

Maintenance of Jean Augustine Park Pond

Date: September 26, 2017

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 6 - Etobicoke-Lakeshore

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to the request from Etobicoke York Community Council meeting of June 13, 2017, for the General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation, in conjunction with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, to report on converting the Jean Augustine Park Pond to an ornamental fountain, and a long term maintenance plan for the pond and immediately surrounding area.

The pond is currently in a naturalized state. Staff require specialized service equipment and TRCA approvals to maintain the pond, resulting in infrequent maintenance and complaints from residents. The suggested alternative of an ornamental water feature is expensive to construct and operate. Further study is required to assess options for its design, location, service, and maintenance.

As such, Parks, Forestry and Recreation is recommending a technical assessment and feasibility study be carried out to assess the options for decommissioning the existing natural pond and replacing it with an ornamental fountain. The results of this study will be reported back to Etobicoke York Community Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. Etobicoke York Community Council request the General Manager of Parks Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), to carry out a technical assessment and feasibility study to assess options for decommissioning the existing natural pond in Jean Augustine Park and replacing it with an ornamental fountain; and report back to Etobicoke York Community Council the results of the study.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The technical assessment and feasibility study, estimated at approximately \$20,000-\$25,000, will be undertaken through the existing Investigation and Pre-Engineering sub-project, within the Facilities Components project in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2017 Council Approved Capital Budget.

If the installation of the fountain is recommended to proceed, a capital project will be submitted as part of future Capital budgets along with any associated operating impacts to maintain the fountain.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on June 13, 2017, Etobicoke York Community Council requested the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in conjunction with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, to report on converting the Jean Augustine Pond to an ornamental fountain, and a long term maintenance plan for the pond and immediately surrounding area.

Link to Decision Document – Item EY23.69:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EY23.69>

COMMENTS

The pond in Jean Augustine Park in Humber Bay Shores is owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and maintained by City of Toronto Parks staff. The pond is currently naturalized with a small fountain feature for aesthetics and to prevent issues associated with standing water.

Every year, the pond becomes densely filled with reeds and algae. Despite the addition of a second fountain to the pond in 2015, there is not enough water circulation to prevent this, resulting in proliferation of aquatic vegetation over the summer season. Many of the bushes planted around the perimeter of the pond are overgrown. Dead shrubbery was also removed by Parks staff in 2015, but the seating areas around the pond are less usable due to the growth, both within and around the pond.

Annual maintenance is required to remove the excess pond growth. This requires approvals from the TRCA, and the use of specialized service equipment by Parks staff. Thus, the required maintenance is not conducted frequently. As a result, complaints

from residents regarding the lack of maintenance and deteriorated condition of the pond are frequent.

The Ward Councillor and community have requested that the pond be converted into an ornamental feature.

As land owners, TRCA have been consulted and have agreed to its removal. Completely man-made, it serves no significant quantity or qualitative storm water management function; although in its naturalized state, it provides habitat for several species of birds.

There are many factors to consider in converting the pond to an ornamental feature. Ornamental fountains are expensive to build and operate. Examples of the most recent water features installed in City of Toronto parks are Berczy Park (1.8 million) and Grange Park (1.2 million). Both represent a high level of design and are considered large scale projects. Smaller water features can be considered based on budget availability for the project.

While maintenance of the naturalized pond requires TRCA approvals and specialized heavy equipment on a periodic basis, ornamental fountains also require regular and ongoing maintenance of mechanical equipment, i.e. pumps, filters, etc. Mechanical equipment needs to be housed in a secure location to prevent vandalism, either above ground, in a maintenance building, or below, in a chamber. Ornamental fountains require seasonal winterizing annually, as well as start up in the spring.

Ornamental fountains are generally designed with recirculating systems to minimize water use. Water quality is maintained through chlorinating and UV stabilizing equipment to meet Ministry of Health and Toronto Public Health regulations and standards. Access to utilities and services for an ornamental fountain, such as hydro, water, and sanitary sewer, need to be assessed.

The location of any ornamental feature needs to be considered. The existing site of the naturalized pond may not be suitable given that it is located in the lowest area of the park, and is not as visible from the street as other locations in the park. Replacement in its current location may require a large amount of fill and be subject to approval from TRCA. Existing drainage patterns and overland flow requirements also need to be considered.

Based on the above, the General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation recommends that a technical assessment and feasibility study be undertaken to assess options for decommissioning the existing natural pond in Jean Augustine Park and replacing it with an ornamental fountain.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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