

**TOWN OF MINTO****DATE:** March 30, 2017**REPORT TO:** Mayor & Council**FROM:** Belinda Wick-Graham, Business & Economic Manager**SUBJECT:** Communities in Bloom Week & Evaluation

STRATEGIC PLAN:

9.8 Continue support for energy conservation through programs like Green Legacy, Communities in Bloom, Energy Conservation Plans and similar.

12.8 Support projects that encourage original communities to work together such as the trail development, Norgan Theatre, Communities in Bloom, downtown revitalization and similar.

BACKGROUND:

“Communities in Bloom is a non-profit Canadian organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement and the challenge of a national program, with focus on enhancing green spaces in communities”.

The program consists of communities receiving information and being evaluated either provincially, nationally or internationally by a volunteer jury of trained professionals on the accomplishments of their entire community (municipal, residential, corporate and institutional sectors, citizens) on the following key criteria: Tidiness, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Urban Forestry, Landscape, and Floral Displays.

The Town of Minto has been involved in the Communities in Bloom Program since 2003. In 2009 the Town of Minto was honoured to be recognized as a National Winner in the Communities in Bloom Program. Since that time the Town has participated in the Communities in Bloom Circle of Excellence, a non-competitive category only open to past National Winners. Participating in this category requires communities be evaluated every 3 years. This evaluation is to confirm the community's bloom rating. In 2013, the Town of Minto received 5 blooms and special recognition for the Palmerston Lions Heritage Park.

In 2017, Minto will once again be evaluated. As part of this evaluation we will be preparing a Community Profile Book, as well as hosting judges from July 16 – 18, 2017. Members of Council and Staff will be requested to participate in the evaluation process so please try and reserve these dates if possible.

The Communities in Bloom organization is also looking for participating communities to declare the week of May 1 – 7, 2017 as Communities in Bloom Week, which annually recognizes and celebrates the benefits derived from Communities in Bloom and the countless volunteers and individuals that make our communities great places to live.

COMMENTS:

A lot of hard work by volunteers and staff goes into making Minto a great community. The key areas that Communities in Bloom focusses on: Tidiness, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Urban Forestry, Landscape and Floral Displays are all areas we pride ourselves on. For a community our size Minto has a lot going for it. Continued participation in the Communities in Bloom program allows us to showcase and promote the Town.

Much has changes since 2013. Renovations are underway at Palmerston Rail Museum, and the CNRA fountain is working. The TLC Coordinator position is now full time, and he is completing landscape designs for new entrance signs and Mill Street Park. The Town owns White's Junction Trail and has linked Harriston and Palmerston with the rail bridge replaced by June. Trees for Minto Committee planted 4,100 trees in rural areas, Council adopted a new tree policy and naturalized the Municipal Office, parts of Palmerston Lion's Park and the Coon Creek watershed. These actions should help us continue Minto's strong standing with Communities in Bloom.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The cost this year to be involved in the Communities in Bloom Circle of Excellence – Evaluated Category is \$876.75. There will be additional costs associated with hosting the judges and these costs will be accommodated within our 2017 Communities in Bloom Budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Council of the Town of Minto receives the Business & Economic Manager's report dated March 30, 2017 regarding Communities in Bloom Week & Evaluation and declare May 1 – 7, 2017 Communities in Bloom Week.

Belinda Wick-Graham, Business & Economic Manager