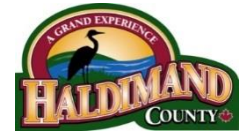

HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report PED-COM-10-2018 Community Partnership Program - Friends of LaFortune Park Disc Golf Installation



For Consideration by Council in Committee on May 15, 2018

OBJECTIVE:

To approve a request from the Friends of LaFortune Park to undertake, at LaFortune Park in Caledonia, the installation of an 18-hole Disc Golf Course for community recreation and socialization.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report PED-COM-10-2018 Community Partnership Program - Friends of LaFortune Park Disc Golf Installation be received;
2. AND THAT the request from the Friends of LaFortune Park Committee to undertake the installation of a Disc Golf course, at LaFortune Park in Caledonia, be approved;
3. AND THAT the total project budget of \$29,824 be approved based on the three-way funding contribution—as approved previously through Report PED-COM-10-2016 Re: Friends of LaFortune Park—of one-third each from the LaFortune Park Reserve Fund (\$9,941), the Community Partnership Capital Reserve (\$9,941) and community fund-raising (\$9,942);
4. AND THAT project funding and approval are conditional upon compliance with Policy 2011-01 and County installation standards, permits and processes;
5. AND THAT the revised budget as outlined in PED-COM-10-2018 be approved.

Prepared by: Katrina Schmitz, Community Partnership Liaison

Reviewed by: Sheila Wilson, CPRP, Manager, Community Development and Partnerships

Respectfully submitted: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, General Manager, Planning and Economic Development

Approved: Donald G. Boyle, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

LaFortune Park is a 106-acre property located along the Grand River west of Caledonia's downtown. The property was bequeathed to the municipality by owner Perry LaFortune when he died in 1969; as well, Mr. LaFortune established a Trust Fund to financially support capital projects related to the Park's continued use. Report PED-COM-10-2016 outlines the principles for the use of these funds, including a three-way funding arrangement—one-third each from community fund-raising, the Community Partnership Program (CPP) and the LaFortune Park Reserve Fund—for capital proposals which have been reviewed and supported through the CPP. In 2014, the Friends of LaFortune Park, a group of residents committed to ensuring the Park remained a municipal asset and to improving its amenities, was established.

The group has been meeting since 2014, developing a vision, mission, values and potential uses for the Park, keeping in mind Mr. LaFortune's commitment to environmental protection and education for the property. It has undertaken annual clean ups of the Park, rehabilitated a Pavilion, is currently constructing picnic tables and has been actively promoting the Park at events such as the Caledonia Fair and through community presentations. At this time, the group is proposing the installation of an 18-hole Disc Golf Course throughout the upper Park (north of Highway #54).

Disc Golf is a rapidly-growing low-cost recreational activity suitable for individuals and families of all ages and abilities. Participants travel around the region to play at different courses, creating a great tourism opportunity. Currently, there are more than 45 courses in Ontario, including three in Hamilton and others locally in Burlington, Brantford, Paris, Woodstock, Cambridge, Milton, Georgetown, Guelph, Kitchener and St. Catharines. LaFortune Park offers a unique—and desirable—Disc Golf experience given it combines open, naturalized spaces with treed areas.

The Friends of LaFortune Park group has been working with local residents/disc golf enthusiasts and representatives of the Ontario Disc Sports Association (ODSA) to develop the project, including a work and fund-raising plan. The proposal—with an estimated budget of \$29,824—has been reviewed by the CPP Staff Review Team, including extensive on-site work and consultation with the County's Forestry Project Manager and Facilities and Parks Operations staff. Staff are recommending approval and funding for this project based on the established policy of one-third fund-raising, one-third from the CPP Reserve and one-third from the LaFortune Park Trust Reserve.

BACKGROUND:

Haldimand County's Community Partnership Program (CPP) is intended to encourage and enhance strategic partnerships to the benefit of community stakeholders and the municipality, offering a simple, streamlined and customer-focused approach. The Program is intended to balance the rigor of the review process—necessary to ensure legitimate public interest issues are addressed—with flexibility and respect for the volunteer commitment of the groups.

Since 2011, more than fifty CPP projects have been approved and more than forty completed, leveraging almost \$1.8 million in community-raised funds to construct \$3.2 million in County enhancements.

The Friends of LaFortune Park is only a few years old; however, it has an extremely active and engaged membership of forty to fifty participants who meet monthly to develop and undertake activities related to the stewardship of the Park. The request from the group is for:

- (i) Approval to undertake this project on Haldimand County property;
- (ii) Capital funding to support the installation of a Disc Golf Course at upper LaFortune Park (Attachment 1) with related upset funding in the amount of \$9,941 from the CPP Capital Reserve, representing no more than 35% of the total budget of \$29,824; and
- (iii) Capital funding to support the project from the LaFortune Trust Reserve Fund to an upset amount of \$9,941, representing no more than 33.3% of the total project budget.

ANALYSIS:

The Proponent:

The Friends have developed a multi-year project plan, which was presented to Council through report PED-COM-13-2016. Since 2015, several objectives have already been initiated or completed, including:

- *Park Clean-Ups:* Working with County staff, the group has organized several park ‘clean-up’ days, using the opportunity not only to care for the Park but also encourage residents, families and visitors to familiarize themselves with this recreation asset;
- *Upper Pavilion Revitalization:* Through the County’s Community Partnership Program (CPP), the group received approval and funding to rehabilitate an existing pavilion (Attachment 2). The \$3,000 project was undertaken in the fall 2017 and, in the coming weeks, volunteers will be painting the structure;
- *Picnic Tables:* Again through the CPP, the Friends received approval to purchase/construct ten picnic tables for the Park at a cost of approximately \$3,000. These are anticipated to be installed in 2018; and
- *Promotion of the Park:* The group has done presentations to many service clubs and other organizations in the community since 2015 and has an active social media presence (Facebook) and promotional materials (brochures, banners). As well, the Friends have participated in a community booth at the Caledonia Fair in 2016 and 2017 and provide regular updates of activities to the Caledonia Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Friends have also worked to investigate partnership opportunities with interested groups such as local geocachers, birders, conservation groups and trail enthusiasts.

During the last three years the group has worked to build its capacity. The Disc Golf proposal represents the group’s most ambitious undertaking to date.

The Partners:

In spring 2017, the Friends of LaFortune Park were approached by local disc golf enthusiasts (the newly-formed Caledonia Disc Golf Association) with a proposal to consider installing a Disc Golf Course at LaFortune Park. These residents, who travel throughout southwestern Ontario to participate in the sport, felt the Park presented an ideal location for a course given its diverse, naturalized landscape and proximity between existing courses in the Hamilton/Niagara and Brantford/Cambridge areas.

The residents worked with staff from the Ontario Disc Sports Association (ODSA) to develop the proposal, providing the following details about the sport:

- The ODSA is recognized by the Government of Ontario (through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sports) as the Provincial Sports Organization (PSO) responsible for promoting the growth of disc sports in Ontario as well as facilitating programming and infrastructure development through fund-raising and community engagement;
- ODSA also provides sanctioning through “tour standards” for Ontario Cup events as well as leagues and clubs;
- Disc golf in Ontario has a built-in “Code of Conduct” that includes sportsmanship standards, respect for non-disc golfers and co-habitation with other park users;
- The sport is growing steadily, and ODSA estimates there are 30,000 disc golf players—both competitive and recreational—in the province;
- With a low barrier of entry and easy access to the sport for new players of all ages, disc golf is easy to learn and play, and participation demographics span from young children to seniors 80+ years of age; and
- It doesn’t require athleticism—instead rewarding strategy and coordination—and the ODSA reports that 15% of its competitive members are 50+ years of age.

Project Details:

Disc golf is played much like traditional golf; however, instead of a ball and club, players use a flying disc (much like a Frisbee). The golf disc is thrown from a tee area to a target/basket, which is the ‘hole’. As the player progresses down the fairway, he or she must make each consecutive

shot from the spot where the previous throw has landed. The variety of the trees, shrubs and terrain provide the strategic challenges for the golfer.

The Friends have spent considerable time working with County staff—including three walkthroughs of the Park and proposed course—to assess the following:

- Locations of the 18 holes on the course and their related proximity to private residences and other risk factors;
- Tee pads—which are an area of mulch—will be maintained and moved (if necessary) by Caledonia Disc Golf Association volunteers;
- Areas surrounding each hole and any risk factors; and
- Appropriate signage at the start of the course (including a course overview, instructions and rules of play and conduct, emergency contact information, etc.) and at each hole.

The Caledonia Disc Golf Association has indicated its willingness to be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and management of the Disc Golf Course in collaboration with the Friends of LaFortune Park and Haldimand County. Staff have indicated the potential for the Caledonia Disc Golf Association to become part of the County's Field Management Program in the future.

Need and Community Benefit:

Preliminary community feedback for the Disc Golf Course has been extremely positive. Several residents who have tried the sport elsewhere have now joined the Friends of LaFortune to support the project and the overall mandate of the group. The low cost and accessibility of the sport to a broad demographic has been favourably identified, as well as the opportunities for tourism promotion. (Players are known to travel extensively to other Disc Golf Courses and for tournaments and events.)

The ODSA—in its presentation to the Friends and County staff—highlighted a recent experience with the City of St. Catharines, which installed a municipal course as part of a park revitalization project. The City identified the following positive outcomes:

- Increased park use and a decline in the neighbourhood crime rate;
- The diversity and composition of the local club, which includes non-traditional athletes of all ages (junior players, men, women and seniors); and
- The inclusiveness and respectfulness in terms of ability (competitive and recreational players).

Project Review:

The proposal was reviewed by an interdepartmental team of County staff (the CPP Staff Review Team) and was favourably received as it meets the following CPP priorities and objectives:

- (i) Community Vibrancy and Healthy Community;
- (ii) Corporate Image and Efficient Government;
- (iii) Creates or maintains public infrastructure;
- (iv) Reduces the cost of government services by optimizing partnership resources; and
- (v) Capitalizes on the collective energies and expertise of participating groups.

The proposal was also reviewed by Haldimand County's Accessibility Advisory Committee and, although the Park and Disc Golf Course are not accessible, the Committee was supportive of the initiative and its inclusiveness in other areas (demographics, financially).

While the Staff Review Team was supportive of the proposal and activity, there was concern related to the anticipated increase in public attendance at the Park, particularly given LaFortune Park has been maintained to a passive level for the past 15 years. Specific concerns were discussed with the partners and addressed as follows:

Item	Details	Solution
Location of 'holes' along riverfront portion (south of Highway #54)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Originally considered within context of AODA Challenging given lack of pedestrian access from lower to upper Park (Highway #54 underpass floods; County doesn't want to encourage pedestrians to use it) Riverfront is busiest area for other Park users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All holes moved north of Highway #54
Proximity of two 'holes' to adjacent residences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both home owners are aware of proposal Both holes throw discs away from residences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise layout to create wider buffer between private property and Park
Condition of trees/foliage in area around 'holes'/fairways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of hazard trees within course area and related removals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arborist's report prepared to identify hazard trees in buffer zone Estimate to remove or prune hazardous trees is \$28,500 Of that, estimate \$24,000 worth of work to be conducted through County's Forestry Management operations and \$4,500 in-kind through volunteers supervised by staff
Condition/replacement of small 'bridge' along naturalized pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3' x 6' small 'bridge' across stream is unsafe/unsteady 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project is in the approved Capital Budget and this work will be completed in 2018 by Facilities and Parks Operations
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited upper Park parking at Onondaga Road Concerns related to increased public use with the addition of Disc Golf, especially for events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends of LaFortune and the Disc Golf group will monitor use in first year May require opening of Park in the future to allow parking inside gates Has operating implications
Management/maintenance of course and each hole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions regarding who will ensure ongoing condition and safety of tees and baskets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caledonia Disc Golf Association and Friends of LaFortune will be responsible for this Consider including the Caledonia Disc Golf group

Item	Details	Solution
		in the County's Field Management Program
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of the Park may require an increase in waste receptacles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner groups to monitor and report back Facilities and Parks Operations can add waste cans if needed
Moving Park from a passive classification to more active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased users in the Park may increase risk and liability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner groups and County to monitor and address any changes through annual budget process

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Policy No. 2011-01 states the Community Partnership Program (CPP) will encourage and actively support partnerships with not-for-profit community groups. Within the Community Capital Projects Grant Program, Council has the responsibility to approve community capital projects with an overall budget of greater than \$10,000.

The overall proposed budget for this project is \$29,824; the requested CPP funding of \$9,941 is in keeping with the Community Capital Projects grant funding limitation of 35% of the total project value.

Based upon the approved/recommended projects to date requiring funding from the Community Partnership Capital Reserve, there are sufficient funds available in the Reserve. Should this initiative be approved there remains approximately \$120,544 in the Community Partnership Capital Reserve which is unallocated.

In addition to Mr. LaFortune's bequest of the lands, his Will provided the County a residual interest in a Trust Fund, amounting to just over \$155,000 at this time. The LaFortune Park Reserve Fund was established in 2016. In order to expedite the Disc Golf project, the Friends of LaFortune Park have requested approval to access this Reserve Fund. The project and the requested funding of \$9,941 meet the criteria of the Reserve Fund—approved through PED-COM-10-2016—which requires a proposal be assessed through the CPP process in order to be eligible for up to one-third funding from the Reserve Fund towards that project.

The CPP policy requires all community funding for Council-approved projects be in place with the County or secured/confirmed with the applicable community group prior to the start of any on-site work. The Friends of LaFortune Park and its partners intend to begin fund-raising for their share of the project (\$9,942) upon approval of the request.

As a result of the proposed project, the following capital budget amendment is required:

	Current Approved Budget	Proposed Revised Budget
Expenditures:		
LaFortune Park Disc Golf Installation	\$0	\$29,824
Total Expenditures:	\$0	\$29,824
Financing:		
Community Contribution (33.3%)	\$0	\$9,942
Community Partnership Capital Reserve (33.3%)	\$0	\$9,941
LaFortune Trust Reserve Fund (33.3%)	\$0	\$9,941
Total Financing:	\$0	\$29,824

In addition to the funding required for the requested rehabilitation, the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) reporting standards require the County to record the fair market value of contributed assets. This enhancement will be amortized over the estimated life of the associated asset for accounting purposes.

Ongoing additional operating costs related to the Disc Golf course (inspections, maintenance and repairs) will be the responsibility of the Friends of LaFortune Park and its partners (Caledonia Disc Golf Association) on the project. As well, Haldimand County’s Facilities and Parks Operations Division staff will be available to provide some ongoing consultation (primarily related to tree management) and support. Future capital replacement or repair of assets—through a partnership with the community groups—will impact the County’s existing long-range capital funding plan.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

This application was assessed and supported by the Community Partnership Program’s Staff Review Team, which is comprised of staff from all County Divisions. Staff from the Facilities and Parks Operations Division conducted multiple site visits/inspections of the location to assess the condition of the Park in relation to the proposed Disc Golf installation and any required risk management mitigation.

The proposal was also reviewed by the County’s Accessibility Advisory Committee.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: Yes

Policy: No

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Disc Golf Course – LaFortune Park, Caledonia.
2. Park Pavilion Rehabilitation Project – Before and After Photos.