



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF KING

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Monday, September 10th, 2018

Planning Department

P-2018-35

RE: **Mayors' Monarch Pledge**

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Planning Department respectfully submits the following recommendations:

- a) That Planning Report Number P-2018-35 be received as information;
- b) That Council adopts the Mayors' Monarch Pledge Resolution as noted in Appendix A and commits to implementing the actions identified in the Resolution; and
- c) That Council supports the Pledge and authorizes the Mayor to take the Pledge

2. **PURPOSE:**

Staff and the Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) requests that Council formally take the Mayor's Monarch Pledge and commit to both restore the monarch butterfly habitat in King and encourage our residents to do the same. Staff is currently undertaking a number of programs and initiatives to create habitat for the monarch butterfly and pollinators, and to educate citizens about how they can make a difference at home and in their community. This builds on and aligns with King's Bee City Canada Certification, achieved in the fall of 2017, which involves protecting and encouraging native pollinator populations across the Township.

3. **BACKGROUND & DISCUSSION:**

The goal of the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) Mayors' Monarch Pledge is to help to restore habitat for the monarch butterfly and encourage our residents to do the same. The monarch, well known for its distinctive orange, black and white markings, is one of the most recognizable and strikingly beautiful species of butterfly. It is an iconic North American species whose multigenerational migration and metamorphosis from caterpillar is truly magnificent. Each fall monarchs set out on an incredible 5,000-kilometre journey to their wintering sites in the mountain forests of Mexico, where they cluster together from late October through March. It is one of the world's longest insect migrations.

Twenty years ago, more than one billion Eastern monarch butterflies migrated to Mexico. In the winter of 2014, only 60 million made the trip. The North American monarch population has declined by more than 90 percent in the past two decades. Monarch scientists attribute the decline to degradation and loss of summer breeding habitat in Canada and the United States, and loss of winter habitat in Mexico in addition to climate change and the use of herbicides.

In May of 2018, the grade one students of the Country Day School expressed their concern to Mayor Pellegrini on how human development has impacted the monarch habitats. During their learning and research, they came across the NFW program and asked that the Mayor and SAC consider taking the Pledge. The NFW program has expanded to become a tri-national program, promoted in Canada by the David Suzuki Foundation. Participating municipalities must complete at least three actions from the NWF's list of 25 actions in the next year. Municipalities that take on eight or more will be added to the Monarch Leadership Circle, and any city that completes all 25 actions will become Canada's first Monarch Champion City. The Township already implements many of the action items as part of King's Bee City Canada Certification and sustainability and environmental stewardship initiatives and programs. The Township commits to implement or continue to implement the following 11 initiatives grouped into three categories below. The full list of initiatives can be found in Appendix B.

Communications:

- 1) Issue a Resolution to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat
- 2) Launch a public communication effort to encourage citizens to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighbourhoods
- 3) Communicate with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants

Program & Demonstration Gardens:

- 4) Host or support a native plant sale or milkweed seed giveaway event
- 5) Facilitate or support milkweed seed collection and propagation efforts
- 6) Plant a monarch-friendly demonstration garden at the Municipal Office or another prominent location
- 7) Initiate or support citizen-science efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health
- 8) Add milkweed and nectar producing plants in community gardens

Systems Change:

- 9) Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats
- 10) Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage the use of milkweed where appropriate
- 11) Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the Township's Sustainability Plan

The NFW will follow up with all mayoral points of contact (King's Sustainability Coordinator) with a quarterly survey to monitor progress.

4. INTEGRATED SUSTAINABILITY PLAN LINKAGE:

Taking the Mayors' Monarch Pledge aligns with the Environmental and Socio-Cultural Pillars of King's Sustainability Plan and specifically the themes of Natural Areas & Stewardship and Connection to the Land. The Pledge will reinforce the goals of the Sustainability Plan by strengthening the connection and appreciation for nature, fostering community engagement and education, supporting healthy ecosystems and being a leader in environmental conservation.

The Sustainability King Refresh currently underway will provide the opportunity to further explore the other Pledge Action Items and determine whether King can commit to implementing more in the future.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no financial implications associated with the Mayors' Monarch Pledge.

6. **CONCLUSION:**

King's SAC would like to thank the grade one students at CDS for bringing this important initiative to the Committee's and Council's attention. The students' environmental appreciation and enthusiasm to take action to improve their environment is truly inspiring.

7. **ATTACHMENTS:**

Appendix A – Mayors' Monarch Pledge Resolution
Appendix B – Mayors' Monarch Pledge Action Items

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