

	THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG
	ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (October 2019 –December 2020) AND WORK PLAN for 2021
TO:	Mayor and Council Members
FROM: TITLE	Beth Bellaire Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
DATE OF MEETING:	Committee of the Whole – January 25, 2021
SUBJECT:	Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee – Annual Report and Work Plan
REPORT DATE:	January 5, 2021

1.0 MEMBERSHIP

Beth Bellaire (Chairperson)

Dora Body

James McGrath

Miriam Mutton (appointed December 2019)

Richard Pope

Patricia Whitney (Co-Chair)

Emily Chorley(Councillor, Coordinator of Parks and Recreation Services)

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers the period of October 1, 2019 to December 8, 2020. Although the 2019-2020 meeting schedule was interrupted by COVID-19, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee remained active and looks forward to a productive year ahead.

Our Work Plan for 2020 included fifteen (15) items, most of which were tied to the Town of Cobourg's Strategic Plan; we were able to address eleven (11) of these.

We sent thirteen motions to Council, making recommendations on tree planting, the redevelopment of the East Pier and Campground, the establishment of a Natural Heritage Park in the West Harbour area, the

management of Victoria Park Beach, the financial viability of large events at the CCC, the implementation of the Lifesaving Society’s Safety Audit of the West Harbour including the formation of a joint working group consisting of the Town and various stakeholders to develop safety protocols acceptable to all, and the acquisition of an updated legal opinion on the authority of the Town to mandate activity in the harbour. Many of these recommendations were acted upon by Council.

3.0 MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

	February 4, 2020
	March 3, 2020
	July 7, 2020
October 1, 2019	August 4, 2020
October 10, 2019 (Special Meeting)	September 8, 2020
November 5, 2019	October 6, 2020
December 3, 2019	November 3, 2020
January 7, 2020	December 8, 2020

4.0 COMMITTEE PURPOSE

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee is to provide strategic and policy advice and recommendations to Council on matters related to parks, open spaces, waterfront, recreation facilities, and recreation programs that enhance the quality of life of residents and visitors, reflect the needs of the community, and support and encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

5.0 HIGHLIGHTS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This report covers the period of October 1, 2019 to November 3, 2020. Although the 2019-2020 meeting schedule was interrupted by COVID-19, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee was quite busy and looks forward to a productive year ahead.

Our Work Plan for 2020 included fifteen (15) items, most of which were tied to the Town of Cobourg’s Strategic Plan; we were able to address eleven (11) of these. Following is a summary of the actions we have taken with reference to these eleven items.

PRAC Objective #2 (linked to Strategic Plan: People, Strategic Action #3: Encourage healthy lifestyles across all age groups by promoting and raising awareness about public health and active transportation): *Follow up on progress of Outdoor Adult Fitness Park (status of applications for funding; location of park; choice of equipment, evaluation of usage, etc.)*

Action: PRAC had a presentation from Keith Oliver at their February 4th meeting. Shortly after this, a grant was acquired, but because of COVID-19, this project

was put on hold until a later time. The funding is good until March 2022. PRAC continues to monitor the status of this initiative.

PRAC Objective #3 (linked to #3 Strategic Plan: People, Strategic Action #4: Continue to pursue the Age-Friendly Communities Designation): *Provide advice to Council regarding best practices for creating an age-friendly community; in particular, identify areas for improvement related to the mandate of Parks and Recreation - request report from Staff on progress to date and planned next steps.*

Action: At the March 3, 2020 meeting of PRAC, the Committee had a presentation by Krista Williams, Recreation Coordinator, regarding the various programming available through the Seniors Centre at the CCC. Feedback from members was provided but no motions were forthcoming. Following the meeting, Krista provided a tour of the Seniors' Centre and other parts of the CCC. Although no motions were made, feedback and suggestions were provided to staff.

PRAC Objective #4 (linked to #4 Strategic Plan: Places, Strategic Action #6 - Repair and rejuvenate the East Pier): *Provide analysis and feedback on results of public engagement process regarding the East Pier.*

Action:

The following motion was approved at the October 10, 2019 meeting of PRAC:
Moved by Member McGrath:

THAT the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee has observed that the public will seem to be to retain the campground, that service upgrades are a necessary cost and should be adopted but THAT cosmetic upgrades such as the interface improvements require more in-depth study before a thoughtful recommendation can be made by this Committee. Carried

The following motion was approved at the October 10, 2019 meeting of PRAC:
Moved by Councillor Chorley:

THAT having considered the East Pier and Campground Staff Report of October 4, 2019 and the accompanying Public Engagement Report, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that Council approves the procurement of engineering and other professional services to develop drawings, costs and tender documents for the following: • East Pier structural repairs to enable a combination of pedestrian and light vehicle use (Option 4); • East Pier enhancement as deemed appropriate by Council. Carried

PRAC Objective #5 (linked to Strategic Plan: Places, Strategic Action #7, part two: The natural environment of the West Harbour will be safeguarded and protected): *Consider actions that could best achieve this goal and make recommendations to Council*

Action:

At the October 1, 2019 meeting of PRAC, Richard Pope presented on behalf of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists who are advocating for the establishment of

a Natural Heritage Waterfront Park. At this meeting, PRAC approved the following motion

Moved by Member Whitney:

THAT the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee supports the concept of a Natural Heritage Waterfront Park including the Ecology Garden, West Beach, West Headland and West Harbour. Carried

Further, at the March 3, 2020 meeting of PRAC, the following motion was passed:

Moved by Member Mutton: *WHEREAS, The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee believes that stronger protection regulations are needed for the West Headland as a Natural Environment.*

Therefore, based on the review of the detailed report from the director of Community Services, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that Council clarify and strengthen zoning for the West Headland and the addition of the West Headland as a nature park under Schedule A of the Parks Use By-Law.

PRAC Objective #6 (linked to Strategic Plan: Partnerships, Strategic Action #3: Continue to work with Sustainable Cobourg and other stakeholders on greening Cobourg initiatives: *Consider ways to increase tree canopy of Cobourg, particularly within its parks - staff in process of preparing a report by October 2019, so address this accordingly.*

Action:

The following motion was approved at the November 5, 2019 meeting of PRAC:

Moved By Member Pope:

THAT the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that Council consider an increase of the Budget Line for Tree Planting in the Town of Cobourg to be considered as part of the 2020 Parks Department Budget, with the amount to be determined based on the report from the Town Arborist to Municipal Council in early 2020. Carried.

The following motion was approved at the January 7, 2020 meeting of the PRAC:

Moved by Member Mutton:

THAT the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that the position of Community Stewardship Coordinator be explored to support the realization of the Urban Forest Management Plan following the update to be provided by the Town Arborist. Carried.

The following motion was approved at the January 7, 2020 meeting of the PRAC:

Moved by Member Body:

THAT In 2019 more trees were cut down than planted resulting in a reduction in the urban tree canopy.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that Council increase the budget for tree planting to \$100,000 in 2020.

FURTHER THAT an extra \$50,000 be allocated for replacement of trees removed due to the Emerald Ash Borer. Carried

At the Sep. 8, 2020 meeting of PRAC, the committee reviewed the UFMP Annual Report memo, and approved the following motion:

Moved by Member Mutton:

THAT the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that the Town of Cobourg recognize Professor Elwood Pricklethorn and his team for their contribution to community service for the environmental education of all ages on the topic of urban trees. Carried

PRAC Objective #7 (linked to Strategic Plan: Prosperity, Strategic Action #1: Develop a policy for establishing shovel-ready development lands):

Study the impact of Bill 108 on parkland in new developments and make recommendations to Council as required to coincide with a review of policy on this

Action: At the Sep. 8, 2020 meeting of PRAC, Member Mutton addressed concerns regarding changes the provincial government is making to the Parkland Dedication Relief process. The Director of Building & Planning was invited to the October meeting at which he reviewed the process. Most changes will not impact Cobourg at this time. He will forward information on current amounts in the Parks Reserve.

PRAC Objective #8 (linked to Strategic Plan: Prosperity, Strategic Action #4: Explore innovative solutions to improve the connectivity between the beach/waterfront and downtown Cobourg): *Include an analysis of impact of special events on parks in conjunction with other committees developing a new policy to address this.*

Action: The following motion was approved at the August 4, 2020 meeting of PRAC:

Moved by Member Mutton:

Whereas the beach areas are an important public asset to the citizens of Cobourg, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that Council request staff to investigate and report on how comparable beach front communities are managing and regulating their beaches and waterfronts for public access. Carried.

In response, Council approved the following motion: *WHEREAS at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on August 24, 2020 Council considered a memo from the Secretary of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, regarding a recommendation from the Committee on the Cobourg Beach;*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council endorse the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) and request staff to investigate and report on how comparable beachfront communities are managing and regulating their beaches and waterfronts for public access, with the report provided to PRAC by December 1, 2020; and FURTHER THAT Council request PRAC to receive public input on how the Town of Cobourg can manage the popularity of Victoria Park Beach, and provide recommendations to Council by March 1, 2021.

A report will be coming to PRAC in December, and PRAC is engaged in developing a survey for Bang the Table to elicit public opinion on this issue.

PRAC Objective #9 (linked to Strategic Plan: Programs, Strategic Action #3: Implement a comprehensive management plan for all of the Town's assets): *Provide Feedback to Council on Staff's Asset Management Plan for Parks and Recreation*

Action: At the Sep.8, 2020 meeting of PRAC, Member McGrath addressed the financial status of the CCC, particularly as it applied to the hosting of large events such as concerts. The following motion was approved:

Moved by Member McGrath:

WHEREAS the Cobourg Community Centre (CCC) is operating in a deficit each year; AND WHEREAS the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee is tasked with advising council on policy related to the CCC and the best use of the CCC for the residents of Cobourg; AND WHEREAS, in order to advise on the policies to apply to the CCC specifically in relation to major events, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee requires information concerning the CCC's funding and budget; BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Staff provide to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee the following information in regard to the latest 5 major events:

- *Time the venue was unavailable for normal usage together with forgone revenue for ice rental and other activities during that time*
- *Revenue*
- *Advertising and sponsorship revenue*
- *Advertising expenses including preparation, printing, distribution*
- *Event revenues guarantees if any*
- *Full-time staff costs including wages, salaries, and benefits*
- *Part-time staff costs including recruiting, wages, salaries and benefits*
- *Management cost allocation*
- *Material costs*
- *Costs for any required special equipment*
- *Cost gap guarantees*
- *Utilities*
- *Rentals*
- *Insurance*

- *Janitorial services*
 - *Recycling/waste removal*
 - *Security/police*
 - *Ticketing and gate costs including bank and credit card fees*
- Carried.*

This motion was not supported by Council.

PRAC Objective #10: *Feedback on Budget for Parks and Recreation component for 2020 and 2021*

Action: PRAC provided budget feedback through its motions regarding the tree canopy for the town (Objective #6) and through its motion regarding the CCC (Objective #9)

PRAC Objective #14: *Provide comment and advice on issues as requested by Council, from time to time*

1) In September 2019, Council made the following motion with regards to the Lifesaving Society Aquatic Safety Audit of the Cobourg Harbour:
 THAT Council refer the Lifesaving Society's Audit of the Cobourg Harbour to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to obtain feedback on the report's recommendations; and
 FURTHER THAT Staff provide a report along with the comments from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee that is inclusive of all user groups; and
 FURTHER THAT the Staff Report come to Council for the first Committee of the Whole meeting in March 2020.

Action:

At the November 5, 2019 meeting of PRAC, there were presentations from Steve Wilkes, Coach of Survivor Thrivers; Nancy Marshall, Trish Russell, and Sandy Ward of the Survivor Thrivers; Jeremy Fowlie, Head Coach/ED of the Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club; and Alan Clough, from the Cobourg Yacht Club, all regarding the Lifesaving Society's Safety Audit.

The following motion was approved at the November 5, 2019 meeting of PRAC:

Moved by Richard Pope:

THAT the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that Council receive the Lifesaving Society Aquatic Safety Audit of the Cobourg Harbour for information purposes; and FURTHER THAT the Town direct the Town of Cobourg Risk Manager to conduct a full study of the Harbour Safety based on extensive consultation and observation with the main Harbour users, including but not limited to; the Marina, the Sailing Club, the Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club and the Survivor Thrivers; and FURTHER THAT Staff present the results of said report/study to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee for comments before sending to Council. Carried

The following motions were approved at the July 7, 2020 PRAC meeting:

Moved by Member Whitney:

Whereas it is not clear whether the Town has jurisdiction to control activities on the water. It is recommended THAT a definitive legal opinion from an independent legal counsel with expertise in riparian rights be obtained prior to any further attempt to regulate on water activities AND further to release the original opinion. Carried

Moved by Member Mutton:

THAT the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that Council instructs staff to implement select recommendations from the Aquatic Safety Audit as follows: #1, 2, 12, 13 and 15.

Carried

Moved by Member McGrath: *THAT in order to create a consolidated safety procedure and emergency manual the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends THAT a joint working group is formed with one member from each user group and appropriate staff; and charging said group with writing such a procedure manual and submitting to Council and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.*

The user groups will include:

Survivor Thrivers

Cobourg Yacht Club

Cobourg Dragon Boat & Canoe Club

Coast Guard

Learn to Sail

Green Canoe

Northumberland YMCA

These motions were adopted by Council at their May 11, 2020 Council meeting.

PRAC Objective #15: *Respond to Presentations and Delegations to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee as required*

Following is a summary of the presentations made to PRAC by either staff, committee members, or the public, as well as the actions taken by PRAC as a result:

- 1) Oct. 1, 2019: Presentation by Laurie Wills, Director of Public Works regarding Parking Revenue. Action: None
- 2) Oct. 1, 2019: Presentation by Member Pope, Willow Beach Field Naturalists, regarding a proposal that will be made to Council about the creation of a natural waterfront park in Cobourg. Action: See PRAC Objective #5
- 3) Dec. 3, 2019: Presentation by Ted Williams, Cobourg Resident, regarding the Marina and Campground Finances. Action: PRAC asked staff for corresponding data from their records, so staff shared the Cobourg Waterfront Brochure that contained pertinent financials for the Marina and Campgrounds.
- 4) Dec. 3, 2019: Rory Quigley, Town Arborist, presented an update on the

Urban Forest Master Plan. Action: See details under PRAC Objective #6

5) Jan. 7, 2020: Miriam Mutton presented on the recent Seniors Open House. Action: See details under PRAC Objective #3

6) Feb. 4, 2020: Ted Williams, follow up on Marina's asset management. Action: none taken

7) Feb. 4, 2020: Keith Oliver, presentation on status of Adult Fitness Park. Action: See details under PRAC Objective #2

8) Mar. 3, 2020: Krista Williams - Seniors Centre Update. Action: See details under PRAC Objective #3

9) Jul. 7, 2020: Alan Clough, Cobourg Yacht Club: comments on Staff's Report regarding the Lifesaving Society's Aquatic Safety Audit report. Action: See details under PRAC Objective #14

10) Sep. 8, 2020: Miriam Mutton reported on Parkland Dedication Relief and concerns regarding how recent changes by the provincial government might affect the Town's ability to acquire new parkland from new developments. Action: See details under PRAC Objective #7

There were four (4) PRAC Objectives which saw no progress; these were:

PRAC Objective #1 (linked to Strategic Plan: People, Strategic Action #2: Implement a municipal youth program): *Provide advice to Staff through Council on setting up a Youth Advisory Committee*

Action: Chairperson communicated with Clerk who is responsible for this item. Due to COVID-19, no progress has been made on this initiative. Brent Larmer will notify PRAC when process is reactivated.

PRAC Objective #11 (linked to Parks Master Plan (2013) Recommendation #2: Trails Master Plan):

Request Staff to prepare a comparative report that indicates progress in the past six years towards what was envisioned, that is, "a connected network of pedestrian trails and cycling routes that link parks together and integrate other Town destinations."

PRAC Objective #12 (linked to Parks Master Plan (2013) Supply of Parks and Services (page10))

Request Staff to prepare an updated chart that compares level of service (amount of parkland provided per 1000 persons) to other similar communities, to determine whether we have increased our level of service both in absolute terms as well as relative to the other comparator communities and to provide a report on any financial implications of any suggested actions.

PRAC Objective #13 (linked to Parks Master Plan (2013) Park Facility Standards (page11)).

Request Staff to prepare a report showing our present level of service with respect to recommended levels

6.0 FUTURE GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The Parks and Recreation Committee will continue to use the Town's Strategic Plan as its guide to identify goals and objectives.

The Committee will also refer to the Parks Master Plan (2013), the Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design (May 2018), the Urban Forest Management Plan (July 2018), the Town of Cobourg Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan (December 2016), and the Cobourg Community Centre Campus Master Plan Final Report (December 2014). Each of these documents have goals, objectives, and action items that have provided guidance to Staff and Council. It is important that these reports are reviewed to ensure they are not just "sitting on a shelf gathering dust," but are being actively used to direct improvements in programming and development of resources. The Committee sees part of its mandate is to review progress against these plans.

However, the Committee also recognizes that it cannot request too many reports from staff, since there needs to be a balance between making progress and reporting on that progress. Therefore, the Committee has included a limited number of requests for updates from Staff over the course of the year with hopes of striking the right balance.

Given these considerations, the Committee has determined the following goals for the next twelve months:

- Repair and Rejuvenate the East Pier: This continues to be a major undertaking of the Town. The Committee will continue to provide feedback and recommendations to ongoing surveys and developments.
- The West Harbour: Also a central goal of the Town's Strategic Plan, the Committee includes the safeguarding and protection of the West Harbour as one of its central objectives as well. We look forward to responding to the ongoing Public Engagement.
- The Town's Tree Canopy: The Urban Forest Management Plan recognized that Cobourg needed to increase its tree canopy and set a long-term goal of achieving a coverage level of 35% by 2037 (pg. 31) – up from the 27.2% coverage of 2018 (pg. 12) . The Committee will continue to monitor this issue and make recommendations as necessary.
- The Town's Parkland Supply: The Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2013) identified that Cobourg lagged behind other waterfront communities of similar size in Ontario in its ratio of hectares of parkland per 1000 persons. The Committee's goal is for Cobourg to increase its coverage from the 2013-level of 4.3 to narrow the gap to the average of the comparator towns, that is, 5.7, while taking financial impacts into consideration.

- Trail Connectivity, including the Waterfront Trail: The Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2013) set a goal to “create an integrated and connected network of park and public open spaces.” The Cobourg Waterfront User Needs Assessment and Detailed Design Plan (2018) also recognizes the need for connectivity, especially in the waterfront area. Finally, the Town’s Strategic Plan notes a desired outcome to be “a community that prioritizes biking, walking, and public transportation as means to mitigate the effects of climate change.” Given the increased focus on outdoor activity as we live through the COVID-19 pandemic, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee sees this as an area of growing importance and so will set a goal of measuring where we are now and identifying areas needing attention to realize the goals set by the Town.
- The CCC and other Town-operated Recreational Facilities: Coinciding with Town’s Strategic Plan actions of (1) improving the financial performance of Town-operated facilities and (2) implement a comprehensive management plan for all of the Town’s assets, and on the data provided in the Parks Master Plan (2013) that identified deficiencies in the number of various types of facilities (eg; baseball diamonds, tennis courts, etc.), the Committee will focus on a goal of measuring where we are now.
- Outdoor Adult Fitness Park: The Committee will continue to track progress on this addition to Cobourg’s commitment to the Canadian Sport for Life Program. The Committee’s goal is for Cobourg to provide an outdoor fitness park that will encourage adults of all ages to not only become more active but to maintain their activity levels as they age.
- Age-Friendly Community Designation: Identified in the Strategic Plan is a goal to achieve this designation. This robust designation consists of eight dimensions. The goal of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee is that the Town of Cobourg will achieve the designation for the dimensions related to our mandate, that is, Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, and Civic Participation and Employment. The Committee will continue to monitor seniors’ programming in Cobourg.
- Youth Advisory Committee: A focus on engaging youth is present in several of the plans. Staff identified this as an action item for the fall of 2019, but then the pandemic struck. The Committee’s goal is that Cobourg will have a Youth Advisory Committee that represents the breadth of the youth demographic, that is both creative and productive, and that provides meaningful participation for the youth involved; accordingly, we will provide input to the Clerk once this initiative is reactivated.
- Trash-to-Treasure pilot project: Due to the pandemic’s impact on working with local schools, this project is now slated to happen in 2022. WE are keeping it in our plan as a placeholder.
- Follow-up on Ongoing Issues

- Safety Audit of Harbour – report by Joint Working Group established by Council to report back to PRAC
- Management of Beach – survey of residents to take place in winter; report due back to Council by March 1, 2021

7.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Subject to approval of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee’s 2021 Work Plan, in 2021, we will assist with consulting on relevant issues as required. Public engagements for The East Pier, the Campground, and the West Harbour are ongoing. Another public engagement is indicated by Council for the West Harbour. We are also in the process of developing a survey for use on the Bang-the-Table platform to elicit feedback on the management of Victoria Park Beach for future years.

8.0 EDUCATION

Subject to approval of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee’s 2021 Work Plan, in 2021, assist with consulting on relevant issues as required.

9.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE AMENDMENTS (IF APPLICABLE)

Once Council has approved the Sustainability and Climate Change Committee’s definition of sustainability, we will provide recommendations on how best to embed sustainability into our terms of reference.

10.0 2021 BUDGET ITEM RECOMMENDATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

To provide the necessary resources for the Parks & Recreation Department to undertake the action items deferred from the 2020 Work Plan, in particular, funds to ensure the construction of an adult fitness park by 2022. (Note: Due to the pandemic’s impact on schools, the Trash-to-Treasures pilot project has been postponed until 2022.)

11.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Over the past year, the Committee has focussed on procedures that govern us as well as identifying segments of the Strategic Plan that require our input. Our work plan for next year reflects the issues we’ve identified as needing attention this year. We have also responded to presentations from the public and look forward to addressing more such ideas in the future.

12.0 COMMUNICATION RESULTS

Beth Bellaire, Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
[Jodi Ware-Simpson Secretary, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

13.0 ATTACHMENTS

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee – 2021 Work Plan