
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CDP-05-2023 Fields and Parks Management Request – Springvale Park Committee



For Consideration by Council in Committee on February 28, 2023

OBJECTIVE:

To obtain Council approval for the inclusion of the Springvale Park Committee, as a management partner group operating Springvale Park, into Haldimand County's Fields & Parks Management Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDP-05-2023 Fields and Parks Management Request – Springvale Park Committee be received;
2. AND THAT the Springvale Park Committee be authorized to manage the ongoing operations and maintenance of Springvale Park;
3. AND THAT a grant, in the amount of \$4,940 for 2023, calculated in keeping with Haldimand County's Fields & Parks Management Policy 2019-04, be approved;
4. AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the Memorandum of Understanding, attached to Report CDP-05-2023, with the Springvale Park Committee to operate and maintain Springvale Park;
5. AND THAT the operating approach and associated costs outlined in Report CDP-05-2023 be approved and considered as a Council-approved initiative in the 2023 Tax Supported Operating Budget.

Prepared by: Sheryl Sawyer, Senior Community Partnership Liaison

Reviewed by: Katrina Schmitz, Manager, Community Development & Partnerships

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 the Fields and Parks Management Policy 2019-04, operating procedures, and a grant funding model.

Staff are recommending that the Springvale Park Committee (the Group) be accepted into the FPM Program as a new partner, including associated grant funding.

BACKGROUND:

Haldimand County partners with many volunteer groups to provide recreational and community services and to build, operate, and maintain municipal assets. 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 Fields & Parks Management (FPM) program was updated and approved by Council in 2019; it currently comprises 13 volunteer groups operating public recreation assets throughout the County. Through the Fields and Parks Management Policy 2019-04, the FPM provides groups with operating and maintenance procedures which are consistent with the County's standards, as well as annual operating grant funding at a rate of 35% of the estimated cost if the County was operating the asset.

The Springvale Park Committee has shown persistence and longevity with respect to interest in the Springvale Park. Staff are supportive of the current request from the Springvale Park Committee for the approval to:

- (i) Become a partner in the FPM program; and
- (ii) Annually receive grant funding to support ongoing management of Springvale Park at a rate of 35% of the estimated costs if the County was operating the asset.

Staff have calculated the estimated grant for 2023 would be \$4,940.

ANALYSIS:

The Park:

Springvale Park is a three-acre park located in the community of Springvale, west of Hagersville, at the confluence of Haldimand Regional Road 55 and Concession 14, Walpole. For many years, the site was an active ball park and a volunteer group cared for the Park through a previous operating agreement. The ball equipment was eventually decommissioned and removed due to low participation levels and because it was no longer in a state of good repair. In 2010, the volunteer group disbanded. In an interesting twist, several of the current Springvale Park Committee members are related to members of the original volunteer group, and feel passionately that caring for their local park is important.

In 2018, members of the Committee met with staff and the local Councillor to discuss the potential of a new Springvale Park Committee partnership with Haldimand County. At that time, the Park exhibited multiple deficits that were barriers to the Group taking over maintenance. As per County standards, a property is to be in a state of good repair before operational responsibility is turned over to a group.

The remedial work required, plus administrative delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meant that for several years the Group was unable to participate in Park maintenance. Staff have since overseen the removal of unsightly and outdated infrastructure, replaced the playground, and installed new locks and doors on the ball concession building in anticipation of the Group using a portion of the building for equipment storage.

In 2022, the Group undertook a clean-up project through the Community Partnership Program (CPP) framework – which meant its permission was vetted through the Staff Review Team. The Group fulfilled its obligations to County standards and has repeatedly shown itself to be a responsible partner, with deep ties to the community, a strong work ethic, and a commitment to care for Springvale Park. The Group has expressed a desire to increase the state of grounds maintenance in the Park, which had previously been awarded to an external contractor. The Group is passionate about the Park and desires to maintain it to a higher standard than the level of service outlined in the County's grass cutting contract.

The Proponent:

The Springvale Park Committee is a group of approximately a dozen local residents who have expressed interest in taking on formal responsibility for the care of the Park. Given their long ties to the community and the original Springvale Park Committee, their persistence in following up through multiple delays, and their ongoing desire to care for the Park, staff are confident in recommending them as new partners in the FPM program.

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. The FPM currently has 13 community groups operating public parks, baseball and soccer fields, and a disc golf course (within LaFortune Park) throughout the County for the benefit of residents and visitors.

The FPM Program ensures a fair, clear, and consistent approach to identifying and evaluating partnership opportunities and addresses processes related to both operating and capital matters as well as risk management and resource maximization. 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 and maintenance of the asset. The funding matrix—which was developed by staff from the Divisions of Community Development & Partnerships, Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations, Finance, and Legal & Support Services—uses County rates and standards for labour, equipment and supplies.

Risk Management:

As per the FPM, if an agreement is executed between the County and the Group, the Group will be covered for third party liability under the County's Municipal Liability Insurance Policy while performing activities in a volunteer capacity for the County.

The County, as the property owner, continues to be responsible for insurance related to the property and structures.

The Group will be responsible for providing its own insurance for equipment and contents (as applicable).

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Policy 2019-04 states that 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 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 recreational assets.

Staff have reviewed the request from the Springvale Park Committee in the context of the funding formula and have established an annual grant of \$4,940, proposed to be added to the 2023 Tax Supported Operating Budget as a Council-approved initiative. Due to timelines surrounding this report and the printing of the Draft 2023 Tax-Supported Operating Budget, this request appears as a New Initiative in the budget document but will be treated as a Council-approved initiative during budget deliberations, should the recommendations in this report be approved. The grant amount is for more than the most recent grass-cutting contract awarded by the County to an outside contractor, reflecting the Group's responsibility for more than just grass cutting (general maintenance, garbage removal, water haulage and garden upkeep) as well as allowances for equipment lifespan planning and replacement, and Park utilities. Approval of this grant will allow a reduction in grass-cutting contracted services by \$3,000.

The Draft 2023 Tax Supported Operating Budget includes \$241,270 for the Fields & Parks Management Program. Inclusion of this request will result in an increase of \$4,940. Taking into account the associated reduction in Contracted Services of \$3,000, the total levy impact of this initiative will be \$1,940.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

This request was reviewed and supported by staff in Community Development & Partnerships, Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations, Finance, and Legal & Support Services.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: Yes

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: Yes

Policy: No

REFERENCES:

1. [Fields and Parks Management Policy 2019-04](#)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map – Springvale Park.
2. Draft Memorandum of Understanding – Springvale Park Committee.