



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Community Services Sub-committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026

Time: 4:30 P.M.

Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Beatty - Chair Presiding, Councillor Henderson - Vice Chair, Councillor Briscoe, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

Staff Present: Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Michael Mousley - Manager of Transit, Victoria Trotter - Council Committee Coordinator, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

To watch the Sub-committee meeting live, please click the following link: <https://stratford-ca.zoom.us/j/84014317631?pwd=piYsaD6qkkHKAL1A6LbqKJNNG6olk1.1>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website <https://calendar.stratford.ca/meetings> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence

from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Council Committee Coordinator

4.1 Energy and Environment Advisory Committee Request for 2027 Free Transit Pilot (COM26-001)

3 - 7

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT staff be directed to review and conduct a cost/benefit analysis of options for implementing and funding a free transit pilot project, along with alternatives to increase transit ridership.

5. Department Update

8 - 10

The Director/Manager to provide an update on department activities and ongoing projects.

6. Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes

11 - 23

The following Advisory Committee minutes are provided for the information of Sub-committee:

- The Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee minutes of August 7, 2025, December 4, 2025, and February 11, 2026.

7. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Community Services Sub-committee meeting will be held May 14, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber if required.

8. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Community Services Sub-committee meeting adjourn.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: April 16, 2026
To: Community Services Sub-committee
From: Vicky Trotter, Council Committee Coordinator
Report Number: COM26-001
Attachments: None

Title: Energy and Environment Advisory Committee Request for 2027 Free Transit Pilot

Objective: To consider a request from the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee (E&E) to implement a one-year free transit pilot program beginning in 2027.

Background: The discussion of free Transit has been at the forefront in many Municipalities over the past few years. While many Transit Agencies in Canada still struggle with lower ridership due to not fully recovering post-pandemic, ridership trends have significantly changed as lifestyles of those that relied on Transit services previously and certain travel patterns have been impacted due to work from home arrangements, ease of online shopping, just to name a few.

At the March 5, 2026 E&E meeting the following recommendation was adopted:

WHEREAS the City of Stratford adopted a Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) in 2024 which provides plans to reduce the City's emissions by 30% by 2030;

AND WHEREAS the CCAP outlines plans for the reduction of the use of personal vehicles, which create nearly 50% of the city's GHS emissions;

AND WHEREAS the increased use of public transit will contribute to a reduction in GHG emissions;

THEREFORE the Energy and Environment Committee requests that City Council, in order to promote the wider use of public transit, begin the budgetary and administrative process to implement a one-year trial of free transit commencing in 2027 and lost fare revenue be replaced with savings from fare collection procedures and rebates from provincial gas tax revenue.

Analysis: In 2024, the E&E Committee initiated discussions on potential enhancements to Stratford Transit, including extended service hours and a free-transit pilot. The purpose of these discussions was to advocate for energy efficiency by increasing transit ridership and reducing the number of vehicles being used within the municipality.

The major concern for Municipalities is the loss of fare revenue as a result of offering a free Transit program. Stratford's annual revenue is approximately \$650,000.00 for regular Transit, and \$55,000 for Mobility bus services. Mobility services need to be included as fare parity is legislated through the AODA (Accessibility Ontario Disabilities Act). And finally, will free transit provide the results provide enough of a reduction in GHS emissions to warrant the cost of the pilot program. Alternatively, there are may be other community benefits to consider.

While the Provincial Gas Tax revenues can be used for either capital or operating transit costs; the use of those funds for this pilot project would still be a cost to the taxpayer. The Provincial Gas Tax revenues are a consistent steady source of funding that is built into the City's transit funding plan – the use of those funds for the cost of a pilot project will then require more property tax investment in the future as those funds will no longer be available. Therefore, if the pilot is supported, the net cost will have an impact to the municipal tax levy. Currently, Provincial Gas Tax is used to fund our 26.67% of ICIP Capital projects in order to not negatively impact the local tax levy and has been used for the past several years. This practice of 'stacking' the two forms of funding will continue for the next few years with additional Capital projects funded by CPTF that were approved by Council at the March 9, 2026 Council meeting. Some of this funding could be utilized to fund a smaller free Transit pilot project if Council preferred, noting that this would leave a shortfall that the tax levy is likely to bear for the previously approved capital plans.

It should be noted that there would be reduced expenditures with a free Transit pilot as farebox repairs, producing paper Transit passes, transfers, tickets, coin deposits using Brinks, staff resources, etc. It is anticipated that this would be approximately \$100,000.00 annually.

Providing free Transit is never a guarantee that ridership will increase. Staff has been closely observing Orangeville, Ontario who implemented a free Transit pilot program a year and a half ago and their data shows that ridership has doubled since the implementation. It should be noted however, that while Orangeville has a similar population to Stratford, the Transit service differs greatly, with Orangeville providing service for only 2 routes compared to Stratford's 7 routes. Further to that, Orangeville's increased ridership in 2024 was approximately 260,000 – Stratford's 2024 ridership was 445,000 and increased to 493,000 in 2025.

There are many positives with increased ridership including an increase to our Provincial Gas Tax allocation annually, increased affordability, removing a barrier to employment, decreased maintenance and staff time with fareboxes and cash handling, and a

potential positive impact towards the City's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets through a reduction of personal vehicles on the road over time. However, at this time it is not known if providing free transit would have a significant impact on ridership; or if there are alternative methods to achieve increased ridership like targeted marketing campaigns, targeted fee reductions, additional routes, etc.

In November 2025, the Manager of Transit attended an E&E meeting to respond to various Committee questions regarding Transit services which included exploring free transit in Stratford.

Following review of the information provided by the Manager of Transit, the E&E Committee has recommended that a one-year free transit pilot project be initiated in 2027.

Options for consideration:

1. Request review of the recommendation put forward by E&E by staff:

THAT staff be directed to review and conduct a cost/benefit analysis of options for implementing and funding a free transit pilot project, along with alternatives to increase transit ridership. *(recommended)*

2. Request review of a 3 or 6 month free transit pilot project in 2028 by staff:

THAT staff be directed to review options for implementing and funding a 3 or 6 month free transit pilot project in 2028.

3. Request review of a 6-month free transit pilot project by staff in 2027:

THAT staff be directed to review options for implementing and funding a six month free transit pilot project in 2027.

4. Approve the request (initiate a 1-year free transit pilot project in 2027):

THAT the request from the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee to begin the budgetary and administrative process to implement a one-year trial of free transit commencing in 2027 and replace lost fare revenue with savings from fare collection procedures and rebates from provincial gas tax revenue be approved.

5. File the request (meaning take no action):

THAT the request from the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee to begin the budgetary and administrative process to implement a one-year trial of free transit commencing in 2027 and replace lost fare revenue with savings from fare collection procedures and rebates from provincial gas tax revenue, be filed.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There is no impact to the current year operating budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

The financial implication to consider initially is the impact of the loss of fare revenues along with the reduced expenses. Based on the 2026 operating budget and assuming a 3% inflationary impact, no changes to service levels (staffing requirements, capital investments or other) and for simplicity, the expenditure reductions noted captured fully in the regular service:

Impact (Revenues, Expenses, Tax Levy)	2026 Budget	2027 Projected	Estimated % change
Revenues-Regular Transit	\$616,200	\$0.00	(100%)
Expenses-Regular Transit	\$4,813,848	\$4,854,542	+0.85%
Tax Levy Impact-Regular Transit	\$4,196,948	\$4,854,542	+15.67%
Revenues-Parallel Transit	\$50,000	\$0.00	(100%)
Expenditures-Parallel Transit	\$720,850	\$742,476	+3.00%
Tax Levy Impact-Parallel Transit	\$670,850	\$742,476	10.68%
Total impact on Tax Levy of both services combined	\$4,867,798	\$5,597,018	14.98%

This illustrates that the cost to provide free transit is estimated at a 14.98% increase or \$729,220.

Should a shorter pilot period be considered, what is not captured is the adjustment to paying riders returning which may not be instantaneous and could inadvertently impact subsequent operational years.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Not applicable: This report does not align with one of the Strategic Priorities as it is a request for a one-year free transit pilot.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Travel and Transport

Reducing the need to travel, encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon transport.

Zero Waste

Reducing consumption, reusing and recycling to achieve zero waste and zero pollution.

Zero Carbon Energy

Making buildings and manufacturing energy efficient and supplying all energy with renewables.

Staff Recommendation: THAT staff be directed to review and conduct a cost/benefit analysis of options for implementing and funding a free transit pilot project, along with alternatives to increase transit ridership.

Prepared by: Vicky Trotter, Council Committee Coordinator
Recommended by: Karmen Krueger, CPA, Director of Corporate Services
André Morin, CPA, Chief Administrative Officer

Community Services Sub-Committee

Department Update

March 2026

PARKS & CEMETERY

- Parks and Cemetery Spring clean up as begun
- Winter equipment being transferred to summer use (taking off winter applications, changing to summer implements)
- Swans to be released back into the public parks system on the Wednesday after Easter
- Completing Hiring for
 - Seasonal Workers – Summer Students
 - Temporary Parkskeepers – Summer position
 - Cemetery Maintenance – Full Time position
- Tenders are out for Devon Park and Willow Park Play Structure Replacements
- Starting to gain interest from sports groups in booking new cricket pitch

TRANSIT

Weekly Ridership Year-over-Year Comparison

2026 Week	Ridership	Sat On-Demand	2025 Week	Ridership	Sat On-Demand
Feb 15-20	6924	260	Feb 16-21	7679	267
Feb 22-27	9921	196	Feb 23-28	11,234	211
Mar 1-6	9930	201	Mar 2-7	10,542	246
Mar 8-13	8687	154	Mar 9-14	8838	197

PC Connect Year-over-Year Comparison:

Year Month	Ridership
2026 Feb	922
2025 Feb	1079

TRANSIT CAPITAL

- None scheduled

PARALLEL TRANSIT

Weekly Ridership

2026 Week	Ridership	2025 Week	Ridership
Feb 15-20	347	Feb 16-21	388
Feb 22-27	402	Feb 23-28	411
Mar 1-6	406	Mar 2-7	420
Mar 8-13	447	Mar 9-14	416

Pre-Pandemic ridership was typically 400 per week.

At present, Mobility bus has 706 registrants and continues to grow.

PARALLEL TRANSIT CAPITAL

- 2 Mobility buses ordered and expected early Summer 2026

RECREATION PROGRAMMING

- Recreation staff held a very positive March Break Program with each day being at capacity and are currently planning for a sold-out PA Day on April 24.
- In addition to camp, 3 free family friendly programs were offered to the community from Monday to Friday during March Break. The three free programs of basketball, NextStrat Esport Lounge and public skates were all well attended. The public skates were possible due to generous community sponsors.
- Registration for summer camp and Lions Pool programming opened on March 1, 2026, which saw high demand resulting in several of the camps and programs being full before the end of the first day. One was even full in 15 seconds of opening!
- Staff are working through the onboarding of over 70 seasonal staff.
- The Ontario Fencing Association saw over 800 attendees during their Youth Circuit #3 tournament hosted at the Agriplex February 14-15, 2026.
- Staff continue to coordinate, partner and plan Doors Open Stratford and support in the development and launch of Asian Heritage Month activities.
- Staff attended the Municipal Sponsorship Summit to gain knowledge and build a network as the development of Stratford' Sponsorship Program continues.

RECREATION FACILITIES

- The Dehumidifier Replacement Capital Projects at Rotary Complex, William Allman Memorial Arena, and Dufferin Lions were awarded to Cimco Refrigeration in the amount of \$807,166.91, including HST.

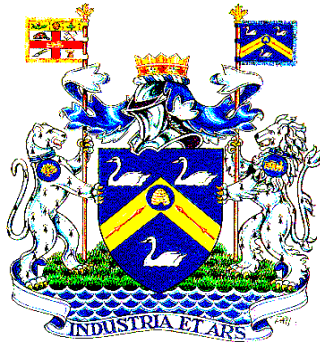
These projects will be completed during times that ensure there are no service disruptions for the facilities and ice surfaces.

- The maintenance and repairs Capital Project at National Stadium has been awarded to Baribeau Construction in the amount of \$74,160 plus HST. The scope of work for this project includes replacement of exterior metal doors, installation of handrails on the steps of the spectator seating area, and installation of prefabricated seating for the spectator seating area. The project is expected to be completed by May 31, 2026.
- The SERC Washroom renovation Capital Project has started and is expected to be completed by April 15, 2026, in advance of the May 1st seasonal opening of the washroom facility.
- The Veterans Drive Bandshell refurbishment Capital Project is expected to start in the first week of April and be completed in early June.
- The Canadian Dairy XPO (CDX) is being hosted at the Rotary Complex and Agriplex on April 1 & 2, 2026.

Following the completion of the Rotary Hockey Final Day Event at the Rotary Complex on March 28, 2026, the Rink B ice surface will be removed in advance of load-in and setup for CDX.

The Rink A ice surface at Rotary Complex will remain in for the summer months. This ice surface will be covered for the CDX event.

- The last day for ice rentals at Dufferin Lions Arena is Thursday, April 2, 2026. The ice surface will then be removed for the summer months.
- The replacement of the railing system at the Boathouse for the Membrane & Railing replacement Capital Project is scheduled for the last week of March and first week of April. This project is expected to be fully completed by April 15, 2026, in advance of the seasonal opening of the tenant at the Boathouse.



Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee

MINUTES

A meeting of the Stratford Communities in Bloom (CIB) Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, August 7, 2025 at 12:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

Committee Members: Councillor Brad Beatty – Chair Presiding, Kimberly Richardson, Linda Wakenhut, Mary-Anne Krutila, Carys Wyn Hughes, Barb Hacking

Staff: Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Regrets: Councillor Bonnie Henderson, Yvonne O'Reilly, Cindy Carlson

1. Call to Order

Councillor Beatty, Chair presiding, called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

Reading of the Land Acknowledgement and a Moment of Silent Reflection

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Conduct Statement

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

3. Adoption of the Previous Minutes

Motion by Carys Wyn Hughes

Seconded by Kimberly Richardson

THAT the minutes from the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee meeting dated July 3, 2025 be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

4.1 2025 National Symposium Update

Kimberly Richardson reviewed the following plans for the symposium:

- Finalize the flowers;
- Destination Stratford has created a site for delegates attending to let them know what events and activities are happening during their time here;
- The hotel room bookings have now fulfilled the minimum of 50% booked and can maintain the rate;
- Flyers to be sent out to local businesses in September;
- Organize volunteers in September once final numbers are known (approximately 10 people). Linda Wakenhut will confirm with Garden Stratford members and collect their contact information;
- Some small snack items will need to be purchased closer to the date;
- Vicky Trotter will follow up and confirm biographies for speakers;
- Vicky Trotter will send the walking plan and driving tours to CIB members;
- Councillor Beatty has secured a sponsor for the large decorations (pumpkins, gourds, mums, displays);
- Table-top decorations to be decided (approximately 24);
- Three bushels of apples will be delivered and need cold storage for a week;
- Cost for attending the symposium is approximately \$400/pp (12 attendees for CIB Stratford Committee). Vicky Trotter will follow up with CIB National to inquire if members are still required to register;
- Vicky Trotter will have the display boards and any miscellaneous items printed by staff;
- List of incidentals – chalk art (\$165.00 for stencil), silent auction items, pop-up artists/buskers, social media options, museum fee for visitors (\$250.00 flat fee), cost for brewery tasting/pizza, water for bus tour;
- 2026 Symposium host city will be hosting on Friday night. CIB Stratford will offer to assist;

Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
August 7, 2025

- Councillor Beatty will organize the "Stratford After Dark" mystery tour for Thursday evening. Councillor Beatty will require a small budget to be finalized at the next meeting;

4.2 Review of CIB Committee Terms of Reference

Committee members received a copy of the current Terms of Reference for the committee for review and discussion on updating the document. Kimberly Richardson suggested that this could be a project that the committee could look at in early 2026 when the new members are all appointed.

Vicky Trotter stated that staff is currently undertaking a review of many items relating to advisory committees, such as remuneration for mandated committees and reviewing the policy for appointments to streamline the process. Staff is also completing an advisory committee manual for members. Terms of Reference are not being reviewed by staff at this time. If CIB members would like to update their Terms of Reference, it would be required to go to staff, Sub-committee and onto Council for final approval.

The Committee would like to review the document and have a discussion at a future meeting to update it. Staff will list this item on the December or January meeting agenda. Kimberly Richardson suggested that the rules of conduct at meetings could also be included in the Terms of Reference. Ms. Trotter noted that these are outlined in the City's procedural by-law.

Kimberly Richardson no longer present at the meeting at 12:52 p.m.

4.3 Update on Ted Blowes Garden

Barb Hacking provided the following updates:

- CIB was fortunate to receive a donation from a local grocery store when their garden centre closed for the season. Ms. Hacking has planted the plants in the garden and will send the store a thank you note from CIB;
- The top of the memorial stone in Ted's garden will be redone as it is difficult to read;
- Volunteers have been doing a lot of watering this summer.

Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
August 7, 2025

4.4 Update on Gateways Project

Vicky Trotter will follow up with Adam Betteridge, Director of Building and Planning, for an update at the September CIB meeting.

4.5 Update on Scotts Miracle Grow Garden Contest

Vicky Trotter reported that there were (14) nominations received this year. The review sub-committee will be reviewing the submissions following this meeting.

4.6 Discussion on Ted Blowes Community Service Award Criteria

Vicky Trotter reported that for this year's award, the committee received two nominations. Unfortunately, one of the nominations is for an individual who does not reside in Perth County, which is on the list of criteria in order to be eligible for the award. Ms. Trotter noted that the committee could review the list for future awards and reconsider the criteria for next year. Ms. Trotter will discuss this with the Mayor's Office, as this was originally their award to distribute.

The second nomination received to date is for a Stratford resident. Carys Wyn Hughes will take both nominations and meet with St. John Ambulance to review them and bring their recommendation back to CIB in September.

5. New Business

None noted.

6. Upcoming Events

- 2025 CIB National Symposium (Stratford, ON) – October 16-18, 2025
- City Council Annual Recognition Awards – October 28, 2025
- Pumpkin Parade – November 1, 2025

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the CIB Advisory Committee will be held on Thurs., September 4, 2025, 12:00 p.m., Rotary Complex (Mansbridge Rm), 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford

Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
August 7, 2025

8. Adjournment

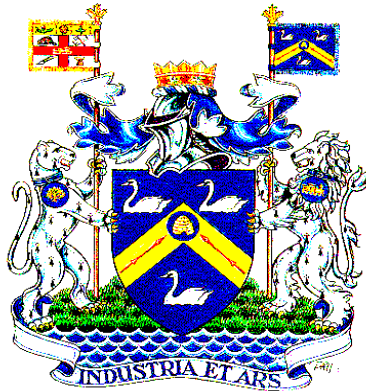
Motion by Carys Wyn Hughes

Seconded by Mary-Anne Krutila

THAT the August 7, 2025 Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 12:02 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 1:03 P.M.



Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee

MINUTES

A meeting of the Stratford Communities in Bloom (CiB) Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 12:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

Committee Members: Councillor Brad Beatty – Chair Presiding, Carys Wyn Hughes, Barb Hacking, Jenn Mitchell

Staff: Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Regrets: Cindy Carlson, Councillor Bonnie Henderson

1. Call to Order

Councillor Beatty, Chair presiding, called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

Reading of the Land Acknowledgement and a Moment of Silent Reflection

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Conduct Statement

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

3. Welcome New/Returning Members

Councillor Beatty welcomed new member Jenn Mitchell. Members and staff introduced themselves.

Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
December 4, 2025

Vicky Trotter reviewed some of the 2025 projects that CiB has worked on, how to request an item be included on an upcoming agenda and how to contact staff if you are unable to attend a meeting or have any questions. Ms. Trotter will forward this document to all members for their information.

4. Election of 2025/26 Chair & Vice-Chair

Staff declared nominations open for the 2025/26 Chair of the CiB Advisory Committee. Barb Hacking nominated Councillor Brad Beatty.

Staff asked if there were any further nominations. No further nominations were made.

Motion by Carys Wyn Hughes

Seconded by Barb Hacking

THAT the nominations for the 2025/26 Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee Chair be closed. Carried

Councillor Beatty indicated that he would allow his nomination to stand.

Motion by Carys Wyn Hughes

Seconded by Jenn Mitchell

THAT Councillor Beatty be elected as the 2025/26 Chair of the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee. Carried

Staff declared nominations for the 2025/26 Vice-Chair of the CiB Advisory Committee open. Barb Hacking nominated Carys Wyn Hughes.

Staff asked if there were any further nominations. No further nominations were made.

Motion by Barb Hacking

Seconded by Jenn Mitchell

THAT nominations for the 2025/26 Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee Vice-Chair be closed. Carried

Carys Wyn Hughes indicated that she would allow her name to stand.

Motion by Barb Hacking

Seconded by Jenn Mitchell

THAT Carys Wyn Hughes be elected as the 2025/26 Vice-Chair of the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee. Carried

Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
December 4, 2025

5. Adoption of the Previous Minutes

Motion by Carys Wyn Hughes

Seconded by Barb Hacking

THAT the minutes from the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee meeting dated October 2, 2025 be adopted as printed. Carried

6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

6.1 Update on Ted Blowes Garden

Barb Hacking reported that the tulip trees have been purchased and will be planted along the path from Ted's garden to the existing circle of trees for the future Indigenous project. Tulip trees are home to Tiger Swallowtail butterflies. Locates will be completed in the area and the trees will be planted in the spring.

There is one autumn blaze maple tree and Councillor Beatty will contact the Parks & Forestry Manager to confirm the location.

A sign has been re-located to the Ted Blowes Garden under the Butterfly Bridge that was previously located in the Hope Garden downtown. The sign is slate and the front is no longer legible. Ms. Hacking inquired if it could be refinished. Carys Wyn Hughes will contact the original supplier and inquire about options.

Ms. Hacking has access to some more tulip bulbs and will pick them up.

6.2 Pumpkin Parade Review

Barb Hacking reported that the event this year was great. Most notably, the decision to have Public Works place bins ahead of time in Market Square for people to directly throw their uncarved pumpkins into was really helpful and cleanup was much quicker. Ms. Hacking suggested that next year, CiB could advertise that the bins will be there to let people know ahead of time. Vicky Trotter also suggested signs could be posted directly on the bins as well.

The two farms who take some of the pumpkins came and picked up the number of pumpkins they wanted and the remaining pumpkins were taken in the bins by Public Works staff to compost at the landfill.

The Pumpkin Parade will be listed early on the CiB agenda to allow for planning discussions, as the Committee will now be taking the lead on this event.

Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
December 4, 2025

CiB will store the supplies that CBEAC previously had, members and staff will discuss a good storage location for the supplies.

7. New Business

7.1 Annual Committee Report to Council

Councillor Beatty reviewed the draft 2025 Annual Report that is submitted to Council to update them on what the committee has been doing. Committee members were given the opportunity to provide feedback prior to the report being submitted.

7.2 2026 CiB Registration Options

Councillor Beatty reported that CiB National is offering a new program for 2026 that Stratford could register for. It is called "Healthier Livable Cities". There are three options that Stratford can choose from in 2026:

1. Host the judges and be evaluated, as is usually done every two years, at a registration cost of \$2,215.00 + HST;
2. Register in the new "Healthier Livable Cities" category for \$2,650.00 + HST;
3. Register as non-evaluated this year (National is permitting this, as Stratford just hosted the National Symposium in October) for \$725.00 + HST;

Members discussed all three options and feel that registering to be evaluated in the regular category would be the best choice for 2026. Vicky Trotter will inquire if the registration fee can be paid from the 2025 budget or needs to wait for the 2026 budget.

Motion by Jenn Mitchell

Seconded by Carys Wyn Hughes

THAT the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee spends \$2,215.00 + HST to register for the 2026 CiB judging evaluation. Carried

7.3 Symposium Tulips

Councillor Beatty reported that 2000 tulips bulbs were received as a thank you for hosting the 2025 National Symposium. Community Services staff has already planted the bulbs in the Shakespearean Gardens. Vicky Trotter will send a thank you on behalf of the committee.

Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
December 4, 2025

7.4 City of Stratford Gateways

Carys Wyn Hughes reported that in the 2026 budget, there is \$5,000.00 allotted for the gateways project. Vicky Trotter will gather some initial quotes to give the committee an idea of what costs might be. The most economical option would be to partner with other organizations to move this project along. Ms. Hughes will contact Destination Stratford to inquire about grant opportunities once some quotes are received. Vicky Trotter stated that eventually this project will need Council approval for design and cost.

Motion by Carys Wyn Hughes

Seconded by Barb Hacking

THAT the Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee requests the Council Committee Coordinator procure initial quotes for the design of potential gateway concepts. Carried

8. Updates on Upcoming Events

- Annual Scott's Miracle Grow Contest
- Spring Fling Event
- Pumpkin Parade – November 1, 2026

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the CIB Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 12:00 p.m., Rotary Complex (Mansbridge Rm), 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford

10. Adjournment

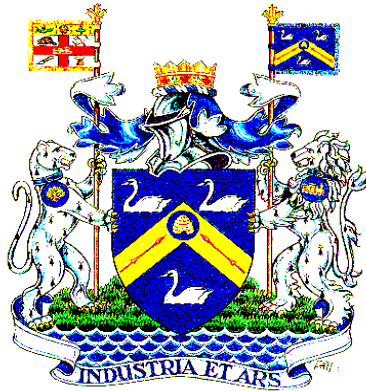
Motion by Carys Wyn Hughes

Seconded by Jenn Mitchell

THAT the December 4, 2025 Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 12:06 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 1:21 P.M.



Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee

MINUTES

A meeting of the Stratford Communities in Bloom (CiB) Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 9:00 a.m., City Hall, Clerk's Office – Romeo Room, 1 Wellington Street, Stratford ON

Committee Members: Councillor Brad Beatty – Chair Presiding, Councillor Henderson, Carys Wyn Hughes, Barb Hacking, Jennifer Mitchell, Cindy Carlson

Staff: Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Councillor Beatty, Chair presiding, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Reading of the Land Acknowledgement and a Moment of Silent Reflection

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Conduct Statement

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

3. New Business

3.1 CiB National Event

Councillor Beatty stated CiB Stratford was chosen to participate in the 2026 "Cervia Città Giardino special edition dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the Republic. Flowers of freedom, roots of hope". The following details were provided regarding the invitation:

Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
February 11, 2026

- The garden is in recognition of the 80th anniversary of Canadians liberating Italy;
- A minimum of three (3) members of CiB Stratford are required to participate in the program;
- Accommodations and provisions will be provided by the Cervia, Italy;
- Gardens are to be designed by the Canadian Community;
- The Manager of Parks & Forestry has been requested to assist with the design of the garden;
- The garden will be planted by CiB Stratford members over a 2-4 day period;
- Scheduled from May 23 to 27, 2026;
- Airfare is required to be paid by members wishing to participate.

Members discussed the potential requesting of additional funds from City Council for travel costs and obtaining sponsorship from the local Army Navy and Legion Branches;

Motion by Carys Wyn Hughes

Seconded by Cindy Carlson

THAT the Stratford Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee proceed as an Ambassador City in the 2026 "*Cervia Città Giardino – Special Edition dedicated to the 80th Anniversary of the Republic: Flowers of Freedom, Roots of Hope*";

AND THAT a delegation of up to six (6) members of the Stratford Communities in Bloom Committee attend and participate in the official garden planting and related ceremony taking place from May 22 to May 27, 2026 in Cervia, Italy;

**AND THAT the Committee seek financial support from City Council to help offset up to 50% of the cost for Committee members participating.
Carried**

Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
February 11, 2026

4. Adjournment

Motion by Carys Wyn Hughes

Seconded by Barb Hacking

THAT the February 11, 2026 Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 9:00 A.M.

Meeting End Time: 9:38 A.M.