

## **Staff Report 2023-0051**

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Meeting Date: February 7, 2023

Subject: 2023 Climate Action Fund Recommendations

Submitted By: Kyle Rous, Coordinator, Climate Change, Energy and Environment, Corporate Strategy and Innovation

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Climate Action Fund grants be allocated to the seven (7) recipients as outlined in Table 2 of Staff Report 2023-0051 and funded from the 2023 Climate Action Fund operating account budget of \$36,902.77.

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- In June 2022 Council approved the Town's Climate Action Fund Framework, which served as an update and replaced the former Community and School Green Fund programs;
- The 2023 Climate Action Fund is the first year the Town accepted applications under the updated program, which will provide more funding to individual projects than the former Green Fund programs;
- The Climate Action Fund provides up to \$8,000 of funding to eligible applicants that undertake a climate change project in alignment with the goals and objectives of the Town's Resilient Caledon Plan;
- The 2023 Climate Action Fund application intake window was open from September 6, 2022 to October 31, 2022 and received twelve (12) applications;
- An internal cross-departmental Evaluation Committee scored applications utilizing a weighted application evaluation framework to determine funding recommendations;
- The Evaluation Committee recommends the release of \$36,902.77 to fund seven (7) Climate Action Fund projects outlined in Table 2 and Schedule A to Staff Report 2023-0051.

### **DISCUSSION**

In June 2022, Town of Caledon Council approved the Climate Action Fund Framework ('the Fund'), which serves as a replacement for the former Community and School Green Fund programs. The program update increased the amount of available funding per project and improved how programs are evaluated and aligned the program with the Resilient Caledon objectives.

The purpose of the Fund is to provide up to \$8,000 of grant funding to eligible entities to implement projects that address climate change in Caledon and are in line with the targets and objectives of the Resilient Caledon Plan.

## **Program Rules**

Projects that are eligible to apply for Climate Action Funds must meet the following criteria:

- Contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (climate mitigation); and/or,
- Enhances resiliency to climate change impacts (climate adaptation); and/or,
- Educates the community about climate change action.

For a project to be eligible for the fund:

- It must be based in Caledon and directly benefit Caledon residents;
- It cannot have been submitted in the previous years program intake;
- Funding must be used within the same calendar year it is issued, unless otherwise stipulated;
- Any unspent funds must be returned to the Town upon completion of the project;
- Applicants who apply to the Climate Action Fund cannot apply to the Town's Municipal, Agricultural and Community grants, and/or Golf Tournament funding; and,
- Only one application per organization will be accepted each year.

Example of the type of projects that would be eligible for Climate Action Funds include:

- Planting flower gardens that attract pollinator insects;
- Building a community greenhouse;
- Installing bike racks and bike repair stations;
- Raising and releasing fish and/or water invertebrates;
- Installing water bottle refill stations;
- Installing mini community based renewable energy systems; and,
- Facilitate climate change education workshops.

## **Application Intake Process**

The 2023 Fund application intake window was advertised and open from September 6, 2022 to October 31, 2022 where eligible applicants were invited to submit an online application.

The Town provided the following support to eligible entities interested in applying to the Fund:

- Published a detailed Applicants Guide that discloses eligibility requirements and the evaluation scoring matrix and recorded a webinar to walk through the Guide; and,
- Applicants were invited to contact staff in advance of submitting their application for guidance;

Once applications are submitted to the Town, Energy and Environment staff accept and pre-screen them to ensure that the mandatory eligibility criteria are met.

Applications that pass the pre-screen are provided to the Town's cross-departmental Evaluation Committee that score applications against a set of evaluation criteria that directly correspond to the questions in the Fund's application form. The sum of the total

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weighted consensus scores determines the application funding threshold recommendation, as described in Table 1:

**Table 1: Evaluation Score and Funding Threshold**

Evaluation Score	Funding
30-35 points	100% Full Funding
25-29 points	75% Partial Funding
24 points and below	No Funding

### 2023 Evaluation Results

The Town received twelve (12) applications to the 2023 Climate Action Fund intake. The Evaluation Committee recommends the release of \$36,902.77 to fund seven (7) projects as follows:

- One (1) project was recommended for full funding;
- Six (6) projects were recommended for partial funding; and,
- Five (5) projects received scores that do not reach the threshold to be recommended to receive funding.

A summary of the Evaluation Committee's funding recommendations are provided in Table 2 below. Full project summaries and evaluation results are provided in Schedule A to Staff Report 2023-0051.

**Table 2: Summary of 2023 Climate Action Fund Evaluation Results**

	Applicant	Eligible Grant Request	Consensus Score	Funding Recommendation	Recommended Funding Amount
1	Credit Valley Conservation Foundation	\$8,000.00	32	Full funding	\$8,000.00
2	Alton Village Association	\$8,000.00	29	Partial funding	\$6,000.00
3	Ontario Streams	\$8,000.00	29	Partial funding	\$6,000.00
4	Belfountain Public School	\$2,129.36	27	Partial funding	\$1,597.02
5	Macville Public School	\$6,540.00	27	Partial funding	\$4,905.00
6	Caledon Central Public School	\$6,117.66	26	Partial funding	\$4,588.25
7	ecoCaledon	\$7,750.00	25	Partial funding	\$5,812.50
	James Grieve Public School	\$5,228.94	24	No Funding	\$0.00
	Ellwood Public School	\$8,000	23	No Funding	\$0.00

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	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Eligible Grant Request</b>	<b>Consensus Score</b>	<b>Funding Recommendation</b>	<b>Recommended Funding Amount</b>
	Bolton United Church	\$8,000	22	No Funding	\$0.00
	James Bolton Public School	\$8,000	22	No Funding	\$0.00
	Southfields Public School	\$8,000	21	No Funding	\$0.00

Following Council's decision on the Fund allocations for 2023, Energy and Environment will provide all applicants with feedback from the Evaluation Committee to improve the quality of applications in future years.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Staff Report 2022-0062 approved the merging of Energy and Environment's operating budget lines 01-09-255-44040-365-62224 Community Green Fund (\$17,000) and 01-09-255-44040-365-62393 School Community Green Fund (\$18,000) into one operating budget line (\$35,000) and renamed to the Climate Action Fund as part of the 2023 budget process. With carryover funds from 2022, there are enough funds available to cover all recommended projects for 2023.

It is typical for the requested grant funds to exceed budget availability. Staff are working to set up an online process to accept public donations that can help to grow the annual Climate Action Fund budget.

### **COUNCIL WORK PLAN**

**Connected Community** – Promote community enrichment through support of local groups, enhanced partnerships and events.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Schedule A: 2023 Climate Action Fund Summaries