

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM8.24	ACTION			Ward: 23
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Building Up Our Parks and Our Communities - by Councillor Jamaal Myers, seconded by Councillor Amber Morley

** Notice of this Motion has been given.
* This Motion is subject to referral to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Jamaal Myers, seconded by Councillor Amber Morley, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer to hold the funds currently allocated for capital improvements in Muirlands Park (PR 222) in trust until a suitable trustee organization can be selected by City Council to steward a community-led revitalization of Muirlands Park.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to work with the Director, Strategic Partnerships and report back, as part of the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan 5-Year Review and the Parkland Strategy 5-Year Review, on a process to enable nearby residents to participate responsibly in the governance and ongoing care of their local serving parks.

Summary

The City of Toronto has long recognized the importance of social, recreational and community programs as essential to the well-being and quality of life of our citizens and communities. Many of these programs take place in our cherished park spaces, and as the City's Parkland Strategy notes, our parks are important because they connect us to nature, provide spaces to build up our communities economically and socially, and care for our physical and mental well-being.

In 2001 when Council first adopted the City's Social Development Strategy, the importance of crafting a 'civic consciousness' by fostering active local participation in the design and delivery of their programming was noted. When residents make decisions about what programs are provided, community capacity, civic engagement and neighbourhood participation grows.

Over the last several months, my staff and I have engaged with residents in my Ward who live adjacent to Muirlands Park about planned capital park improvements. Over a hundred residents of all ages and ethnicities attended a community town hall meeting I held on Wednesday, July 5th with our Catholic and Toronto District School Board trustees, and with the support of the school principals from Macklin Public School and Divine Infant Catholic School.

Participants discussed Muirlands Park's current use, the planned revitalization, and how residents might be able to contribute to the ongoing care of their space. Throughout the conversation, our residents clearly showed us that they had a broader year-round interest in using their park than the initial proposal for a pickleball and tennis facility would offer.

While attendees were most interested in basketball, residents expressed similar levels of interest in multiple other options: accessible pathways and trails, BBQ pits, green gyms, playground equipment, skate trails, splash pads, shelters, seating, tennis, and trees. Negligible interest in pickleball was expressed.

While we appreciate the context of the initial proposal, better community participation in governance and programming will lead to more effective investment in, and use of, local parks in a way that allows them to be dynamic and flexible as the local community changes over time. We need to invite the Milliken community to decide how their recreational space will be cared for in the future.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM8.24