told by Councillor Pearson that City Hall lighting is already on motion detectors at night. This is a very good start but why not extend the program now?

The Bird Friendly City Hamilton/Burlington team is the only local advocacy group dedicated solely to the protection of birds and we're actively working to mitigate threats to birds in many ways. We are all volunteers! Amongst other projects, we are currently preparing educational material to be provided to the Hamilton Public Library and to local schools, free of charge. Our successful social media platform promotes the activities of our partners and supporters and will promote the BAP.

We offer our full support to the Biodiversity Action Plan. Also, as a stakeholder, we offer our services. We want to be a part of this essential project.

Thank you for your time and attention.