



TOWN OF LAKE COWICHAN

Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee
Tuesday, October 15th, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. – Council Chambers

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

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| Page # |
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INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS (if applicable)

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3. BUSINESS ARISING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(a) (i) Stone Park.

(b) **Ongoing Items Still Being Addressed:**

(i) Riverfront Walkway and Trail Connections – Update.

4. DELEGATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

(a) Matt Piechnik, Kin Clubs of Lake Cowichan re: Upgrade of Duck Pond Playground.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

6. VERBAL COMMENT FROM THE PUBLIC ON A SUBSEQUENT ITEM ON THE AGENDA– (maximum 3 minutes per speaker and maximum time allotted 15 minutes).

7. REPORTS

(a) Superintendent, Public Works and Engineering Services re: Feasibility of leaving gates open to Centennial Park.

(b) Superintendent, Public Works and Engineering Services re: Ball Field in Centennial Park.

(c) Manager, Cowichan Lake Education Centre re: Moving Forward!

(d) Manager, Cowichan Lake Education Centre re: Cowichan Lake Education Centre – Conference Centre 2019 Operations.

(e) Manager, Cowichan Lake Education Centre re: A Tax Burden or an Economic Generator?

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8. NEW BUSINESS

(a) Two-sided Signage – Trans Canada Trail at Hammond Road

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

10. PUBLIC RELATIONS ITEMS

11. QUESTION PERIOD (maximum 3 minutes per speaker and maximum time allotted 15 minutes)
- Limited to items on the agenda

12. ADJOURNMENT

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Memo



TO: Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Feasibility of leaving the gates open to Centennial Park

DATE: September 17, 2019

FROM: Superintendent, Public Works and Engineering Services

Background

Centennial Park consists of two fenced off baseball diamonds. The park is used by many baseball enthusiasts during the spring and summer months, but the season is now over until next year. The park's gate is locked and the public cannot use the fields.

It was discussed at the Park, Recreation and Culture Committee meeting that geese were visiting the park and becoming a health hazard.

Geese are a health hazard because they carry diseases that come from their feces. An adult goose can drop as much as two pounds of feces a day. This is dangerous because people can slip on the droppings and hurt themselves. The droppings can also destroy the grass on the playing field.

It has been observed that over 50 geese can be at the Centennial Park at one time.

The directive from the meeting was for PWS Staff to determine the feasibility of leaving Centennial Park gate's open during the winter months for the public to walk their dogs on leash and scare away the geese.

Discussion

Centennial Park's field is currently in a state that requires significant rehabilitation. A baseball diamond is supposed to be covered in grass. The park's field is currently a mixture of grass, clovers and dandy lions. Regular maintenance of fertilizers and watering will result in more clovers and dandy lions, while the grass is reduced in numbers.

The plan this year is to spray the field in herbicides; level set the field and replant the lawn in time for next year's baseball season. Due to the ongoing maintenance, it is not recommend that the public use the park until it is safe to do so.

Next year, the option to open the gates to the park to the public could be explored again.

There was discussion that the gate should remain closed to prevent vandalism, but it is of the staff's opinion that closing the gate will have a minimal affect.

Options to remove geese

Geese deterrents such as noise makers or silhouettes of predators would have limited effects. Geese will get used to the deterrents and after a while will ignore them. Trapping and relocating geese is difficult and geese have excellent homing abilities and will return to the same locations.

Recommendation

Geese are protected by the Migratory Bird Act, which states that they cannot be killed due to nuisance concerns. Harassment of the birds is allowed.

The most environmental friendly and cost effective way to deal with future geese issues is to leave the park gate open. After the new field is planted and ready to be used, allow the public to walk their leashed dogs in Centennial Park to chase away the geese until they do not come back.



Kam So, P.Eng
Superintendent, Public Works and Engineering Services

Memo



TO: Chief Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Ball field in Centennial Park
DATE: October 9, 2019
FROM: Superintendent, Public Works and Engineering Services

Background

The Town of Lake Cowichan owns and maintains Centennial Park which is located below the Cowichan Lake Sports Arena and Centennial Hall in Lake Cowichan. This park was built for Babe Ruth baseball, accommodates adult ball, and features a concession building, flush toilets, dugouts and covered spectators seating.

Issue

The upper little league Park is in great condition. The issue is the lower two baseball fields are not in great condition. The town of Lake Cowichan had a Horticulture expert inspect the field and his observations included the field contained Red Thread which is a turf disease associated with low nitrogen and pH levels. Irrigation was an issue as the over watering in the evening resulted in reduced oxygen to the roots of the grass. Lastly there were bog like conditions resulting in the fields containing over 50% weeds (clover, plantain and moss).

Continued regular maintenance of water and mowing the lawn at this point would further exacerbate the bog like conditions and would not return the field to a playable condition.

Treatment

A combination of herbicides, lime treatment, fertilizers, aeration, and weed control will return the field to a grassy field and a playable state.

The field would not be usable while the treatment is taking place.

Regular continued Maintenance

Regular mowing at proper heights, proper sprinkler timing, fertilizer treatments and weed treatments need to be properly executed to maintain the field for years to come.

Consultation with Public

The President of the Lake Cowichan & District Minor Baseball association (Kelly Bergstrom) is aware of the conditions of the ball fields. When consulted about the possible schedule and treatment of the ball field, Kelly Bergstrom was supportive of the rehabilitation plan and excited that the ball field will be returning to a playable state.



Kam So, P.Eng
Superintendent, Public Works and Engineering Services



Memo

TO: Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Moving forward!

DATE: October 11, 2019

FROM: Dalton Smith, Manager Cowichan Lake Education Centre

The Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education Centre

WASHROOMS / DUCK POND and CENTENNIAL FIELD

In the short term, the centre can manage the washroom projects that were originally considered as job creation programmes and modify the plan to work with local qualified contractors to do the work within the budget already allocated in the 2019 capital budget.

At this point in time the projects would start in 2019 and finish up in 2020.

Does council wish to consider this approach?

EDUCATION CENTRE

Maintain the status quo with the same target clientele or make substantial upgrades, and if this second option is a consideration, where are the dollars going to come from?

How about a marketing plan, so far, past and present councils have rejected submissions to move forward with an approach that would cost between \$15,000.00 and \$20,000.00, is this an option that would be approved?

What are we actually marketing if money was approved in the 2020/2021 budget, the status quo centre or a centre with a major upgrades and improved facilities?

Should the centre change directions?

- a campground

-a park

-a public beach

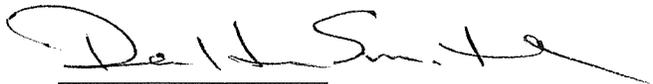
-many more options are obvious however this is just to encourage discussions

-noteworthy is the fact that unless the centre is used for public use the province has the right to the lands

-noteworthy is the fact that if the centre operation would be stopped ,there would be substantial annual costs to the Town and one only has to look at the budget amounts for parks to understand what could be associated with care and upkeep and reduced admin fees to the a town

This report has been written by Dalton and Jennifer to offer council some topics for discussion .

In a separate report for next month we would like to submit information that reflects the variety of costs that are not normally associated with private enterprise operations vs. the centre and Campground expenses.



Dalton Smith



Memo

TO: Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Conference Centre 2019 operations

DATE: October 11, 2019

FROM: Dalton Smith, Manager Cowichan Lake Education Centre

Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education

The following information is to provide Mayor and Council with an update on some of the groups and organizations that use the centre and to highlight the specifics of some of our rentals.

As with most tourist facilities on Vancouver Island (with the exception of ski mountains) our busiest season is May thru Sept with a shoulder season that has limited rentals in October and thru mid-Dec and then more challenging rental periods from late Dec thru February.

The fact that the Centre is rustic in nature and provides for shared sleeping arrangements for our guests, does present challenges. However our target audience is groups and organizations that reflect a need for moderate needs and a desire to to work within modest budgets and wishing to enjoy the privacy and natural setting of a lakefront property on acreage and situated away from urban distractions.

With the exception of wedding weekends, most of our groups are not for profit organizations and it has been with purpose that we do not compete with private enterprise operations that accommodate small groups and families in motels and bed and breakfast operations.

In fact, for economic and business reasons we will not entertain groups of less than 20 guests.

Because we are a full service facility with a union workforce we do not allow for groups that wish to bring in or cook their own meals.

Approximately 90 % of our anticipated bookings have indeed followed thru with their

bookings to date and all of the rentals have been multi day and or week log rentals. The intensity of planning for and providing for group needs for multi day rentals requires a team approach to ensure that the needs of guests are met on a daily basis.

A good example of meeting the needs of our groups is to use six of our busiest weeks during the summer and looking at some impressive statistics.

Three hundred and fifty youth and additional professional staff were served three meals per day for six weeks and nutrition breaks on a daily basis, for an average of 210 meals each day. One thousand meals in a week!

Sorry, I have not counted the amount of dish detergent, laundry soap or toilet paper required for the human needs!

Toilets 27 Sinks 27 showers 20
Beds 100
Sheets 250
Blankets 125
Kitchen staff on call 9
Housekeepers 2
Maintenance 1
Programme co-ordinators 1
Managers 1
Resource instructors on call as needed

All of our cooking staff have local roots and in most cases have a couple of jobs but are committed to working at the centre.

All of that food means a lot of work for housekeepers as well and the cleaning required to make sure our guests are comfortable.

Maintenance is also required and is done as needed by centre workers or contractors are used when specific trade qualifications are mandated to meet provincial codes. The centre programme co-ordinator and the manager provide for all logistical steps that begin with a group enquiry and end up with a booking.

The centre is a 7 day a week operation and therefore attendance to guests is similar to a hotel and requires on duty exempt staff and management to be on site or on call at all times when guests are at the centre.

Some of the groups that have used the centre in 2019 include but are not limited to the following ;

Spiritual groups
Leadership groups
First Nation youth and adult groups

Camp Yes summer youth groups
Educational groups such as UVIC/ VIU / St Margarets and Queen Margarets schools
and some public schools
Citizens counselling group /Victoria
Weddings
Becoming an outdoors woman

Noteworthy is the fact that as many food and maintenance supplies are purchased locally and therefore contribute directly to our local community :
For example, local grocery store, local furniture store ,local hardware and building supplies businesses ,local gas stations .

Noteworthy as well is the fact that the centre and the park contribute approximately \$30,000.00 per year to the Town operation as an office administration charge.

Also noteworthy is the fact that over the years, because of operational needs for the Centre and Lakeview Park and for job creation programmes on community projects, the centre has hired over two hundred people.

The economic and socio economic contributions as a result of these temporary positions, often for marginalized people or displaced workers are difficult to measure but obviously the contributions have been significant.



Dalton Smith



Memo

TO: Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: A tax burden or an economic generator?

DATE: October 11, 2019

FROM: Dalton Smith, Manager Cowichan Lake Education Centre

The Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education and Conference Centre and Lakeview Park Campground and Public Beach and Lake Access

In the context of what I would call a discussion paper that is based on the history of the aforementioned venues owned and operated by the Town of Lake Cowichan, I would like to offer Council as many facts regarding the Centre/Lakeview Park and Public beach that will assist Mayor and Council in future decision making.

My purpose for writing a report in this way is to in fact boast about the achievements that have been made possible for our community as a result of owning and operating municipal facilities that create employment, provide economic opportunities for businesses and families and protect valuable and sensitive land bordering the lake and river.

The very nature and the fact that the operation of the Centre was under the auspices of the school board originally and then the Town of Lake Cowichan ensured that the facility would have not for profit status to allow for provincial and federal funding opportunities to improve public facilities and aging infrastructure in the case of public areas such as parks and buildings. It has always been a given that municipal operations should strive to be self-sustainable.

The centre works within this financial mandate.

History is important and the following information reflects some of the initiatives that have taken place to improve publicly owned community facilities and parks that attract visitors to our community and improve public access to our river and lake. In all cases, Job Creation programmes funding was secured by the Centre with endorsements from community leaders, local business and unemployed workers

seeking temporary bridging because of displacement or layoffs due to down turns in the economy.

Some of the projects are listed below:

Improvements to the Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education centre include the following ;

Rebuilding the west dormitory and modifying the shell of a building that was condemned for use to 9 small modest motel like rooms. This included new electrical and plumbing to code .The flat roof was replaced with a pitch roof as well.

The east dormitory was renovated and also included new plumbing, communal washrooms and a new pitch roof.

The garage was converted into a meeting room for groups of approximately 35 people.

New roofing replaced the old roofing on the other five buildings including the main hall.

The old building that once was used for storing a variety of boats was moved to the area just beyond the main gate to allow for a bus that was once operated by the centre for school groups and excursions that showcased the forest, fauna, lakes and oceans and river that make our community so attractive to visitors and community alike.

The building now serves as a shop and storage area.

The main hall has had a number of face lifts that have included new windows , improved energy saving lighting, an attractive garage door that allows for large group seating that extends to the new stamp concrete patio that is bordered by a glass safety wall .

The two log cabins were also renovated.

The Toby and Marilyn Hird log cabin was moved from its place on the north arm and was donated to the Town and resurrected at the entrance to the centre.

The Lakeview Park Campsite

Prior to being assigned to Centre staff for management, Lakeview Park was run down and from year to year cost the municipality approximately \$40,000. 00 a year and was not a welcoming campsite unless the guest was able to put a trailer on the beach and precluding people from enjoying the beach. The public boat launch also prevented people from enjoying the beach because the boat traffic made it dangerous because it was located in an area that was perfect for swimming.

Centre Staff Secured Federal funding and a Job creation programme to redesign ,build and plan a new campsite and develop a public beach with parking for 75 vehicles in the first year .

Summer students were hired to work during the summer months and to this day the same format is followed. As well, security was added to the park staff.

A year later, with more federal funds and approximately \$75,000.00 the septic holding tanks were replaced with a sewer and water system that connected to the municipal system, and electricity and water was introduced to some sites.

In the third year, an automated reservation system was put in place.

Other improvements to the park and public beach over the past years included the following ;

Major Washroom renovations

Mooring dock for approximately 8 boats

A new swimming float

The Town secured a trees for tomorrow grant for plantings between sites

A group picnic shelter

The number of sites were expanded to 89 from 60 and included some walk in sites

2001/2002

The floating walkway and forest loop trail was planned and created while meeting and or exceeding all environmental requirements as mandated by all ministries of the time .To this day it is enjoyed by the community and serves as an attraction to our community for campers and day visitors year round.

In the past few years we have extended the use of this walkway as well for campers on a user pay basis.

Lakefront Protection

As a direct result of owning and operating The Cowichan Lake Outdoor Education and Lakeview Park Campground, the Town was able to secure land that connected both Town owned properties thus protecting the waterfront from development and ensuring an environmental corridor would be preserved for our community.

Ted Burns Nature Trail

Planned and created by centre staff and also funded by a job creation project

Saywell Park Improvement

Worked with the Kaatza historical society with a Job creation project to refurbish the railway car and also build an outside display area .

Planned and constructed the volleyball

Planned and constructed the walking path and the swimming and observation dock as well with a job creation project

Planned and constructed the public washrooms /job creation project

Central Park

Planned and constructed the washrooms/ job creation project.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dalton Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and "S".

Dalton Smith