

Re: Shawanoe Park Playground Equipment Reduction

To Town Council,

I would like to thank members of Council and Administration who took the time to speak with me regarding the reduced playground equipment in Shawanoe Park, especially Deputy Mayor Joe Bachetti and Ms. Beth Gignac. Your time and consideration are greatly appreciated.

Nearly six weeks have passed since this issue arose and I have consistently been in contact with members of Council and Administration seeking a solution to these issues having occurred without prior public notice or consultation. First the removal of the existing equipment, the second installing new equipment amounting to a fraction what existed.

I have attempted address this in a simple and straightforward manner and was relieved when early conversations showed clear acknowledgement of the reduction in services, and a desire to find solutions. This unfortunately changed during the Council meeting in October when the question brought forward to council was changed from how to solve to issue, sidestepping the problem. Further, subsequent phone messages went largely ignored, or the problem dismissed when calls were returned, and my request to address Council on the matter was rejected. As well, my requests for further information have been delayed though legal processes, and the Town has denied the information required to address the issue with the necessary facts. I am aware that one piece of equipment is on backorder and one toddler slide was ordered. I am also aware that despite requests as to the nature of the equipment, no information has been provided aside from the acknowledgment that they would be inadequate to restore the park.

Per my recent conversations, some members of council and administration have tried to cast these requests as unreasonable, and I would like to state them clearly. Myself and others in the community have a reasonable expectation that services provided by the Town be maintained. The playground equipment at Shawanoe Park needs to be restored to at least the scope and scale of what was removed. Second, this should be included for work early next year so that it will be available for the 2024 season.

Based on my interactions in recent weeks, I do not believe Council intends to restore the park. I would encourage each member to consider how they are affecting the youngest members of our community, and to use next council meeting to have an honest and forthright discussion of how to solve this issue and provide clear directives to Administration to address it immediately and report back to council publicly on its progress. Or conversely, to clearly state that removal of playground equipment is intentional and represents the values Council.

Given this negative experience, I would have to assume that further silence is approval and that Council intends to ignore the issue, delay further discussion, and hope it fades in the minds of residents.

In closing I will point out that acceptance of this on the part of the public is greater than that of a bumpy road or standing water. It is watching children unable to find a place to slide, swing or play, as they did. I know any parent would find intolerable, and further public engagement will be sought unless this is clearly addressed on November 14th.

Sincerely,

Adam Mourad