



## COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: January 25, 2022

From: Paul Gipps, CAO

Subject: **WildSafe BC Bear Smart Community Initiative**

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

**THAT** Council consider and direct staff to proceed with the first step of becoming a Bear Smart Community and undertake a Bear Hazard Assessment at a cost of \$15,000.00; and

**THAT** WildSafe BC be invited to an upcoming Committee of the Whole to provide an update on the progress of their work within the City of West Kelowna.

### BACKGROUND

The City of West Kelowna has been participating in the WildSafeBC program for many years to help reduce the number of wildlife conflicts. This program has been very successful in our community with educational opportunities and reminders about managing attractants. The attached background information from our WildSafeBC Partners provides good information specific to West Kelowna and would be worthy of an invite to a future Committee of the Whole to get a complete update of the work they have done.

In discussions with our Partners and BC Conservation Service Officials the number of conflicts with wildlife and specifically bears continue to arise each year. Our community partners on the Westside, WestBank First Nation, have initiated a Bear Smart Community Program and are working towards their accreditation as a Bear Smart Community. In our discussions with BC Conservation Authority and WildSafeBC representative staff believe this would be a good time to consider entering into a program to become a Bear Smart Community as well.

Essentially there are 6 steps involved in becoming a Bear Smart Community.

- 1) Bear Hazard Assessment: This is an evaluation of our community to identify the attractants, the history of conflicts and areas where this can be improved.
- 2) Prepare a Bear/Human conflict management Plan: basically a strategy to lessen the potential for conflict.

- 3) Revise Planning and decision making documents: This will see an overlay of the Bear Smart Principles into our OCP and (RDCO) Solid Waste Management Plans.
- 4) Implement a continuing education plan: The City has been participating in Wildsafe Program that has an education component.
- 5) Develop and maintain a bear proof waste management system.
- 6) Implement Bear Smart by-laws.

Staff would like to take the first step this year and undertake a Bear Hazard Assessment. This process will identify the priority areas in the community and what steps the City of West Kelowna can take or advocate others to take to reduce our Bear Conflicts.

Staff have received a detailed proposal to undertake this initiative and are seeking Council support and approval to proceed. The cost would be approximately \$15,000.00 and the funds are available.

Powerpoint: Yes ☐ No ☒

Attachments:

1. Bear Smart Communities
2. Wildlife Conflicts in West Kelowna – Stats