

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM29.13	ACTION			Ward:17
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Memorandum of Understanding for the Implementation of Loretto College Parkette - 151 Rosemount Avenue - by Councillor Cesar Palacio, seconded by Mayor John Tory

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Government Management Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Cesar Palacio, seconded by Mayor John Tory, recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to take the necessary steps required to execute a lease agreement between the City of Toronto and the Toronto Catholic District School Board for lands owned by the Toronto Catholic District School Board at Loretto College for the construction, operation and maintenance of a playground structure and other accompanying recreational amenities, including the existing wading pool, at Loretto College School, known municipally as 151 Rosemount Avenue, for a term of no less than twenty-one (21) years less a day commencing upon the Toronto Catholic District School Board's approval of the final concept plan, preceding construction, and on other such Terms as may be satisfactory to the General Manager and in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor;
2. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry, and Recreation to report back to City Council on available Section 42/45 and Capital funding for this project by no later than the fourth quarter of 2017.

Summary

When Loretto College was being built there was an existing playground structure belonging to the former elementary school R.W. Scott, but unfortunately, the pressure treated materials of the former play structure did not comply with Toronto Catholic District School Board standards, and as a result, it was subsequently removed, without community input nor consultation.

In addition, the school grounds were supposed to be fenced off, which would have created a barrier that separated the community. However, it remained opened, as a means to establish a safer and well-connected neighbourhood and has been actively used as opened green space ever since, with parent's even donating toys and other objects for community enjoyment.

The Loretto College School grounds, which currently has a City-run wading-pool, are lands owned by the Toronto Catholic District School Board. As a result of the lands being owned by the Toronto Catholic District School Board, the Parks Development Capital Projects unit cannot improve the space unless the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the City execute an agreement to lease this space to the City.

The demographics in the community have changed dramatically over the past few years, as there has been an influx of newcomers that consists of young professionals and families. Many Loretto College Students live in the neighbourhood and many current elementary school students in the community will be attending Loretto in the near future.

However, Ward 17 remains the most parkland deficient in the entire City of Toronto with the fewest number of parks/parkettes and open space amenities for children. By creating recreational facilities for families and children to enjoy, it would bring added life and vitality to the area and also create a "win/win" situation for everyone. We need a place for children to play, congregate, and most importantly, get to know one another.

Moreover, little pockets of greenery, such as this well-used green space along the Loretto College school grounds, are classical examples of shared use within our communities. In particular, I have personally spoken to the many children and families in the area who have told me how much they regularly enjoy using this space, and how it would be further enhanced with the installation of a playground for the community.

It is worth noting that a binder full of ideas (which was compiled by the community showcasing potential playground options and amenities) and conceptual drawings completed by the City, which included a clear delineation for a playground, was given to the School Board for their consideration.

My office, in consultation with local area residents, the South Corso Italia Residents Association, our Catholic School Trustee - Frank D'Amico, Toronto Catholic District School Board Management Staff and City of Toronto Parks and Recreation staff, have been working on an action plan (May 2012 to present) to get an agreement in place so that the green space surrounding the Loretto College school grounds can be improved for the local community to include a playground structure abutting Auburn Avenue, adjacent to the existing wading pool, with some seating area surrounding it.

Through creative fundraising efforts, I have been able to secure \$50,000 that has been set-aside in a dedicated Ward 17 reserve account for playground equipment at Loretto College. Unfortunately, in spite of all my efforts in moving this project forward, the school community, as well as the Toronto Catholic District School Board, have expressed that they have NO desire of creating any playground, or additional recreational space beyond the existing wading pool. Without the school's permission, nothing can be done to improve this space, as the property is owned by the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

At this point, I remain confident that this Notice of Motion at City Council will help expedite, resolve, and secure a lease with the School Board and the City of Toronto.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM29.13

