

SAVE OUR JUNIOR SKATE PARK

BACKGROUND:

Back in February of this year at the second Council Meeting, Council passed the approval to expand the parking lot adjacent to Thicketwood ball diamond. The rationale was to increase public parking for downtown. At this meeting it was discussed that the skate park equipment that was beside the parking lot should be relocated.

In early April the Town's Public Works department, in conjunction with a local contractor, removed the equipment without notifying the Ward 6 Councillor Rob Hargrave or the local residents. Needless to say this was a shock to the kids who used the equipment and an outrage to the parents.

When questioned by Councillor Hargrave why there was no notification sent to the residents the Director of Leisure Services did not have answer. All that was said is that the equipment is now being stored at the Public Works yard.

REACTION:

The kids who used the park were extremely disappointed along with the parents. This tactic was very similar to the ones used to remove the toboggan hill and our war memorial. No prior communication to remove these great recreational land marks was given to the taxpaying residents.

On April 28, approximately one week after the equipment was moved, Councillor Hargrave had a meeting with Rob Raycroft (Director of Leisure Services) and Rob Flindall (Director of Public Works) in Mr. Raycroft's office to discuss the future of the junior skate park in Memorial Park.

At this meeting Councillor Hargrave raised the option of fundraising the monies for the cost to relocate the junior skate park to another location in Memorial Park. Both Directors agreed that it would be a great idea. As well it was mentioned at this meeting that the half pipe was damaged and that it would need to be replaced. Councillor Hargrave asked for the half pipe dimensions so that the specs could be costed out for the fundraising.

At no time during this meeting was there ever a concern or push back from either town Directors. - There was 100% support. The only request from the Director of Leisure Services was that Councillor Hargrave make a resolution at the May 2 Council Meeting to direct the staff to find a new location.

ACTION TAKEN:

At the end of the May 2nd Council Meeting Councillor Hargrave made the following resolution. It was asked that the staff report back on this resolution at the next Council Meeting on May 16th.

" That Council direct Leisure Services Staff to find a new location within Memorial Park to relocate the junior skate park; and that the cost to relocate will be funded through a fundraising effort; and report back to Council by next Council Meeting on new location and cost." Carried as amended.

TOWN STAFF RECOMMENDATION MAY 16TH:

The following is the recommendation from the Director of Leisure Services. Needless to say this is completely counter what was said and agreed upon at the April 28th meeting between town staff and Councillor Hargrave.

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council direct staff to ensure the 2017 Leisure and Community Services Department Master Plan Update includes a full community consultation process and comprehensive review including cost to relocate the stored Park Drive skate park equipment into Memorial Park in a designed and planned layout within Memorial Park Phase 5 construction.***

To properly accommodate the existing equipment from the Park Drive Skate Park, a new area equal to approximately 540 square metres or approximately 6,010 square feet would be required. As well, proper design for the base would include cost for either concrete estimated at \$75,000.00 or asphalt estimated at \$35,000.00. Such expenditure had not been included by Staff in the 2017 budget process. Given the lack of available land and no funding in 2017, Staff recommends deferring the decision to relocate the skate park until the completion of the Master Plan Update which will include the disposition of the Park Drive Skate Park.

Currently no 2017 funding exists for the relocation of the Park Drive Skate Park in the approved budget. Staff recommends including the matter of a relocating the Park Drive Skate Park features in Memorial Park after completing a community consultation process and in conjunction with the 2017 Leisure and Community Services Department Master Plan Update. The process of developing the 2017 Leisure and Community Services Department Master Plan Update will set our course for the provision of relevant recreation and leisure services through to 2028. This process will allow for a fulsome consultation process which will inform Council, Staff and all stakeholders as to precisely what facilities and services the municipality requires, where facilities are required and what the best designs are for those facilities.

DESCREPIENCIES TO STAFF REPORT:

1. The May 2 resolution made by Councillor Hargrave clearly states that the cost would be fundraised. Why is the staff bringing in cost of \$75,000 and \$35,000? When asked by Councillor Hargrave where the numbers came from and if they have quotes, there was no response from the Director of Leisure Service as to where the cost came from. The quote for these expenses should have been included in the staff report and a detail account given. This never happened.
2. The size of the pad 6,000 feet seems excessive. There were no options given to the size only 6,000 sq feet the same size as the senior skate park. When asked why there was no proper answer was give.
3. The cost that a local developer / builder gave to Councillor Hargrave to build a 5,000 sq foot concrete pad was \$20,000. The developer stated that this number would be lower because he would be funding the project.
4. If the town did have to pay any short fall to relocate the junior skate park it would come from Park Trust which is a reserve account for parks. This is an account that collects monies from developers to pay for park construction. The town does not pay for parks developers do.

Currently there are millions of dollars in the Park Trust. This money could have been used by the town to re-locate the junior skate park.

5. By placing the junior skate park into the Leisure Service Master Plan study it could take a few years to have a decision made by the staff. The junior skate park will sit in storage for this summer and possibly next.

MAY 16TH COUNCIL DECISION ON JUNIOR SKATE PARK:

The debate between 6 Councillors was that the junior skate park should be located in another town park. Councillor Hargrave's position was that other parks should get skate parks but they should get new equipment bought from Park Trust not used equipment that was over 10 years old from Memorial Park.

As a result of the staff recommendation and the concern for a \$75,000 cost the remaining 5 Councillors brought forth the following Resolution- that was passed 5-1 (Councillor Hargrave the only Councillor who voted against the motion).

"Recommendation:

That Council direct staff to ensure the 2017 Leisure and Community Services Department Master Plan Update includes a full community consultation process and comprehensive review including cost to relocate the stored Park Drive skate park equipment into a town Park."

With this motion in place the junior skate park can be placed in any park in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

WHAT CAN BE DONE:

In numbers there is strength. Councillor Hargrave has placed a petition on this website that is asking the 5 Councillors to re-think their current resolution and vote for relocating the stored junior skate park equipment into a new location within Memorial Park for the beginning of summer 2017.

Councillor Hargrave will take this petition to the next Council Meeting on June 6th to ask the Councillors to reconsider their decision. If you want to discuss further with these Councillors you can go to the town website and get their contact information. If you want to discuss further with Councillor Hargrave you can contact him by cell 416-985-8376 or e-mail rob@robhargrave.ca.