



## **2022 ANNUAL REPORT TO STRATFORD CITY COUNCIL**

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**Committee Name: Communities in Bloom**

**Date Submitted: December 2022**

### **1. Outline of accomplishments/projects completed in 2022:**

The Communities in Bloom Committee marked its 28th year with the celebration of the "Year of the Garden" and a return to more "normal" program. This year was filled with activities that had been placed on pause

#### **Communities in Bloom Competition**

This year Communities in Bloom National returned to the full competition with judging. Stratford chose to participate in the very competitive international category. Stratford received a "5 Bloom" recognition. Our committee remained very engaged with the National organization and participated in the National annual symposium. We will look to continue in the competition next year.

#### **Ted Blowes Memorial / Peace Gardens (Butterfly Gardens)**

The garden continues to be part of the committees ongoing commitment to our community and to the memory of Ted Blowes. Monarch butterfly releases are carried out in Ted's Garden to connect visitors to nature. The garden continues to mature and is now a destination for many in their visit to Stratford.

#### **Planter Day**

Our yearly Planter Day was a great success. Cana lilies and sunflower seed were given out (free).

#### **Citizen's Recognition Program**

Six gardens were selected to receive the MiracleGro " Best Garden Selection" . Awards showing we appreciate their effort towards making Stratford so beautiful.

#### **Pumpkin Parade**

This year we were happy to return this much beloved community event. It marked the 10th anniversary for the annual Pumpkin Parade. The committee will look forward to an even bigger event in 2023 and continue to educate the community on how they can properly dispose of their pumpkins as well as creative ways that they can be utilized. This initiative will help divert the pumpkins from our landfill.

**Pollinator Pathway**

The Pollinator Pathway project started in 2018 because CIB received a grant from TD Canada Trust. The pathway is between the Railway Station and Erie Street. We planted 9 (Red Oaks and Maples) trees in 2022.

**Porous Pave**

This year we had 5 benches provided with Porous Pave. Providing an enhanced experience for those who enjoy sitting at a bench in our park system.

**Winter Lights**

Communities in Bloom are part of the overall Winter Lights Program. Lights were added to "The Bridge of Hope" December 2021- 2022 for "Lights on Stratford". The lights were blue and yellow as citizens gathered to think of those involved in the war in Ukraine. The committee continues to ensure the maintenance of the snowflakes that adorn our parks in the winter. This year they continue be used as part of the much larger Lights on Stratford program.

**2. Summary of how the Advisory Committee's mandate in the Terms of Reference is reflected in the Committee's accomplishments/projects for 2022:**

The mandate of the Committee is:

- To foster civic pride, environmental protection and beautification, through community participation
  - We meet this portion of the mandate by yearly participating in the National CIB competition; recognizing civic pride through the Citizen's Recognition Program; working with local schools and community groups to educate and encourage new gardeners, and protecting our environment with the Pollinator Pathway and the Peace Garden.
- To improve the tidiness, appearance and visual appeal of neighbourhoods, parks, open spaces and streets
  - We accomplished this portion of the mandate by implementing the Citizen Recognition Program, working with the Parks Department to ready the city for the CIB competition, expanding the Pollinator Pathway and enhancing the Ted Blowes Memorial / Peace Garden

- To focus on environmental awareness and preservation of heritage and culture
  - The Annual Planter Day encourages residents to be environmentally aware. The Pollinator Pathway and the Peace Garden focus on improving the environment within our borders and beyond by providing the necessities of life for bees, butterflies and other insects.
- To coordinate a host program as required
  - Our participation in the CIB competitions meets this part of the mandate.
- To be financially sustainable
  - We operate within our budget.

### **3. Summary of 2022 recommendations made to Sub-committee, Committee or Council:**

- Supporting Stratford – Year of the Garden
- Participation in the 2022 CIB Competition

### **4. Please summarize how your 2022 projects/plans have reflected the City's strategic priorities:**

Our project plans for 2022 align with the following strategic priorities:

- Mobility, Accessibility and Design Excellence
- Strengthen our Plans, Strategies, and Partnerships

### **5. Comments regarding impact of COVID-19 on your Committee's operations in 2022:**

This year saw a shift back to a more "normal" activity operationally on the Communities in Bloom committee. Most of our activities involve direct involvement with the citizens of our community and we were able to offer this again. Through education and awareness to celebrating holiday events the activities. Examples included being able to participate and host judges for the competition to running the Pumpkin Parade again.

### **6. Outline of projects/plans for 2023 budget funds:**

- Annual Planter Day
- Maintain Ted Blowes Memorial / Peace Garden & Pollinator Pathway
- Pumpkin Parade
- Citizen's Recognition Program
- Pollinator Pathway Program
- Interacting with and assisting community partners
- Participating in the National Communities in Bloom Competition
- Attending symposiums and conferences related to CIB