

Cobourg Lawn Bowling Club - Municipal Grant 2023

Supplemental Information

The Grant application provides comprehensive information on why the Cobourg Lawn Bowling Club needs parking permits from the Town. It can not be emphasised enough why the permits are so important to the club hence this further note which provides some additional information.

Membership fees are essential in generating adequate revenue to cover operating costs, including routine maintenance of the club house and the bowling green. The club is run and maintained entirely by volunteer members which allows the club to be self sufficient. In addition to membership fees, local businesses support the club through various sponsorships (mainly tournaments & web site ads). By generating our own revenue and keeping costs to a reasonable level, assisted by the many volunteer hours our club members provide, the people of Cobourg and the surrounding area have an opportunity to enjoy a healthy outdoor summer sport and enhanced quality of life.

Although membership is required to play (otherwise the club would cease to exist) the club also provides other community services. Two examples would be that we have bowling & bocce ball for Community Living clients and provide the opportunity for Probus clubs to visit & bowl.

As explained in the grant application the club is also a Victoria Park attraction. People using the park or just passing through stop to watch the games. Even when there is no bowling going on the well-maintained bowling green and 1920s vintage club house are a scenic part of the heritage district and a benefit to the park and the Town. Even if they have no intention of taking up lawn bowling, they enjoy the spectacle and the fact that the bowling is accessible to them and that Cobourg has something different to other parks and beach areas.

The grant application explains that the club is dependent upon membership fees in the first instance but also on tournaments and the associated sponsorships for the majority of our revenue. If there is a decline in either of these the club would find it increasingly difficult to survive. In the first instance the cost of parking (currently \$5/Hr) for members bowling or doing voluntary work at the club would drive up their costs and would start to turn what currently is a relatively low cost, affordable sport into a much less affordable activity. The inevitable result would be a loss of membership and fewer volunteers to maintain the club and greens.

Practically every lawn bowling club in Ontario has free parking available. If the Cobourg club does not have parking permits bowlers would start to defect and play in tournaments at other clubs. When faced with the choice of driving from Toronto to Cobourg and paying \$40 for parking or driving to Peterborough, Oshawa, Belleville and parking free most bowlers are going to go elsewhere. That would not only result in less revenue from tournament fees, but would lead to loss of sponsorship money as well. In addition, this would lead to a reduction in visitors to the Town and money spent here. In 2022 Cobourg hosted 3 championships. The District Seniors, District Mixed Pairs and Ontario Mixed Pairs Championship. The Ontario event had 16 teams from Windsor to Ottawa competing. These teams had to book rooms in local hotels for 2 nights as well as eating at local restaurants. (Est. well over \$10k in local spending).

This is not an exaggeration. If we must pay for parking it will result in a loss of membership income and tournament sponsorship. In time the operation of the club will become untenable. As evident from this application the club is largely self sufficient – it asks nothing from the Town except parking permits so that lawn bowlers get the same benefits as users of other sports facilities in the Town (such as the CCC) and we can continue to provide the sport of Lawn Bowling in Cobourg for another 100 years.