



c/o Communities in Bloom – Dryden City of Dryden, 30 Van Horner Ave. Dryden, ON P8N 2A7

Mayor Anne Krassilowsky  
City Councillors  
30 Van Horne Avenue  
Dryden ON P8N 2A7

Dear Mayor Krassilowsky & Councillors:

Re: Future of Communities in Bloom-Dryden Program

The Communities in Bloom-Dryden Committee has been honoured to serve the citizens of Dryden for the past 5 years. In that short time, the city of Dryden received 3 top “5 Bloom” Provincial honours, culminating in a first place win in our population category in the 2009 National competition which included a 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive “5 Bloom” score. Mayor and Council should be proud of our citizens for their numerous contributions to this process.

Earlier this year, at separate meetings with the Mayor and City Manager, we announced that the current Committee membership was completing its final year of commitment to the CiB Program and would be retiring as of November 30, 2010. As you know, since Dryden won our population category at the National level in 2009, we are not required to actively compete for 2 years. We saw this as an opportunity to redirect funds received from the Adopt-a-Planter program, that would normally be used for the competition process, into the beginning of the highway beautification project and the downtown hanging baskets.

More importantly, we also saw this as an opportunity for the City leadership to review its commitment to, and involvement in, the CiB program by taking full responsibility for the organization and management of the Program upon the retirement of the volunteer committee. While we have been honoured to serve, we have been saddened by the lack of response from the City in this regard. We are one of the few CiB organizations entirely led by volunteers. It is a heavy commitment, made heavier by this sense of disinterest. This feeling has come about through many small gestures which ironically have been magnified by our 2009 National winner status. For instance, the granite award earned at Dryden’s first entry into Nationals should have had a place of honour at City Hall instead of being buried where no one could find it. This is just one example of disinterest but one which is symbolic of the Program’s relationship with the City.

Although we are pleased this year to have Jennifer Francis and Chris Gadd join our Committee and acknowledge the support we have received from senior managers Arie Hoogenboom and Bill Latham, we are disappointed and confused by the lack of involvement of Council members. Council appears to have lost track of the fact that we were created as a committee of Council.

By comparison, in some municipalities the Communities in Bloom committee is the Council or at the very least chaired by a member of Council. As it now stands, without an active Council representative, City Councillors have little opportunity to learn or gain a better understanding of the Program and its benefits.

We are also greatly disappointed that the City has failed to capitalize on the status afforded by the Provincial and National awards gained over the past 4 years of competition. These awards are highly prized among municipalities across the country and around the world. However, other than the publicity created by the CiB-Dryden Committee itself, little has been used for promotion by the City of Dryden or Dryden Development Corporation.

Few seem to realize or understand that, in the words of one of the 2009 National Judges, "Communities in Bloom is in fact an Economic Development Tool masquerading as a beautification contest, a blueprint for a green future, an economic development tool". Although the relationship is not always evident, we would have hoped that by now the City's elected and appointed leaders would have grasped the potential inherent in the program.

The current Committee of CiB-Dryden leaves the City with many lasting changes: A quadrupled Adopt-a-Planter Program, a Showcase of Gardens friendly competition, an official City flower and tree, permanent signage at three City entrances proclaiming our Provincial and National wins, a Community Profile Book for each year of competition available at our Public Library, two professionally-designed display banners for the City's use at conventions and trade shows, public exposure in three national distributed magazines and the national "Canada Blooms" trade show, and the third most visited CiB website in the country after Canada and Ontario .

Collectively as a committee we are pleased that we have been able to accomplish so much; however, it is you the City's elected and appointed elite who must now determine if Communities in Bloom-Dryden is to be taken to the next level. Should representatives of the City wish to meet with committee members this fall, we would be pleased to share our thoughts and ideas on what the next phase of a Communities in Bloom Program for Dryden might look like.

We hope that you too would like to see Dryden continue as "the Best Bloomin' City in the Wilderness".

Yours truly

John Borst, Chair  
Communities in Bloom-Dryden

c.c. Senior Management: Hoogenboom, Latham  
Jennifer Francis  
Wade Petranik, Chair and DDC Board