



Township of Blandford-Blenheim

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To: Fran Bell, CAO **Date:** October 25, 2011
From: Ken Wood, Manager, Community Services **Number:** CS-11-06
Subject: Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Council Meeting Date: November 2, 2011 **File:**

Purpose:

To provide Council with information regarding proposal for the Community Services Manager to facilitate a community process to develop a Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Background:

It is obvious that development is moving forward within the department as shown in projects such as playgrounds, the skateboard park, ball diamond renovations and upcoming arena and hall renovations.

As the Township has accomplished many successful projects of which to be proud of, it is also a time to take the opportunity to lead the community in a Master Planning exercise to identify the wishes of residents for the future direction of parks and recreation services. Recreation is an all encompassing, ever evolving, part of our culture and lifestyle and it is important for our community to review the direction and make recommendations for future development.

The Manager has experience in facilitating such a plan (somewhat different than a consultant) in which the community builds the Master Plan. The result is community "ownership" to the Master Plan, having a keen interest in guiding the Community Services Department and Council in the strategic planning process.

Analysis/Discussion:

Firstly, a plan allows us to review the past, look into the future, and examine our community from the inside. The exercise of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan allows a community to openly discuss issues and solutions for which they may otherwise not have had the opportunity to voice. The Master Plan contributes to the overall strategic direction and goals of the community contributing to a healthy future.

Typically, communities hire consultants, developing a lengthy document, which tends to sit on the shelf at a very high cost. The Manager believes and has experienced the developing of a "made by the community plan" administered by a committee of volunteer residents. The process, facilitated by the Manager and presented by the committee, exhaustively engages with residents, organizations, businesses and politicians in order to ensure the plan will be embraced by the community providing facilities and services identified and supported by Council.

The Process:

- 1) **Project Methodology** will be present to Council at its December meeting giving Council the opportunity to add or remove items and confirm timelines.
- 2) **Time Frame** for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is expected to be completed in one (1) year.
- 3) **Recommended that \$3,000** be set aside in the 2012 budget in order to cover associated costs for publishing documents, advertising and committee expenses.
- 4) **Recommended that 8 residents** would be selected to become the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee. Residents would be asked to apply to become part of the committee and further, the Manager and CAO would recommend the future members of the committee to Council for approval.

It is important that committee members capture the differences within our population; differences in age, gender, length of residency and general recreation (in the broadest sense) and health interests. Involvement in recreation or sport interest groups is not recommended as criteria to be on the committee.

- 5) **Respected Independence.** Also of importance, is the ability of committee to do their work independently of Council. Regular reporting to Council on behalf of the committee to coincide with the methodology will be respected however it is recommended that no Council Member be appointed to this committee. This allows the committee to be truly advisory in nature and submit a plan that represents no political influence. Council like other important stakeholders will be consulted to give input into the plan.

Recommendation:

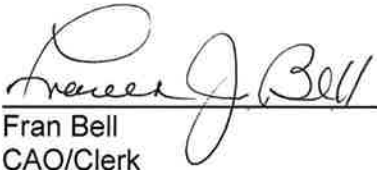
That Report CS-11-06 be received as information;

And further, that Council approves the process outlined in the report in principle, pending agreement of the methodology to be presented at the December meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:



Ken Wood
Manager, Community Services



Fran Bell
CAO/Clerk