

COUNCIL REPORT



February 9, 2012

MEMO TO: F. C. MANSON, C.G.A., CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
FROM: B. C. RUSSELL, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING
ROBERT HARARY, DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS
SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL RESOLUTION #12-007 REGARDING A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Issue:

Consideration of Council Resolution #12-007 regarding partnering with the British Columbia Conservation Foundation's Englishman River Study.

Executive Summary:

The City supports the British Columbia Conservation Foundation (BCCF) and the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia (PWSBC) in their joint research and information-sharing project related to the science of "living water smart" on the Englishman River. However, since staff resources are very limited to participate with this initiative, a consensus was reached to link their project's objectives with the new Official Community Plan (OCP), as appropriate, as well as to provide technical information associated with a future Master Drainage Plan, while minimizing the impact to City resources.

References:

Council Resolution #12-007

Background:

A delegation presentation was made by the BCCF to the Committee of the Whole on Monday, January 16, 2012. At the same meeting, Council passed the following Resolution:

#12-007 THAT the proposal from the BC Conservation Foundation, Natural Resources Canada to form a partnership with the City of Parksville to designate a pilot study area in order to evaluate the effects of development and climate change scenarios on surface and groundwater levels feeding Englishman River freshwater resources be referred to staff for review and to obtain input from the Official Community Plan consultant and report back to Council. CARRIED.

On February 6, 2012, the City's Planning and Engineering staff, OCP Consultant, and Regional District of Nanaimo representative met with Craig Wightman of the BCCF, Kim Stephens of the Partnership of Water Sustainability in British Columbia (PWSBC), and Dr. Gilles Wendling of GW Solutions Ltd. to discuss the feasibility of a pilot study on the Englishman River.

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From this collaborative discussion, an understanding-in-principle was reached on a limited “inform and educate” approach. Based on this approach, the following activities appear achievable for both the BCCF and City staff:

- BCCF and partners would, under the guidance of the OCP Consultant, contribute to an OCP Advisory Committee meeting to provide an overview on the topics of groundwater science, aquatic ecosystem health and the water balance model.
- Up to four City staff would attend a Water Balance Model forum in Duncan on March 28, 2012.
- Up to four City staff would attend a half-day knowledge-transfer workshop on groundwater and water balance science presented by the BCCF partners (date to be determined).
- BCCF and partners would prepare a tailor-made primer report for Integrated Rainwater and Groundwater Management for lands adjacent to the Englishman River. This primer may be referenced in the OCP as appropriate.
- The Engineering & Operations Department will be proposing to conduct a city-wide Master Drainage Plan Update as part of the upcoming budget process. If funded, the Master Drainage Plan would include a review of surface water containment and aquifer recharge options, surface water discharge quality management, erosion control, and storm water best management practices. It would be prudent at that time to seek technical input from the BCCF and partners, as well as other stakeholders, to ultimately improve the City’s surface water management program.
- When staff resources permit, staff will seek to further collaborate with the BCCF and partners on potentially mutually-beneficial opportunities.

Note that although the BCCF’s presentation to the Committee of the Whole implied that there may be a link between the BCCF and partners research and the Englishman River Water Services’ proposed Aquifer Storage and Recovery system, there may be no direct impacts or benefits at this time.

Options:

Council may:

1. Authorize staff to proceed with the activities outlined above to the extent practical.
2. Deny the BCCF’s request to collaborate with City staff, thus allowing staff to focus on other priorities.
3. Provide further direction to Staff.

Option 1 is recommended.

Analysis:

City collaboration with the BCCF and their partners will inform the OCP review process on the general topics of groundwater science, aquatic ecosystem health, living water smart, and the water balance model. It will also provide a better understanding of the hydrology of land near the

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Englishman River through a “primer” document which can lead to the inclusion of more informed policies within the updated OCP. This may create policies that will lead to the better protection of surface and groundwater resources. Further, the BCCF and partners may be able to provide additional technical support related to surface water quality management in conjunction with a future Master Drainage Plan, if funded. Attendance at information sharing sessions, such as a workshop and forum, would increase technical knowledge of these issues to City staff in several departments.

Denying the BCCF’s request to further collaborate with staff would allow staff to focus on other critical assignments, but prohibit the opportunity to obtain additional technical information on critical water systems at nominal cost to the City.

Sustainability Implications:

Having a better understanding of local natural systems, such as those of the Englishman River, and being able to incorporate this understanding into relevant land use policies and storm water management practices are essential components in long-term objectives of achieving environmental sustainability. The information sessions and primer report proposed by the BCCF appear to be consistent with the City’s sustainability goals.

Financial Implications:

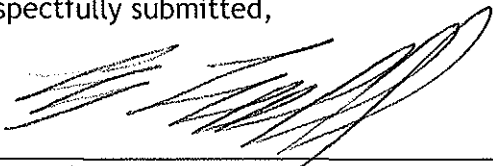
If Option 1 is approved, financial implications are limited to staff time and travel expenses as required to attend a day-long forum and half-day workshop (up to 12 hours total per person). While it is not anticipated, should the OCP Consultant’s attendance be necessary at either workshop or additional meetings with the BCCF, additional consulting fees may be requested which are not budgeted.

Recommendation:


That the report from the Director of Community Planning and Director of Engineering & Operations, dated February 9, 2012, entitled “Consideration of Council Resolution #12-007 regarding a Partnership with the British Columbia Conservation Foundation,” be received;

And That staff proceed with collaborating with the British Columbia Conservation Foundation associated with the activities outlined in this report.

Respectfully submitted,



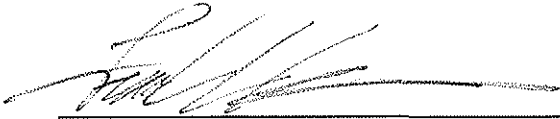
BLAINE C. RUSSELL
Director of Community Planning



ROBERT M. HARARY
Director of Engineering & Operations

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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:



FRED C. MANSON, C.G.A.
Chief Administrative Officer

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