



# NOTICE OF MOTION

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Date: April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

To: Mayor and Council

From: Councillor Kyle Sampson; Supported by Councillors Susan Scott & Ron Polillo

Subject: Bear Aware Advisory Committee & Bear Proofing our Community

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## RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council directs Administration to return to Council a report outlining immediate opportunities and considerations for bear proofing our community for the purpose of public safety, and bear safety, including;
  - a. Options for Council to consider with respect to converting public garbage cans at bus stops, parks, as well as other community garbage cans to a bear proof/resistant model, prioritizing in areas that have the highest rates of bear sightings/interactions.
  - b. Options for a reduction in fruit-bearing (no pun intended) trees on City property to reduce bear attractants on public lands, prioritizing in areas that have the highest rates of bear sightings/interactions.
2. That Council directs Administration to draft a term of reference for a 3-month, limited duration 'Bear Aware Advisory Committee', with the intent that the committee will engage in research and return to Council at the conclusion of their mandate with a report offering recommendations for increased bear-proofing and bear attractant reduction efforts throughout our community for both the purpose of public safety, and bear safety.
  - a. The committee should consider items such as, but not limited to:
    - i. A residential bear proof/resistant garbage can, with various roll-out options such as a city-wide roll-out, an opt-in style program where residents can purchase a bear-proof can, or other potential options.
    - ii. Residential fruit trees management/mitigation/removal incentive program.

## DISCUSSION:

Prince George, like many communities across British Columbia, has been seeing a rise in urban bear activity over the past number of years, particularly in 2023. Local groups and organizations (like Northern Bear Awareness for example), do incredible amounts of work educating the public and offering programs/projects to help reduce bear interactions within City limits; however, both individual residents, as well as the City needs to do more to do their part to reduce bear interactions and bear conflict within the City.

Recently, Council heard from BC Conservation that a record numbers of bear sightings were reported, as well as a record number of destroyed bears. It is anticipated that like 2023, we could potentially another record setting year in 2024. It has been said by some experts that drought conditions will exacerbate the need for bears to seek food outside of their natural habitats, and in urban areas from sources like residential garbage, fruit trees, etc.

It is prudent that Council, and the City of Prince George clearly identifies the growing concern among the community and takes action to help mitigate the issue to the best of its ability.

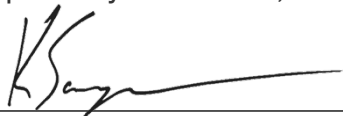
By taking steps to convert existing community garbage infrastructure to bear proof/resistant options in locations like bus stops, parks, and in other locations in the community, we will reduce access to attractants, and reduce the volume of bear interactions. The same can be said for the reduction and removal of fruit-bearing trees in public boulevards, parks, or open spaces.

Additionally, the collaboration of experts, engaged citizens, and City staff, through a limited-duration Advisory Committee will provide Council will recommendations and options on next-steps for an affordable and effective residential bear-proof garbage bin program. This is intended to help mitigate the bear interactions in residential neighborhoods, particularly for properties who are unable to store their bin inside, but also for all.

The committee's term of reference should include an outline for who will sit on the committee. The intent is that the City of Prince George could offer participation from the Northern Bear Awareness Society, BC Conservation, UNBC, Regional District Solid Waste Division, as well as at least three positions to the community at large with the request for applications to go out upon the approved term of reference. The committee should also have participation from the City's Solid Waste division, and Bylaw division.

The intent is that the committees report would return to Council before the end of the year, and that the recommendations will be able to be considered in the 2025 budget.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Councillor Kyle Sampson

*Susan Scott*

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Councillor Susan Scott

*Ron Polillo*

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Councillor Ron Polillo