



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Parks & Recreation Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Paul Anthony, Director Parks & Recreation Services

Date to Council: November 13, 2018

Report Number: PRS-2018-19

Subject: Upgrades to Lacasse Ball Park

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Project # 1 - Construction of a practice infield outside of the left field fence at Lacasse Park, as shown on attachment #1 be **approved**;

AND THAT Project # 2 - Lacasse Upgrades be **presented** through the 2019 Parks Lifecycle Budget for Council consideration.

Background

The Tecumseh Baseball Club (Club) has operated the Lacasse diamond facility since approximately 1947 on behalf of the Town of Tecumseh and, through the efforts of its members and volunteers, has provided the meticulous attention required on a daily basis to maintain the facility. In addition, the Club has provided a quality standard of playing field second to none in the area. The Club is a very important part of the Tecumseh community.

The Club operates the facility through a Lease Agreement that grants the Club the right to use the baseball field, grandstand, clubhouse and related facilities in the Bert Lacasse Baseball Field, in the Town of Tecumseh.

The Club - through the Agreement - is responsible, at their cost, to operate and maintain the facility, including the diamond, turf, washrooms, concession and all ancillary buildings, and to cover utility costs.

In 2013 the Club, in partnership with the Town, applied for and was successful in receiving grant funding through the Federal Infrastructure Improvement Fund for renovations and improvements to the facility. The upgrades included new field lighting, expansion of the outfield perimeter fencing, installation of a warning track around the outfield and the construction of a facility storage shed. The total cost of the project was \$414,990, funded by \$166,660 from the Federal Infrastructure Grant and \$248,330 from the community (Tecumseh Baseball Club \$85,000 and the Town of Tecumseh \$163,330). Due to financial restraints the Town funded the Club's \$85,000 and the Club is repaying through a 10-year annual contribution of \$8,500.

The Agreement also calls for the Town to pay the monthly utilities (water, hydro), and the Club reimburses the Town for the full cost of the utilities in December each year. The average cost for the utilities is \$11,000 annually.

Over the past 4 years, the Lacasse ball diamond usage has increased through a partnership with the Town, the Tecumseh Baseball Club, and St Clair College. It has become the home to the St. Clair College Saints Varsity Baseball Club fall season, as well as expanding to include St. Clair's summer Collegiate baseball league program know as the Tecumseh Green Giants.

Comments

Over the years, the Club has, through a combination of volunteers and summer students, been able to maintain the playing field to the standards the community and players using the field have been accustomed to.

With the increased spring/summer play and practice sessions of the Club and College Green Giant program, along with the expansion of the fall playing season to accommodate the St. Clair College team, the field has non-stop usage from April to late October and has shown consistent increased wear, specifically on the infield. In addition, with the increased play, the number of park visitors has also gone up, and as such necessitated increased maintenance to other areas within the facility grounds to keep them in an acceptable condition.

With the increased usage of the playing field, the cost to maintain the facility has risen, and with the current financial commitments, the club is finding it difficult to maintain operations.

It must be noted that the St. Clair program currently commits financial support to the facility - they purchased and paid for the new scoreboard, updated the clubhouse, as well as providing the Club with an agreed upon annual financial contribution to help maintain their maintenance cost of using the facility.

Administration has had an opportunity to meet with the Club President to review their current financial position and review possible partnerships through maintenance and facility upgrades aimed at lowering the current operating cost of the field and property maintenance, and still allow the Club to provide the quality standard for the facility that the baseball community has been accustomed to. As a result, the following projects are proposed:

Project #1 – Construction of a Practice Infield

- Design and construct an infield practice diamond just outside of the left field fence, shown on attachment # 1. The field would only be used for infield practice. It was reviewed and agreed upon by the Club and administration that this area would still be used and accessible during the annual Corn Festival.

The cost to design and develop this infield would be at the expense of the Club and St. Clair College.

Project #2 – Lacasse Upgrades

- Areas of constant heavy foot traffic include the batting cage, warm-up pitching areas, area behind home plate and on deck circles. These areas are consistently in need of turf maintenance and repair.

A local contractor has been in contact with the Club regarding some artificial turf they recently removed from one of their facilities and has proposed to sell approximately 8,000 sq. ft. of material. Members of the Club have had the opportunity to view the material and note the artificial turf is in good shape and could be installed to help lower costs and maintain the high traffic areas outlined above.

The material could also be used in other locations within the Town, i.e. goalmouth areas for soccer fields that consistently become worn down and require repairs.

The purchase of the material would be at the expense of the Town and the labour cost to install it at the Lacasse ball diamond would be a partnership between the Club and St. Clair College.

- Currently there are three (3) locations with portable bleachers that sit on stone bases, and there are a number of maintenance issues with the stone base. They continually become overgrown with weeds which requires constant maintenance, the stone base does not provide a consistent, even base for the bleachers and currently they are not accessible. It is recommended that the stone base be replaced with a cement pad and that the pad be extended beyond the current stone base footprint to allow for accessible viewing of the playing field.
- With the development of the practice diamond it is recommended that a fencing extension be installed from the current left field fence to just short of the Lacasse Park sign as shown on attachment # 1. The fencing would stop any errant balls thrown on the practice diamond and would act as a permanent piece of the Corn Festival. Normally a temporary fence is put in place to control entrance to the park during the festival.

As the new cement pads & fencing would become Town assets it is recommended that the cost to complete this portion of the project would be at the Town's expense.

As a result of Administration's review, it is recommended that both projects be undertaken as a three-way partnership between the Town, the Club, and St. Clair College.

Consultations

Financial Services
Tecumseh Thunder Baseball Club
St Clair College

Financial Implications

Project #1 - Construction of a practice infield does not have any financial implication to the Town as the Club and St Clair College will fund this project

Project # 2 - Upgrades to Lacasse Park is estimated to cost \$30,000, which will be presented to Council for consideration as part of the 2019 Parks Capital Lifecycle projects report.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2017-18 Strategic Priorities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that the Town of Tecumseh's current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of the Town of Tecumseh's plans and priorities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steward the Town's "continuous improvement" approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate the Town's leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

Communications

Not applicable

Website

Social Media

News Release

Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Paul Anthony, RRFA
Director Parks & Recreation Services

Reviewed by:

Luc Gagnon, CPA, CA, BMath
Director Financial Services & Treasurer

Recommended by:

Tony Haddad, MSA, CMO, CPFA
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
1	Lacasse field proposed upgrades