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Date: August 19, 2019
To: Mayor and Council
Author: S. Kitchen, Deputy Clerk-Council Services
RE: Phragmites Control Resolution
Report No.: CS-2019-15

AIM

To provide Council with an update regarding the status of Council's "Phragmites Resolution" No. 214-2019, and to seek endorsement of an updated Phragmites resolution for purposes of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) upcoming Board of Directors Meeting.

BACKGROUND

At its Regular Meeting held March 25, 2019, Council passed Resolution 214-2019 calling on the Canadian Federal Government to take the appropriate regulatory measures to expedite and approve the use of herbicides in aquatic environments to control Phragmites by the 2019 growing season as well as the use of aerial control measures. By correspondence of Director of Corporate Services J. Astrologo, said Resolution was sent to both the Office of the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, with copies circulated to a number of agencies and other parties, including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (See: Appendix A attached).

On April 3, 2019 a response was received from the Executive Correspondence Officer for the Prime Minister's Office, acknowledging receipt of the correspondence and indicating that a further copy of the correspondence was directed to The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, the Federal Minister of Health.

DISCUSSION

Most recently, on August 12, 2019, the Town was contacted by Sara Jane O'Neill, Policy Analyst, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, who is currently working on the analysis of the issue in preparation for the next FCM Board meeting in September. She is seeking to take Kingsville's request to the Board, with certain specific updates to the existing wording

for clarity and ease of reference. The recitals or preambles in the existing motion will all remain the same. The proposed motion will read:

“WHEREAS *Phragmites australis* (herein referred to as "Phragmites") is an invasive perennial grass that continues to cause severe damage to our wetlands, beaches and municipal drainage systems across Essex County;

AND WHEREAS *Phragmites* grows and spreads rapidly, allowing the plant to invade new areas and grow into large monoculture stands in a short amount of time, and is a plant that secretes toxins from its roots into the soil which impede the growth of neighbouring plant species;

AND WHEREAS *Phragmites* results in loss of biodiversity and species richness, loss of habitat, changes in hydrology due to its high metabolic rate, changes in nutrient cycling as it is slow to decompose, an increased fire hazard due to the combustibility of its dead stalks, and can have an adverse impact on agriculture, particularly in drainage ditches;

AND WHEREAS invasive *Phragmites* has been identified as Canada's worst invasive plant species by Agriculture and Agrifood Canada;

AND WHEREAS controlling invasive *Phragmites* before it becomes well established reduces environmental impacts, time, and costs;

AND WHEREAS according to the Ministry of the Environment, best management practices for *Phragmites* include early detection, herbicide application, mowing, compressing or rolling, prescribed burning, and controlled flooding;

AND WHEREAS these best management practices are most effective when used in tandem as opposed to when used as stand-alone control measures;

AND WHEREAS herbicides containing surfactants are prohibited for use in aquatic environments in Canada, meaning that Canadians are not able to fully implement best management practices.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities calls on the Canadian Federal Government to take the appropriate regulatory measures to expedite and approve the use of herbicides in aquatic environments for the control of *Phragmites* by local governments.”

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Effectively manage corporate resources and maximize performance in day-to-day operations.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial considerations.

CONSULTATIONS

J. Astrologo, Director of Corporate Services
K. Vegh, Drainage Superintendent/Weed Inspector

RECOMMENDATION

That Council passes the following Resolution:

“WHEREAS *Phragmites australis* (herein referred to as "Phragmites") is an invasive perennial grass that continues to cause severe damage to our wetlands, beaches and municipal drainage systems across Essex County;

AND WHEREAS *Phragmites* grows and spreads rapidly, allowing the plant to invade new areas and grow into large monoculture stands in a short amount of time, and is a plant that secretes toxins from its roots into the soil which impede the growth of neighbouring plant species;

AND WHEREAS *Phragmites* results in loss of biodiversity and species richness, loss of habitat, changes in hydrology due to its high metabolic rate, changes in nutrient cycling as it is slow to decompose, an increased fire hazard due to the combustibility of its dead stalks, and can have an adverse impact on agriculture, particularly in drainage ditches;

AND WHEREAS invasive *Phragmites* has been identified as Canada's worst invasive plant species by Agriculture and Agrifood Canada;

AND WHEREAS controlling invasive *Phragmites* before it becomes well established reduces environmental impacts, time, and costs;

AND WHEREAS according to the Ministry of the Environment, best management practices for *Phragmites* include early detection, herbicide application, mowing, compressing or rolling, prescribed burning, and controlled flooding;

AND WHEREAS these best management practices are most effective when used in tandem as opposed to when used as stand-alone control measures;

AND WHEREAS herbicides containing surfactants are prohibited for use in aquatic environments in Canada, meaning that Canadians are not able to fully implement best management practices.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities calls on the Canadian Federal Government to take the appropriate regulatory measures to expedite and approve the use of herbicides in aquatic environments for the control of *Phragmites* by local governments.”

Sandra Kitchen

Sandra Kitchen, Deputy Clerk-Council Services

Jennifer Astrologo

Jennifer Astrologo, B.H.K. (hons), LL.B
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk

Peggy Van Mierlo-West

Peggy Van Mierlo-West, C.E.T.
Chief Administrative Officer