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Recreation Playbook Update Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2021-12

Department(s): Community Services – Recreation and Culture

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Meeting Date: February 22, 2021

Recommendations

1. That staff be authorized to conduct a Request for Proposals (RFP) for architectural services specific to construction of an outdoor ice rink on the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex property; and,
2. That staff bring the budget impact for the aforementioned architectural services to Council for approval as part of a future supplemental capital budget report ; and,
3. That the remaining Recreation Playbook updates contained in the report be received.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the implementation status of the Recreation Playbook specific to the Facility Improvement and Development section of the Playbook. The prior update was provided to Council via Community Services – Recreation and Culture Information Report # 2018 – 07 dated May 31, 2018. This report will serve as a companion to the Recreation Playbook, noting the Recreation Playbook identified strategies to address needs at a given point of time. As the community continues to grow and change, the strategies identified will need to be reconsidered and in some cases updated to better reflect the current needs of the community.

As a result, this report is to serve as the most current reference document intended to inform the community and guide capital and operational planning associated with the Facility Improvement and Development section of the Recreation Playbook.

This report also serves to seek approval to initiate an RFP to secure architectural services for an outdoor ice rink on the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex property. The specific scope of work contained in the RFP will be broken into two parts. Part A will consist of schematic design, design development, costing and consultation. Part B (to be officially awarded after completion of Part A to the Town's satisfaction) will consist of tender development and support and contract administration.

Background

The Recreation Playbook, launched in 2015, serves as a ten year master plan for the community with respect to community recreation facilities and strategic program growth/development.

Discussion

Outdoor Artificial Ice Rink at Ray Twinney Complex

In the Recreation Playbook, it was recommended that the Town construct and operate a full size (NHL size) outdoor, artificial ice rink with the Ray Twinney Complex listed as the sample location. With the purchase of the Mulock property it was determined to consider that location as part of the park master planning process.

Through the detailed work conducted by PLANT (as a result of the required work under RFP-2019-030) there is a high level of confidence following design and consultation work done to date that the rink is not a suitable fit at the Mulock property.

Advancing this amenity as soon as possible is important as demonstrated through take up on community outdoor surfaces during previous winters, closure of Hollingsworth Arena, and only further reinforced through the participation demand for unstructured outdoor recreation activities seen during the pandemic. Provision of this facility also plays an important role in promoting safe recreational skating and helps keep people from using storm management ponds.

The location of the rink on the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex will take into account the pre-existing sports fields; however, depending on the preferred location, it may impact the layout of parking or access driveways and other non-programmed spaces.

Staff recommends re-aligning direction with what was stated in the original Recreation Playbook document (2015); specifically that the outdoor rink be located at a community recreation complex.

Other Recreation Playbook Facility Improvement and Development Section Updates

Outdoor Skateboard/Scooter Park:

Design and public consultation is complete thanks to the coordinating efforts of Engineering Services. Capital budget is approved with development charges serving as the funding source and construction is due to occur in 2021.

Spray Pad in Southwest Quadrant

Construction is well underway and ongoing at Dr. Margaret Arkinstall Park. Targeted opening: 2021

C.A.R.E. (Creating Accessible Recreation for Everyone) Program

As demographics change, subsidy based on ability to pay becomes a key companion policy to a service pricing policy. The Town of Newmarket has had the C.A.R.E. program in existence for a number of years. This program has been refreshed and the processes around obtaining subsidy have been modified to ensure that the dignity and confidentiality of all individuals requesting subsidy is completely respected. **Staff continue to move ahead on a detailed and comprehensive marketing plan inviting community members and businesses to donate to the C.A.R.E. Program to create sustainable funding to continue providing financial subsidy to those who qualify.**

Tennis Court Relocation

In the Recreation Playbook and subsequent reports, it was identified that the tennis courts currently located on the Community Centre Lands would be relocated to Art Ferguson Park on Bayview. This would facilitate growth for tennis as additional courts could be constructed on this site. It would also free up the Community Centre Lands to be used for other purposes. The catalyst for movement of the courts was originally to be determined as a new use for the Community Centre Lands emerged through the Community Centre Lands Task Force.

However, there was considerable feedback around the need for additional tennis courts. As well, the Newmarket Tennis Club has expressed a desire to move to accommodate additional growth of the Club. However, Art Ferguson does present some challenges with wind, required loss of a softball diamond, etc.

Staff will continue to work with representatives of the Newmarket Tennis Club to determine growth plans and needs, while also exploring opportunities in new developments and then will report back to Council in 2021/2022 with proposed timing, updated preferred location(s) and financial implications of a move.

Pickleball Courts

The tennis courts at Quaker Park were converted into six dedicated pickleball courts. As well, pickleball lines and movable nets were added to the tennis courts at Joe Persechini Park. The demand for pickleball courts continues to grow and the dedicated courts and movable courts continue to see very regular use. **Staff will continue to explore the viability of creating dual purpose courts as part of the tennis court resurfacing program.**

Northeast Quadrant & Hollingsworth Arena

The Recreation Playbook was developed through the culmination an extensive public consultation process. Through this process, it became very clear that while this quadrant boasts the majority of soccer pitches (George Richardson Park) and a large portion of the Tom Taylor Trail, the Northeast Quadrant could benefit from more neighbourhood park/play amenities within established and emerging neighbourhoods.

Development of the lands in private ownership (Briarwood) immediately adjacent to the Hollingsworth site to the south will occur (plus a small portion of the southernmost part of the Hollingsworth site that was sold to the developer). The Town has retained the remaining portion of the Hollingsworth Arena property for future park design. The arena is in the process of being demolished.

The intention is also to continue to recognize Frank Hollingsworth in some way in the future as the park is developed. This future park is also anticipated to be the location of the northeast quadrant spray pad (note: four spray pads were identified in the Playbook with one per geographic quadrant).

Conclusion

The Recreation Playbook was intended to be a living document that set forth guiding principles in the delivery of Recreation Services. It was never intended to be a prescriptive document. Staff will always continually monitor community need, impacts, trends and community expectations to develop sustainable solutions that create a vibrant and healthy community. From time to time, that may mean altering the direction set forth in the Recreation Playbook. When that occurs it will be done through extensive consultation with the community and through seeking direction from Council.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Well-balanced

- Striving for cultural harmony and ethnic diversity
- Events that help shape identity and contribute to community spirit

Well-equipped & managed

- Small town feel with city amenities
- Clear vision of the future and aligned corporate/business plans

Well-respected

- Being well thought of and valued for our judgment and insight
- Discovering innovative and creative solutions for future well-being
- Being a champion for co-operation and collaboration
- Being tradition-based and forward-looking

Consultation

The development of the Recreation Playbook (2015) and the recommendations contained therein were all a direct result of a coordinated, considerable public engagement process spanning in excess of a year.

As part of advancing the outdoor rink it is recommended that once a particular location on the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex property is identified, the detailed design and costing will then be subject to a public engagement in order to help inform Council in advancing the project from design to construction.

Human Resource Considerations

This work will be achieved using Town staff and outside consultants.

Budget Impact

Specific to the outdoor rink at the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex, approval of the recommendations will result in a detailed costing being developed within the consultant's scope of work. Formal budget request for architectural services would come forward in an upcoming 2021 Capital Budget variance report from Financial Services along with an identified funding source (development charges).

Design work would occur in 2021. Approval for construction of the project is anticipated to be brought forward for consideration as part of the 2022 capital budget program (funding source: development charges).

It is noteworthy that the development charges used to fund the design and construction represent a shift of already anticipated funds for this amenity as part of the Mulock property project given at the time the Mulock property was the potential location for the rink. Additionally, approximately \$ 400,000 has been generated to date for this project through community fundraising and sponsorship and further fundraising is also anticipated.

Attachments

None

Approval

Ian McDougall, Commissioner of Community Services

Colin Service, Director of Recreation and Culture

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner of Development and Infrastructure Services

Mark Agnoletto, Director of Public Works Services

Rachel Prudhomme, Director of Engineering Services

Contact

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