

Victoria Park – Former Riversdale Lawn Bowling Site

ISSUE

This report is to provide an overview of recent discussions with the Saskatoon Food Council and a collective of community groups regarding the possibility of a future partnership with the City of Saskatoon (City) to utilize the former Riversdale Lawn Bowling site.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council that Administration continue to explore and formalize a partnership agreement with the Saskatoon Food Council and a collective of community groups for the use and repurpose of the former Riversdale Lawn Bowling site in Victoria Park.

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the Holiday Park Community Association paid for and built the existing clubhouse for the former Riversdale Lawn Bowling Club Inc. (Club) within Victoria Park. The building is approximately 600 square feet, has two washrooms, a gathering area and a kitchen area with two sinks, stove, and fridge. The Club maintained a lease agreement with the City until July 15, 2016, when the Club ceased operations and terminated the agreement due to low membership. During the term of the agreement, the Club was responsible for all maintenance and operating costs of the facility including the clubhouse. As per the agreement, upon termination or expiration the City assumed sole ownership and control of the clubhouse and storage buildings.

The site and clubhouse have remained vacant since 2016, aside from temporary use of the building for storage, by the King George and Riversdale Community Garden Group from May 1 to October 31, 2018. After the building sat vacant for an extended period of time, Administration was informed the sewer line had collapsed, the water line had a leak and both would need to be replaced.

In October 2017, an inquiry was received from CHEP Good Food Inc. (CHEP) about the use of land and adjacent buildings at the former Club site in Victoria Park. CHEP submitted a formal business plan proposal to the City in April 2018. The initial proposal was to utilize the site and adjacent buildings for new community programming and food production. A revised proposal was submitted by the Saskatoon Food Council in November 2018 with the same goal of community programming and food production.

In April 2019, Administration met with the community groups to review their proposed program plan. Information was shared with the community groups regarding future use of the site, as well as what next steps would be should the community groups wish to partner with the City.

In September 2019, Administration worked with Facilities Management and Transportation and Construction (Transportation) to assess the scope of work and resources required to address the water and sewer services issue at the site. Through discussions with Transportation and Construction, the cost to replace the full lead connection including sewer replacement was estimated to be approximately \$20,000.

Administration was in the process of obtaining approval to begin this work last fall when upon further inspection of the facility, it became more apparent that the building has reached the end of its useful life cycle. So further discussions will be required to determine the future of the building.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Whether it is a partnership with community groups delivering a recreation and parks opportunity, an arrangement with a group for use of City lands, a cross-sectoral program involving a combination of allied stakeholders or a regional services agreement for recreation and parks, the City, through the Recreation and Parks Master Plan continues to partner with groups and organizations in the provision of recreation programs and use of facilities.

The following community groups have expressed interest in a new partnership with the City to repurpose and program the former Riversdale Lawn Bowling site:

- Saskatoon Food Council;
- CHEP;
- Wild Sky Adventure Learning;
- King George Community Association;
- Riversdale Community Association; and
- King George and Riversdale Community Garden Group.

For the purposes of this report, the community groups will be referred to as the Victoria Park Community Centre Collective (the “Collective”).

The types of community programming the Collective is looking to utilize the site for include:

1. A location for food production;
2. A training centre for CHEP’s askîy urban agriculture internship program;
3. The community association’s recreational, social, cultural and education programs for residents of the community; and
4. A space for community gatherings.

This partnership will have significant community benefit, from educational experiences including food production to neighbourhood community association programs focusing on recreation, social and cultural opportunities.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, financial, social or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

Subject to City Council approval, Administration will continue to proceed with discussions with the Collective on a partnership agreement and will report back on details of the agreement, as well as details with respect to the future plans for the existing building so the community can utilize the site again for recreational and educational programming.

REPORT APPROVAL

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