

RESOLUTION NO. 12- 153

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING ASHEVILLE AS THE INAUGURAL BEE CITY, USA

WHEREAS, *Bee City USA* is a collaborative initiative among backyard beekeepers, the Buncombe County Beekeepers Chapter, and the Center for Honeybee Research (a non-profit organization based in Asheville); and

WHEREAS, the goal of Bee City USA is to promote healthy, sustainable habitats and communities for honey bees and other pollinators; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the honey bees (*Apis mellifera L.*) brought here from Europe in the 1600s, "*One in every three bites of food we eat is courtesy of insect pollination. Even our meat and milk trace back to insects that pollinate the corn and other feed for beef cattle and cows.*" (Mace Vaughan, Pollinator Program Director for the Xerces Society); and

WHEREAS, today, there is global concern over the dramatic decline of honey bees and other pollinators due to a combination of habitat loss, the use of pesticides, and the spread of deadly parasitic mites and other plagues to bees. "Colony collapse disorder" has received widespread media attention in recent years because of the devastation it has wrought not only to the beekeeping and agriculture communities in the short-term, but its long-term implications for the future health of flora and fauna more generally. According to Simon Buxton, a Fellow of The Royal Anthropological Institute and spokesperson in the highly regarded documentary, *Vanishing of the Bees*: "*The future of beekeeping is not in one beekeeper with 60,000 hives, but rather 60,000 people with one hive.*" Beekeeping can be done virtually anywhere at schools, in yards, on rooftops, in forests, at businesses, or on public property like city/town halls; and

WHEREAS, beekeeping fosters environmental and seasonal awareness, promotes environmental stewardship and sustainability, and increases interactions among such groups as commercial beekeepers, backyard beekeepers, farmers, plant nurseries, garden suppliers, municipal departments, neighborhoods, garden clubs, and schools; and

WHEREAS, the economic importance of honey bees and their accessibility place them in a critically unique position among pollinators, the economic benefits of bee-friendliness are:

- Income earned by beekeepers and others through the sale of bee products, beekeeping equipment and supplies, and hive rentals for pollination.
- Increased demand for pollinator-friendly plant materials from local nurseries.
- Increased agricultural crop yields due to bee pollination.
- Heightened prestige and premium asking prices for place-based honey, which enhances the visibility and reputation of its community of origin; and

WHEREAS, Asheville should be the first *Bee City USA* because:

- The forested public lands surrounding Asheville are not only free of pesticides and herbicides, they are globally significant for their biodiversity of fauna and flora, from

which our local varietal honey comes--poplar, blackberry, black locust in the spring; basswood in early summer; and our international award winning sourwood in mid-summer.

- Asheville/Buncombe has one of the nation's largest bee clubs, filled with volunteers who are willing and anxious to educate the public about honey bees.
- Asheville City Council has taken many measures to make Asheville a "green city" and being pollinators-friendly respects the triple bottom line.
- Asheville is home to the Center for Honeybee Research, which has held conferences for beekeepers here with internationally known scientists for the past two years; and

WHEREAS, ideal pollinator-friendly habitat:

- Provides diverse and abundant, and to the extent possible, year-round, pollinator food sources (nectar and pollen from blooming plants).
- Provides water for drinking, nest-building and cooling, diluting stored honey, and butterfly "puddling,"
- Is pesticide-free or has pesticide use carried out with least ill effects on pollinators.
- Is comprised of mostly, if not all, native species of grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees. (Many native pollinators prefer or depend on the native plants with which they co-evolved.)
- Includes signage to educate the public and build awareness, and where possible, designated pollinator zones in public spaces.
- Provides for safe and humane removal of bees when required.
- Provides undisturbed spaces (leaf piles, un-mowed fields, fallen trees) for nesting and overwintering for native pollinators; and

WHEREAS, in order to enhance understanding among city/town staff and the public about the vital role that honey bees and other pollinators play and what each of us can do to sustain them, the City of Asheville agrees to meet the following standards required of all *Bee City USA* designees:

- 1) Establish and/or maintain, a subcommittee of the city/town's Tree Commission (or appropriate body or department) comprised of citizens and staffed by city/town employees charged with assembling and disseminating information to city/town departments, residents, businesses, and developers on topics of pollinator-friendly habitat and policies.
- 2) Pass and/or maintain an ordinance to encourage responsible beekeeping in city/town limits on public and private property for new and existing commercial and residential developments.
- 3) Establish and/or maintain a pollinator-friendly habitat budget of at least \$1 per capita to purchase pollinator-friendly trees and plants and remove invasive species on city/town property. (Note: This may be part of the existing landscaping budget required for members of *Tree City USA*.)
- 4) Annually observe National Pollinator Week (third week of June) and/or National Honey Bee Day (in August) and/or National Honey Month (September) through events, proclamations, promotions, etc. that showcase local beekeepers and

their products, pollinator friendly farms and nurseries, and the city/town's commitment to being a *Bee City USA*.

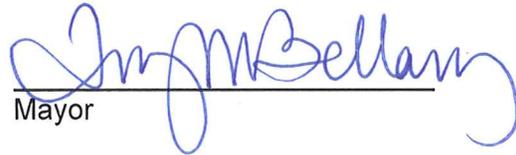
- 5) Designate an official *Bee City USA* contact for the city/town.
- 6) Submit an annual report of *Bee City USA* activities following the format provided.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The Asheville City Council accepts the designation and commits to the standards of *Bee City USA*.

Read, approved and adopted this the 26th day of June, 2012.

Deputy   
City Clerk

  
Mayor

Approved as to form:

  
City Attorney