



Report to: General Committee

Meeting Date: October 19, 2020

SUBJECT:	2020 Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF), Funding Applications Approval
PREPARED BY:	Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report entitled “2020 Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF), Funding Applications Approval” be received;
2. AND THAT the external funding application Pollinators: Bees, Butterflies and Beyond submitted by Swan Lake for a pollinator awareness and planting project, for \$3,730.90, be approved to be funded from the MESF reserve;
3. AND THAT the internal funding application for a Smart Irrigation System Pilot at Milliken Mills Park for \$6,200.00, submitted by the Environmental Services Department be approved to be funded from the MESF reserve;
4. AND THAT further, that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to recommend that funding from the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF) be provided for two environmental projects as recommended by the MESF Committee.

BACKGROUND:

Council created MESF in 2002 to assist the City with funding innovative and leading environmental initiatives, including pilot projects, which contribute to the sustainability and health of the natural environment and support GreenMarkham and Waste Diversion targets.

All approved MESF projects are expected to meet at least one of the following objectives:

- Project is a leading innovation (i.e. pilot project) that can be showcased by Markham;
- Project promotes education, understanding and participation in environmental sustainability in Markham;
- Project supports the City’s environmental policies and strategic plan.

On January 20, 2020, Council approved the continuation of the MESF program and the addition of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Small Grant (SNSG) as part of the Markham

Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF). The purpose of the SNSG is to support small scale, resident-led projects within Markham that focus on enhancing the health and resilience of our ecosystem and sustainability of our natural environment. Small grants up to a maximum \$500 / project are available for residents. Due to Covid-19, the application deadline was extended to June 2020 and the received applications are being evaluated for approval. For the 2020 funding year, \$10,000 has been allocated for SNSG projects from the MESF Budget

The MESF and Sustainable Neighbourhood Small Grant program is administered by the Waste & Environmental Management section of the Environmental Services Department and applications are reviewed by an internal staff committee with representation from a broad range of departments including Sustainability, Operations, Culture and Waste Management.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Project Details:

The MESF Committee received two applications for the 2020 funding year. The application submitted by Swan Lake was originally received for the 2017 funding cycle and resubmitted in 2019.

1. Swan Lake – Markham's Pollinators: Bees, Butterflies and Beyond Swan Lake Butterfly Way Project

Working with the David Suzuki Foundation, Swan Lake Village will plant a Butterfly Way garden to attract butterflies back to the area. Volunteer gardeners will plant and maintain native flowers, plants and shrubs that will increase and sustain butterfly and bee pollinator populations. This project provides an enhanced area for the community to enjoy and educate residents to create pollinator gardens in their own space. The MESF Committee has confirmed that the plantings do not interfere with the park refresh currently underway.

This project supports Markham's declaration in 2016 to become a Monarch-Friendly City. The project creates habitat for local pollinators and to educate residents about pollinators and their environmental importance.

The total funding request for this initiative is \$3,730.90 for garden preparation and plants.

2. Environmental Services – Smart Irrigation System Pilot (Milliken Mills Park)

Markham has close to 100 irrigated parks, parkettes and sports fields with automatic systems. The pilot is to test a smart irrigation control system that enable the programming, monitoring, and operation of irrigation systems with cloud software for Wi-Fi. The City can monitor and adapt system operation and irrigation run times in response to different conditions. The system will also provide historical data to allow analysis and reporting of what ran when, how much water was used, and identification of problems.

This pilot project will test and verify the smart irrigation technology to determine the opportunity to increase water efficiency during peak demand season, and identify potential efficiency in Operations/Parks staff time to service sites.

The total funding request is \$6,200.00 for the purchase, installation, and analysis of the smart irrigation system. This project will be a departmental collaborative effort lead by Environmental Services with support from Operations-Parks.

Both MESF projects meet MESF program requirements and community funding criteria and are recommended for approval by the MESF Committee.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Both applications have been evaluated based upon the approved criteria.

The funding required is \$3,730.90 for the Swan Lake Butterfly Way Project and \$6,200.00 for the Smart Irrigation System Pilot at Milliken Mills Park for a total funding amount of \$9,930.90 (\$3,730.90 + \$6,200.00).

Both projects are to be funded from the MESF reserve, reducing the current reserve balance from \$57,248.56 to \$47,317.66 (\$57,248.56-\$9,930.90). The reserve balance of \$47,317.66 will be sufficient for the 2021 project applications. After the 2021 application period, Staff will re-evaluate the need to top up the reserve as part of the 2022 capital budget process.

The table below summarizes the recommended expenditures from the MESF Reserve.

MESF Reserve

MESF Reserve Balance - as of September 30, 2020	57,248.56
Swan Lake - Butterfly Way Project	(3,730.90)
Smart Irrigation System Pilot (Milliken Mills Park)	(6,200.00)
MESF Reserve Balance	47,317.66

CONCLUSION:

Both recommended projects align with corporate initiatives regarding environmental sustainability.

The MESF Committee is recommending that the two MESF funding applications for community environmental projects totaling \$9,930.90 be approved.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not Applicable

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Aligns with MESF guidelines and supports GreenMarkham goals.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Operations and Finance Departments have been consulted.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Phoebe Fu
Director Environmental Services