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Item No. 13.1.1
Halifax and West Community Council
September 13, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of Halifax and West Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed
Brad Anguish, Director of Parks & Recreation

DATE: August 15, 2016

SUBJECT: Weekend Bicycle Access to Point Pleasant Park

ORIGIN

December 16, 2015 Motion of Halifax & West Community Council:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Watts THAT Halifax and West Community Council request a staff report to examine the possibility of weekend bicycle access to Point Pleasant Park and to discuss the matter with the Active Transportation Advisory Committee.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

By-law P-600 – Respecting Municipal Parks

Vehicles in Parks

10. (1) No person shall operate any vehicle within a park except wheelchairs, bicycles, Municipal or utility vehicles, unless otherwise posted, or by permission.
- (2) No person shall ride a horse or bicycle in a park except on paths therefor.
- (3) No person shall ride a horse or a bicycle within a park where a sign prohibiting the same has been posted.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax and West Community Council direct staff to:

- (1) Undertake a public survey using the Halifax Opinion Panel regarding weekend bicycle access at Point Pleasant Park.
- (2) Launch a pilot project in the spring/summer of 2017 if the survey results support weekend bicycle access.

BACKGROUND

Prior to amalgamation in 1996, the Point Pleasant Park was managed by a Park Commission under the terms of a 999 year lease. In 1866, the British government offered to lease the then military reserve to the City of Halifax for 1 shilling per year. An act to incorporate the directors of a park was passed as an act of legislature on May 7, 1866 and termed the "Directors of Point Pleasant Park Act". This gave the elected board the power to accept financial donations for the park, hire the superintendent and other workers, make park regulations or by-laws, and appoint gate keepers.

On September 1, 1971 all previous regulations were repealed and replaced, many of which are still enacted today; one of which is "No person shall ride a bicycle in the park on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday".

After 1996, the board managing Point Pleasant Park was reformed as the Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee, and the ultimate management of the Park became the responsibility of the Municipality.

The purpose for this long standing rule is to mitigate any possible injuries, collisions, and/or conflicts among users during peak volume times. Point Pleasant Park has historically seen considerable use on weekend and holidays as there are much larger volumes of walkers, runners and off-leash dogs present during this time as opposed to weekday hours.

On November 5 2015, the Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee recommended that the Halifax and West Community Council request a staff report regarding weekend bicycle access to the park. On December 16, 2015, Halifax & West Community Council passed a motion requesting a staff report to examine the possibility of weekend bicycle access to Point Pleasant Park and for staff to discuss the matter with the Active Transportation Advisory Committee.

DISCUSSION

On June 16, 2016, Parks and Recreation staff attended the Active Transportation Advisory Committee meeting to discuss weekend access to bicycles in Point Pleasant Park. The Committee was generally in favour of the possibility of bicycle access on weekends citing that there are street bike lanes that terminate at the park and that this access would allow weekend cyclists to continue cycling through the park.

The Committee also embraced the shared use trail concept, but cautioned that specific sections of the park may need to be made available for bicycles (only) on the weekends to avoid any potential issues with other park users during the busy weekend hours.

Engaging the community for feedback on weekend bicycle access is very important. This feedback will help staff to understand any concerns and/or suggestions the public may have in this matter. This can be achieved through the Halifax Opinion Panel. Currently, staff can reach approximately six hundred people who indicated they visited Point Pleasant Park in the past year. From this group, staff can solicit input regarding weekend bicycle access through survey.

If the survey supports weekend bicycle access, staff recommend that a pilot project be launched during the summer of 2017. The parameters of the pilot would be based on references, concerns, and suggestions as indicated by the survey consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As requested by Halifax & West Community Council, the matter was discussed with the Active Transportation Advisory Committee on June 16, 2016.

The survey would be conducted through the Halifax Opinion Panel.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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