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**STAFF REPORT: RECREATION DEPARTMENT**



**REPORT TO:** Infrastructure and Recreation  
**MEETING DATE:** February 12, 2013  
**REPORT NO.:** DOR.13.04  
**SUBJECT:** Bayview Park Parkland Use Proposals  
**PREPARED BY:** Shawn Everitt, Director of Recreation

**A. Recommendations**

THAT Council receive Staff Report DOR.13.04, "Bayview Park Use Proposals", and consider the following options;

- A) THAT Council does hereby authorize the development of a Labyrinth at Bayview Park as outlined in this report, it being agreed and understood that the Labyrinth will be funded and maintained by the "Women of 12" and will be for use as a public amenity.
- B) THAT Council Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Recreation to sign an agreement satisfactory to the Town Solicitor with the "Women of 12" for the development and maintenance of the Labyrinth.
- C) THAT Council direct staff to develop an Off Leash Area Master Plan in consultation with the public with the proposed location being Bayview Park in the former campground area.
- D) THAT Council Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Recreation to sign an agreement satisfactory to the Town Solicitor with the "Dog Park Working Group" for the development and maintenance of a Dog Park.
- E) THAT Council direct staff to maintain Bayview Park to its current use as open green space, and continue to work with the Women of 12 to identify an alternative site.
- F) THAT Council direct staff to maintain Bayview Park to its current use as open green space, and continue to work with the Dog Park working Group to identify an alternative site.
- G) THAT Council direct staff to maintain Bayview Park to its current use as open green space, and continue to work with the Women of 12 and the Dog Park working group to identify alternative sites.
- H) THAT Council direct staff to maintain Bayview Park to its current use as open green space.

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## **B. Background**

During 2012, Staff received two proposals from interest groups that identified Bayview Park as preferred locations for potential use. The property was previously utilized as a Town owned campground prior to October 2002. The campground housed 23 seasonal sites with additional informal transient sites during its operation; however over the past 9 years since the campground closure, the property use has been that of passive and has key trail connectivity.

The two requests for uses were:

- 1) Dog Park
- 2) Labyrinth

Senior Management has provided input through the internal consultation process and believes that there is significant value and potential uses of the land that should be reviewed to ensure no proposed use will encumber the Town's ability to utilize the land in the future.

### **DOG PARK**

A request for a "Dog Park" or "off leash area" was first brought forward and identified in 2008. While a formal park was not approved, for the past three years, dog owners have utilized the "Blues Diamond" at Moreau Park as an informal "off leash area". During this time, it has been evident that an area that allows dog owners to take their dog off their lease is well used. Typically, a group of 30 to 50 dogs utilize this informal off leash area.

During the first two years of this trial, the Blues Diamond was not utilized for scheduled baseball use, therefore making the location somewhat suitable for an "off leash area". In 2012, the local baseball program offered Midget baseball that required the use of a raised mound for pitching purposes. The Blues Diamond is the only diamond that has the raised mound.

October 29, 2012, Council received correspondence requesting that the use of Baseball Diamonds at Moreau Park as an informal dog park be no longer permitted. The correspondence was forwarded to the Building & Planning Committee for their meeting of November 6, 2012, and as well to the Infrastructure & Recreation Committee.

Since receipt of the correspondence, staff has reviewed the Town's land inventory and have identified the former campground site at Bayview Park as a potential location to house an "off lease area".

Other locations that were considered during this review included Tomahawk Recreation Complex, Moreau Park, Beaver Valley Community Centre, Clendenans Dam area, municipally owned property on Peel Street, as well as some unsuccessful preliminary discussions with some private land owners. During this review staff did not consider any locations outside the Thornbury Clarksburg area due to interest coming from within the Thornbury Clarksburg area.

The area of Bayview Park that has been identified is approximately 2,500 square metres. Attachment "1" to this Report identifies the 50 x 50 metre area that staff propose is the most appropriate location on the property. The rationale for the selection of the area is the utilization of an existing berm that currently has healthy vegetation that would provide a buffer on a good portion of the southern side of the off leash area and the Georgian Trail. The northern and eastern sides of the area have existing wooden fencing as well as some vegetation to limit any impact of an "off lease area" to the residents.

It is important to note that staff does suggest that a minimum of a five meter buffer be recognized from adjacent landowner properties on the north and east sides. Consultation with adjacent landowners would also be included in the Master Plan development process. The western side of the area would provide access to the "off leash area" from the existing trail link that provides connectivity to the Georgian Trail and the Bayview Park and Beaver River Trail networks. Staff does note that a dog park would generate some level of noise by way of dogs barking, however Town staff has not received any complaints from the Moreau Park location regarding noise levels.

During the property review, it was identified that this location offers key amenities that would be viewed as enhancements to any off leash area, such as existing washroom facilities that also include an outside accessible water spigot that could be used for watering the dogs, the property has heavy tree canopy that provides significant shade and sun protection in the summer months and an established wind break for the winter season, with existing parking available on both the southern and northern portions of the property. The property is also centrally located in Thornbury.

Staff has not identified the development of a dog park in the 2013 budget, and since 2008, staff has identified that any potential "off leash area" development would require funding through donations and user group fundraising, and as well facility stewardship which would provide ongoing maintenance.

Regarding such facility stewardship, staff is recommending that if the development of a plan is approved, part of that plan would also include a land use agreement with a formalized group that would help oversee the off leash area and work closely with the Town and its' Recreation Department.

Recreation Staff have consulted with the Town Building and Planning Departments and it has been confirmed that the property is Designated P – Park in the Official Plan and there are no issues in relation to the proposal. From a Zoning perspective the property is located in a T1 Zone by By-law No. 10-77, as amended. The Zone restricts the use to Tourist Camps and uses accessory thereto. However, Section 6.10 of the By-law permits the use of any land as a public park and therefore the Dog Park would be permitted.

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## **LABYRINTH**

Initially it was requested that the location of the Labyrinth be on the North-West Corner of Bayview Park. Since the groups deputation to Council it has been discussed that perhaps the former campground area may be a preferred location. This location is similar to the dog park request in that the campground area has been identified as the preferred location. As suggested in the December 17<sup>th</sup> presentation to Council this site location is also well suited as a Labyrinth for the following reasons;

- It is accessible
- It is naturally peaceful and contemplative
- It is already circled by cedar trees
- It will not impede traffic flow
- It was previously used as a public park
- It is an existing public facility
- It should pose no increase in liability to the Town

Staff has confirmed that the Labyrinth would be developed at grade. The Labyrinth would be completed by the laying of bricks that will create the Labyrinth design. Additional amenities would potentially include the placement of benches.

The “Women of 12” have requested that the Town donate the land specific to the Labyrinth location. Staff suggests that rather than the town donating the land to the “Women of 12”, that an agreement be developed for the use of the land that identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Town and the “Women of 12” for the development and ongoing maintenance of the Labyrinth. With regard to the overall use the Labyrinth does offer a very passive use and noise generation would be limited to minimal levels of conversation.

Staff has also confirmed that the existing tree canopy will remain and no trees would be removed in the development of the Labyrinth. Recreation Staff has consulted with the Town Building and Planning Departments and it has been confirmed that the property is Designated P – Park in the Official Plan and there are no issues in relation to the proposal. From a Zoning perspective the property is located in a T1 Zone by By-law No. 10-77, as amended. The Zone restricts the use to Tourist Camps and uses accessory thereto. However, Section 6.10 of the By-law permits the use of any land as a public park and therefore the labyrinth would be permitted.

Staff believes that both requests are well suited for this location, however Staff also identifies that the property does have great value to the Town and provides opportunities in many ways for potential future uses.

## **C. The Blue Mountains’ Strategic Plan**

- Addressing the Town’s municipal infrastructure needs.
- Supporting and development of social and recreational programs to meet the broad range of needs in the community

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## **D. Environmental Impacts**

Enhancing the Towns active lifestyle opportunities as well as providing active transportation opportunities with locating recreational facilities within walkable and rideable locations.

A land use agreement with a formalized group would help oversee the off leash area or the Labyrinth and would work closely with the Town and its Recreation Department regarding site maintenance.

## **E. Financial Impact**

### **DOG PARK**

It is suggested that all capital and operational costs of development and implementation of an off leash area will be funded by donations and user group fundraising. Staff suggests that the use of the land be identified as the Town contribution to the capital project.

### **LABYRINTH**

It is suggested that all capital and operational costs of development and implementation of a Labyrinth will be funded by donations and user group fundraising. Staff suggests that the use of the land be identified as the Town contribution to the capital project.

## **F. In Consultation With**

Senior Management Team  
Terry Green, Manager of Parks & Trails  
David Finbow, Director of Planning and Building  
Greg Miller, Manager of Building & By Law/CBO  
John Corrigan, Dog Park Representative  
Kristen Shrider, Town of Saugeen Shores, Facilities Manager  
Wendy Martin, Town of Collingwood, Manager of Parks  
Frank Cowan Insurance  
Catherine Smart, Women of 12 Representative  
Teresa Matamoros, Women of 12 Representative

## **G. Attached**

1. Map Identifying Proposed Location

Respectfully submitted,

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Shawn Everitt, Director of Recreation

Recreation  
519-599-3131 ext. 281  
519-599-7723  
[severitt@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:severitt@thebluemountains.ca)

Attachment 1

