
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CDP-06-2020 Fields and Parks Management Program – New Group Request (Caledonia Disc Golf Association)

For Consideration by Council on June 30, 2020



OBJECTIVE:

To obtain Council approval for the inclusion of the Caledonia Disc Golf Association into Haldimand County's Fields & Parks Management Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDP-06-2020 Fields and Parks Management Program – New Group Request (Caledonia Disc Golf Association) be received;
2. AND THAT the Caledonia Disc Golf Association be authorized to manage the ongoing operations and maintenance of the 18-hole Disc Golf Course in LaFortune Park in Caledonia;
3. AND THAT a grant, in the amount of \$12,800 for 2020, calculated in keeping with Haldimand County's Fields & Parks Management Program (Policy 2019-04), be approved;
4. AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized, on behalf of Haldimand County, to sign the attached Memorandum of Understanding with the Caledonia Disc Golf Association to operate and maintain the Disc Golf Course;
5. AND THAT the costs associated with this change be approved and incorporated into the 2021 Tax Supported Operating Budget as a Council Approved Initiative.

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Respectfully submitted: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager of Community & Development Services

Approved: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In March 2019, as part of Haldimand County's Community Partnership Program (CPP), a new Fields & Parks Management (FPM) Program was approved including Policy 2019-04 (Attachment 1), operating procedures and a grant funding model.

In 2018, through the CPP (report PED-COM-10-2018), an 18-hole Disc Golf Course was installed in Caledonia's LaFortune Park (Attachment 2) as a collaboration between the Friends of LaFortune Park and the newly-formed Caledonia Disc Golf Association (CDGA), which agreed to coordinate the installation of the 18-hole course and operate/maintain the new asset with County support.

Report PED-COM-10-2018 included a staff recommendation that, once the Disc Golf Course was installed, the County enter into an FPM agreement with the CDGA for the ongoing operations and maintenance of the course. This report addresses the recommendation.

BACKGROUND:

Haldimand County partners with many volunteer groups to provide recreational and community services and build/operate/maintain municipal assets—a service delivery model recognized as a best municipal-management practice. In order to support this approach in a fair, clear and consistent framework, the County introduced the Community Partnership Program (CPP) in 2011, incorporating the following programs: Community Beautification, Community Capital Projects, Community Halls and Fields & Parks Management.

The new Fields & Parks Management (FPM) Program was updated and approved by Council in 2019; it includes nine volunteer groups operating a dozen public recreation assets throughout the County. The FPM provides groups with operating and maintenance procedures which are consistent with the County's standards, as well as grant funding at a rate of 35% of the estimated cost were the County operating the asset.

Through report PED-COM-10-2018, the Caledonia Disc Golf Association (CDGA) collaborated with the Friends of LaFortune Park to install an 18-hole Disc Golf Course throughout approximately 70 acres of the 104-acre LaFortune Park property. The course opened in fall 2018 and the CDGA—with some assistance from the Friends of LaFortune Park—has maintained the course since then with no financial support from the County.

The current request from the CDGA is for approval to:

- (i) Become part of the FPM Program; and
- (ii) Annually receive grant funding to support ongoing management of the Disc Golf Course at a rate of 35% of the estimated costs if the County was operating the asset.

Staff have calculated the estimated grant for 2020 would be \$12,800.

ANALYSIS:

The Proponent:

The Caledonia Disc Golf Association (CDGA) approached the Friends of LaFortune Park and Haldimand County in 2017 with a proposal to develop an 18-hole Disc Golf Course at LaFortune Park in Caledonia. An application to install the course was submitted through the Community Partnership Program (CPP) given:

- The local popularity of disc golf;
- The suitability of LaFortune Park, with its diverse, naturalized landscape and proximity to existing courses in neighbouring communities to which disc golf enthusiasts travel for recreation and competition; and
- The accessibility of the sport given its low cost and high degree of participation for all age groups and levels of athleticism.

The project was approved through report PED-COM-10-2018 with an estimated budget of \$30,000, including \$9,941 in CPP grant funding and \$9,941 from the LaFortune Park Reserve Fund. The report also recommended, upon installation of the course, consideration to include the CDGA in the County's Fields & Parks Management (FPM) Program given the unique maintenance requirements of the course and the expertise and volunteer commitment of the CDGA to growing the sport locally.

Course Installation & Ongoing Maintenance:

The CDGA and other partners installed the course in fall 2018, opening with a tournament attended by more than 100 participants. Since then, interest in the sport and use of the course by both recreational and competitive players has grown consistently, although it is difficult to quantify numbers as the activity

is passive and does not require registration or rental of the course. The CDGA has hosted some 'learn to play disc golf' activities for the community and regularly has larger groups playing throughout the weekend. There has also been significant interest in hosting additional tournaments and fund-raising events. As part of the larger Ontario Disc Golf Association, the CDGA benefits from cross-promotion, attracting players from neighbouring communities interested in trying a course in a more naturalized, as opposed to traditional-style, setting.

Throughout 2019, the CDGA has maintained the course through fund-raising and other donations; however, the group is now at the point where it requires financial support from the County through the FPM in order to be able to continue its maintenance.

Haldimand County's Fields & Parks Management Program:

In 2019, Haldimand County introduced its revised Fields & Parks Management (FPM) Program following extensive consultation with existing volunteer partners operating these types of assets as well as staff from multiple Divisions (Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations, Finance, and Legal & Support Services) and Senior Management. Approved through CDP-01-2019, the new FPM Program includes nine community groups operating a dozen public parks and baseball and soccer fields throughout the County for the benefit of residents and visitors.

The FPM Policy (2019-04) ensures a fair, clear and consistent approach to identifying and evaluating partnership opportunities and addresses process related to both operating and capital matters. It is the intent of Haldimand County to encourage, support and maximize these partnership opportunities through the implementation of the policy.

Grant Funding:

The FPM Program provides partners with operating and maintenance standards and procedures as well as grant funding, based on a factor of 35% of the estimated actual cost of the County undertaking the operations/maintenance of the asset. The funding matrix—which was developed by staff from the Divisions of Community Development & Partnerships, Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry, Finance and Legal & Support Services—uses County rates and standards for labour, equipment and supplies.

In LaFortune Park, the Disc Golf Course is located in the northern section of the Park across approximately 70 acres. This area includes some open spaces as well as naturalized wooded areas and pathways. Haldimand County maintains (primarily grass cutting) the riverside section of the Park as well as the area from the Onondaga Townline Road entrance to the lower pavilion (just north of Hwy. #54). The County also supplies two portable washrooms in LaFortune; one near the Onondaga entrance and one at the north end of the Park to support Disc Golf users and hikers. This is in keeping with the service level at other partner parks within the FPM, where the County also provides portable washrooms as appropriate.

Using the FPM funding matrix, staff have calculated the 2020 grant for the CDGA for maintenance of the Disc Golf Course at \$12,800, representing 35% of the estimated costs if the County were responsible for the maintenance and operations. (This cost is a best-estimate given the unique nature of the asset and the fact it is the only disc golf course in Haldimand County.) Typical maintenance includes ongoing inspections, clearing of debris on the course, grass cutting and trimming, trimming of brush and stray limbs and maintenance/replacement of the tee pads and baskets.

Staff are supportive of continuing to collaborate with and support the CDGA in its management of the course as the group has taken care of the asset for almost two years without funding, all the while building interest in the park and local participation in the sport.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Policy 2019-04 states Haldimand County is committed to developing meaningful and strong partnership relationships with Fields & Parks Management groups. As well, report CDP-01-2019 (approval of the Fields & Parks Management (FPM) Program) supports:

- The efforts of the County's current community partners operating and maintaining fields, parks and trails on behalf of the municipality;
- The County's strategic priority of enhancing community vibrancy through the investment in high quality, sustainable services which promote the well-being of communities;
- The engagement of volunteer groups in the development of meaningful partnerships which maximize resources and reflect unique community recreation and service requests; and
- The development of new partnerships with community groups interested in operating and/or maintaining County recreation assets.

Based upon the funding model developed by staff in collaboration with community partners, the Caledonia Disc Golf Association (CDGA) would be eligible for a \$12,800 grant in 2020 for the seasonal maintenance (six months) of the course.

This grant allocation—if approved—will be provided annually for the duration of the partnership; as well, the grant amount will be reviewed in greater detail (based upon reporting of actual costs) in three years along with the other participants in the FPM Program.

In order to become part of the FPM Program, the CDGA will be asked to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Haldimand County (Attachment 3).

If supported by Council, there will be a negative variance in the Field & Parks Management Grants activity for the Parks cost centre of \$12,800 in 2020. Corporately, the deficit or surplus for the tax supported operating budget is funded from or contributed to the Contingency Reserve. This increase to the Field & Parks Management Grants, if approved, will be incorporated into the 2021 Tax Supported Operating Budget as a Council Approved Initiative. All community groups which receive funding of any kind from Haldimand County (operating or capital) are required to provide financial reporting information related to the funding in a timely manner.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

This request was reviewed and supported by staff in Community Development & Partnerships, Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations, Finance and Legal & Support Services at the time of the introduction of the new Fields & Parks Management Program. Further, support of the Caledonia Disc Golf Association positively impacts the ability of the Friends of LaFortune Park to dedicate its limited financial resources to other projects in LaFortune Park, which is part of the latter group's mandate.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: Yes

By-law: Yes

Budget Amendment: Yes

Policy: No

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Fields & Parks Management Program Policy.
2. Location Map – LaFortune Park, Caledonia (Caledonia Disc Golf Association).
3. Memorandum of Understanding – Caledonia Disc Golf Association. *Note – Appendix “B” documentation can be found as (Attachment 1) to this report; and Appendix “C” will be attached to the MOU upon finalizing.