

Walter, Penny

Subject: FW: Email - Request to Speak - Joanne Blythe - Wild About Saskatoon - Green Infrastructure 10-Year Implementation Plan - CK 4110-38
Attachments: green_pathways_06_06_22.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>

Sent: Sunday, June 5, 2022 5:48 PM

To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>

Subject: Email - Request to Speak - Joanne Blythe - Wild About Saskatoon - Green Infrastructure 10-Year Implementation Plan - CK 4110-38

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Sunday, June 5, 2022 - 17:48

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

Date Sunday, June 05, 2022

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name Joanne

Last Name Blythe

Phone Number ([REDACTED])

Email [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED] Munroe Avenue South

City Saskatoon

Province Saskatchewan

Postal Code [REDACTED]

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable) Wild About Saskatoon

Subject Green Infrastructure 10-Year Implementation Plan

Meeting (if known) STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, UTILITIES AND CORPORATE SERVICES

Comments

I am requesting to speak on behalf of Wild About Saskatoon. I will be attending in person.

Attachments

[green_pathways_06_06_22.pdf](#)

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting? No

Wild About Saskatoon

June 6, 2022

Re: Pathways for an Integrated Green Network (Green Pathways)

Wild about Saskatoon is a grassroots group that advocates for nature – wild lives and wild places – in and around this city. As such, we appreciate this elegant report and encourage you to vote “yes” when the question is called to approve it in principle.

Approval in principle means accepting much of the content but leaving room for further discussion and change. While we agree with and support much of this plan, we can see that further discussions are urgently needed. We want to participate in these discussions.

The City’s Public Engagement Policy (Policy C02-046) defines public participation as “the activities by which people’s concerns, needs, interests, and values are incorporated into decisions and actions on public matters and issues.” The Policy then enumerates a short list of Guiding Principles by which this participation is to be achieved.

Item 4.5 on this list is “Open and Timely Communication.” The public was allowed less than three working days to review this complex and detailed report, encompassing 53 pages, plus several extended appendices. This is disrespectful to both the importance of the work being undertaken and to the public. **What is the plan for including stakeholders like us in the refinement and improvement of the Green Pathways report?**

In the next bullet, item 4.6, the Public Engagement Policy goes on to stress “the importance of relationship building rooted in mutual trust and respect.” At Wild about Saskatoon, we had a glimpse of this kind of relationship building shortly after this policy was approved. For a brief time, a member of City staff was delegated to join our steering committee. Once, we and other stakeholders participated in a joyful community consultation that helped to launch the Green Strategy. But all these activities stopped abruptly, and the Pandemic Pause was not the only factor at play.

We want to be engaged. We want what the Public Engagement Policy promises -- “an authentic opportunity to influence” – and assist – with the implementation of this Green Pathway.

If the City were tapping into the energy and expertise in the community, there would – for one example - be no question of waiting until 2028 (!) for Bird-Friendly building guidelines. This would – and should -- have been accomplished yesterday. Other organizations, including our own, are already developing the kinds of public education and awareness programs that the City is hoping to get to in due course. Work with us. Amplify our efforts. Develop relationships with us.

We appreciate lovely documents and careful planning, but we need action.

We want to see a clear decision-making path that gives natural areas priority in city land-use decisions. We cannot discern any such decision-making process in this document.

We need rapid progress toward training in basic ecological concepts and best practices for environmental protection, across city departments. We cannot wait for the better part of a decade for this to kick in.

We need to see legal protection for our key natural areas, together with people *on the ground* managing, restoring and monitoring them. According to the timelines in this report, the natural areas protection program will not be operational until 2028-29. With business as usual by the city, many of our key natural areas will be lost or degraded before then.

Given the opportunity, the environmental community has demonstrated its willingness to help the City get up to speed on this critical and urgent work. Your engagement activities to date have elicited a very high level of public support for these initiatives. Let's go.

Joanne Blythe
Janet McVittie
Candace Savage

FOR
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