

Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Parks, Fleet and Facilities

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Ian Clark, Manager, Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries
Date: July 17, 2023
Subject: Regional Park Development Along Bear Line Road

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The preliminary landscape plan for the Regional Park along Bear Line Road be adopted.
2. Further engagement with impacted user groups be conducted to inform future site plan revisions and timelines on phased implementation.
3. Up to \$2,000,000 in costs to develop Phase 1 of the Regional Park along Bear Line Road be funded from the Community Benefit Contribution Reserve.
4. The Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute an agreement, satisfactory to the Director, Legal Services, leasing a portion of the Regional Park to Tennis Clubs of Canada and 1000476522 Ontario Inc. for its construction and operation of a year-round domed tennis facility.
5. Council authorizes the receipt of money fundraised by Mark and Stephanie Chapados for use towards the domed tennis facility.

Background

In 2022, Mark and Stephanie Chapados made a presentation to Council advocating for the creation of an indoor tennis facility in Chatham. Mark and Stephanie Chapados have fundraised for the project and were seeking a contribution from the Municipality of \$200,000 for additional capital costs of the facility. Council allocated this \$200,000 amount in the 2022 budget.

On September 26, 2022, Council authorized an agreement with Hydro One Networks. This agreement, in part, included a Community Benefit Contribution where Hydro One pays the Municipality \$1,000,000 per year for ten years for recreational and cultural purposes, to be allocated and distributed by the Municipality.

In November 2022, the Municipality conducted a survey on its website requesting ideas from the public on the types of recreational and cultural activities to be considered through the Community Benefit Contribution.

On November 21, 2022, Council directed administration to finalize a location in Chatham for the Chatham-Kent Pickleball Club to fundraise for a pickleball hub.

On May 29, 2023, Council approved the donation of 19.5 acres land from St. Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology. The terms of the donation were to allow the Municipality to develop the land into a regional park.

Comments

The regional park along Bear Line Road will include the name of St. Clair College per the terms of the donation agreement. It is temporarily referred to as “the Regional Park” for the purposes of this report.

The landscape plan for the Regional Park is available in Appendix A. Recreation assets identified in the plan were informed by:

- Municipal survey on recreational activities to be considered through the Community Benefit Contribution, reflecting gaps in specific recreational opportunities and demand driven by a growing and diverse population.
- Previous Council direction on recreational facilities.
- Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- Spatial constraints

The landscape plan is a preliminary plan necessary for administration to develop the detailed site plan. Adoption of this plan will also permit administration to engage in further discussions with impacted user groups to finalize the scope of the specific facilities and timelines for implementation where fundraising is required. The landscape plan proposes the following assets:

- Indoor tennis dome
- 10 pickleball courts
- Cricket pitch
- Outdoor pitch primarily for rugby
- Two sport courts
- Playground and open play area
- Recreational trail
- Parking lot, washrooms, and maintenance facilities

Phase 1

The first phase of development includes engineering work and partial site preparation. A Consultant has been retained to create the servicing plan, topographical survey, grading plan, and phasing plan for the entire site. A consultant will also be retained to complete

a lighting plan as part of Phase 1. Grading and drainage, roadway access to Bear Line Road, construction of the granular base for the parking area, and base preparation for the tennis dome will complete Phase 1. It is recommended up to \$2,000,000 in costs to perform this Phase 1 work be funded from the Community Benefit Contribution Reserve.

Phase 1 is expected to directly support the construction and operation of the tennis dome. Pending successful negotiation with Tennis Clubs of Canada, site preparation could begin as early as Fall 2023 with tennis operations commencing in 2024.

Subsequent phases will be determined through both the phasing plan provided by the civil engineer, feedback from user groups, as well as available funding sources.

Tennis Clubs of Canada

Administration has been engaged with Tennis Clubs of Canada with regards to the construction and operation of a domed tennis facility. Originally, the presentations received from Mark and Stephanie Chapados and Tennis Clubs of Canada both proposed refurbishing an existing tennis court in Chatham and constructing a dome for the winter months. Administration has since concluded the best way to accommodate a domed tennis facility in Chatham would be to construct a new facility at the Regional Park for year-round indoor tennis, with support from Tennis Clubs of Canada as described further in this report.

Seven indoor tennis facilities in Ontario currently operate under the Tennis Clubs of Canada banner. Each club is independently owned and operated but offer similar programming to its membership. Administration has negotiated an agreement with Tennis Clubs of Canada and its affiliate corporation 1000476522 Ontario Inc. for a lease to create an indoor tennis facility at the Regional Park. The tennis dome will be constructed and operated year-round by Tennis Clubs of Canada. Other than the Municipal obligations described below, Tennis Clubs of Canada will bear the costs of construction and operation.

The agreement stipulates the Municipality would be responsible for:

- Leveling the land portion to be used for the tennis court.
- Constructing a parking area and necessary pathway to connect from the parking area to the tennis court. The parking area may initially be gravelled to expedite the servicing of the tennis facility; however, the final paved parking area will also serve the other recreation facilities to be built at the Regional Park.
- Servicing the tennis facility with a waterline and sanitary sewer by the third year of operation. Portable toilets will be provided for the facility prior to those services being completed; and
- Construction of any building(s) intended to be used as a clubhouse and/or washroom facilities at the tennis facility.

The \$200,000 allocated by Council in its 2022 budget for the capital costs of the facility, as well as the amounts fundraised by Mark and Stephanie Chapados, will be used

towards the domed tennis facility. Tennis Clubs of Canada will be responsible for installing the tennis courts and installing the tennis dome above the tennis courts to permit for year-round use.

Other key terms of the lease agreement include:

- A twenty-year term, with the ability to renew for a ten-year term thereafter.
- Annual rent payment to the Municipality.
- Taxes assessed on the leased land, all utility charges, and facility maintenance costs payable by Tenant.
- The Municipality will be responsible for all maintenance of the parking lot and any other structures on the lands not leased by the Tenant and snow clearing for the parking area and pathways leading to the tennis dome.
- The tennis facility will be under the full control of Tennis Clubs of Canada to operate year-round. They will be able to establish its own fees for use of the tennis facility.
- The Tenant will be permitted to have advertising in and on the tennis dome, with a revenue-sharing arrangement to be negotiated by Administration, subject to other naming rights restrictions resulting from both the St. Clair College land donation agreement and the stipulations of the Tennis Canada grant.

Areas of Strategic Focus

This report supports the following areas of strategic focus:

			
Economic Prosperity	Healthy & Safe Community	People & Culture	Environmental Sustainability
1.1	2.3; 2.4		

Consultation

Legal Services, Engineering Services, and Financial Services have been consulted on the recommendations.

Communication

Impacted user groups of the recreational facilities identified in the landscape plan will be engaged to inform future site plan revisions and decisions on phased implementation. Communication of this project will occur by posting to the corporate municipal website

page under media releases, radio interviews with the Mayor/Councillors, social media campaigns, and a project page on the Let's Talk Chatham-Kent website.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ)

Administration will include DEIJ considerations in its approach to developing the Regional Park so needs of equity-deserving communities using the proposed recreational facilities are reflected. Accessibility will be a significant consideration in all facility and land development.

Financial Implications

Up to \$2,000,000 in costs to develop Phase 1 of the Regional Park along Bear Line Road will be funded from the Community Benefit Contribution Reserve. Administration will also utilize \$200,000 allocated in the 2022 budget and amounts fundraised by Mark and Stephanie Chapados for costs associated with the indoor tennis facility.

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Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

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Attachment: Appendix A – Landscape Plan