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Date: February 3, 2020
To: Mayor and Council
Author: S. Kitchen, Deputy Clerk-Council Services
RE: Phragmites Control Resolution
Report No.: CS-2020-02

AIM

To provide Council with an update regarding the status of Council's Phragmites Control Resolution No. 443-2019, 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.

Subsequently, and as Council will recall, at its August 26, 2019, a further Resolution (443-2019) was passed revising the resolution slightly as per the request of FCM to resolve that the FCM 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 (full Report in connection with Resolution 443-2019 attached as Appendix A). That revised resolution was forwarded to FCM for consideration by its Board.

DISCUSSION

On December 3, 2019 the Town was again contacted by FCM's policy analyst with further proposed rewording of Council's motion. FCM is seeking to take Kingsville's request once again to the Board with certain specific updates. FCM's Board were mostly concerned about asking outright for the approval of herbicides, indicating that they would not want to

presuppose the rigorous assessment of Health Canada. So the word 'approved' was removed and the words "products that can be safely used" were inserted.

The intent of Council's original resolution is still contained within the changes proposed by FCM. The end result is to allow for the proper herbicides to be used, and FCM is indeed asking for an expedited process to achieve the end goal.

Again, the preambles/recitals will remain substantially 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;

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 in the soil which impede the growth of neighbouring plant species;

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;

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

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

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;

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 municipalities are not able to fully implement best management practices;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities calls on the Government of Canada to expedite the review of herbicide products that can be safely used in aquatic environments for the control of *Phragmites* in order to support local governments in their efforts to eradicate this invasive species."

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

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

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial considerations.

CONSULTATIONS

K. Vegh, Drainage Superintendent/Weed Inspector

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the following motion:

‘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;

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 in the soil which impede the growth of neighbouring plant species;

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;

WHEREAS invasive *Phragmites* has been identified as Canada’s worst invasive plant species by Agriculture and AgriFood Canada;

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

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;

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 municipalities are not able to fully implement best management practices;

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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