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Item No. 13.1.5
Halifax & West Community Council
November 13, 2019

TO: Chair and Members of Halifax & West Community Council

ORIGINAL SIGNED

SUBMITTED BY:

Denise Schofield, Director, Parks & Recreation

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 5, 2019

SUBJECT: **Formal Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan**

ORIGIN

- May 3, 2018 Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee motion

MOVED by Ian Austen, seconded by Susan Summerby-Murray
THAT Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee recommends that Halifax and West Community Council request a formal Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan be prepared for use by the Committee in fulfilling its mandate.
PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- November 14, 2018 Halifax and West Community Council motion:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Cleary
THAT Halifax and West Community Council:
Request a formal Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan be prepared for use by the Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee in fulfilling its mandate. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

Section 79A

- (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if
- (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax & West Community Council accept the proposed Multi-Year Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan, as outlined in Table 1, and direct the Chief Administrative Officer to work with the Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee on its implementation.

BACKGROUND

The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee (PPPAC) was established in 1996 to advise and assist Council in planning and managing Point Pleasant Park. While HRM retains control of staff, budget and daily operations, the PPPAC members provide advice and guidance in terms of Park planning and management decisions.

The mission of the PPPAC is to ensure public participation in the administration and planning for Point Pleasant Park (PPP). Its mandate includes, but is not limited to, the following tasks:

- Advising the municipality on the management and evolution of the Park;
- Applying the highest standards in all aspects of Park stewardship;
- Assisting in preparing and implementing the master plan, the management plan, and the operational plan, soliciting public input, and communicating plans and decisions to the public about the plan's implementation;
- Monitoring regular Park operations regarding ecological management practices;
- Advising on park-related by-laws and regulations; and
- Performing ceremonial functions.

Following Hurricane Juan in 2003, a design competition was held for the Park's restoration. Through consultation, it was clear that the public and HRM wished for the Park to remain natural, that facilities for organized activities should not be added, and that the forest be regenerated and managed in an ecologically sustainable manner.

The resulting Point Pleasant Park Comprehensive Plan's vision was to improve the quality and resilience of the Park by accomplishing several objectives. To effectively implement these objectives, a prioritized approach was developed based on the assessment of urgency and, secondly, opportunity. The order of priorities was:

- 1) Forest Regeneration: ensuring the forest is resilient and sustainable;
- 2) Cultural Assets: protect, celebrate and interpret important resources;
- 3) Infrastructure: make incremental improvements to existing assets;
- 4) Programing: leverage opportunities to bring a broad audience of people into the Park.

In 2015, Halifax and West Community Council requested an update on the PPP Comprehensive Plan. As restoration of a park is a long-term endeavor, it is important to regularly review the implementation of the Plan to date. The subsequent report addressed several priorities as they were presented in the Comprehensive Plan, with comments on the advancement of each priority. The report also included future actions that were required for each priority.

On May 3, 2018, the PPPC passed a motion recommending that Halifax & West Community Council request a formal Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan be prepared for use by the Committee in fulfilling its mandate.

DISCUSSION

In terms of an Operations Plan, the Comprehensive Plan for PPP is the best starting point since that plan is well established and includes many different elements that the PPPAC have asked about during Advisory Committee meetings, particularly around infrastructure and incremental improvements to existing assets.

Forest Regeneration

The highest priority in the Comprehensive Plan was given to the forest restoration. Extensive damage from Hurricane Juan, the removal of 2500 trees in 2001 to help eradicate the brown spruce longhorn beetle, and an ice storm in early 2003, had left the forest in poor shape.

A Forest Work Plan was developed in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and was finalized in November of 2008. This plan identifies the parks forest condition post-Hurricane Juan and provides recommendations to direct future growth and meet several of the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. It gives special consideration to archaeological and wetland areas, as well as providing management options for dealing with non-native invasive species.

Since adoption of the Forest Work Plan, several forest restoration projects have been completed:

- From 2008 – 2009, over 100,000 seedlings have been planted in areas where trees were not naturally re-growing, exceeding the total number of trees that were lost during Hurricane Juan.
- In 2010, several large trees were removed from fortifications to help reduce further damage to historical assets and to prepare for restoration projects.
- Trials for removal of invasive plants, specifically multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), were conducted and information gained used to develop control strategies.

Natural regeneration of the forest has been impressive and has reached a point where stand enhancement thinning (SET) is required to allow trees to become more open in their growth habit and to be more wind firm. A secondary benefit of this thinning is to eliminate exotic and invasive tree species.

Stand enhancement thinning (SET) will be done in two phases:

- Phase 1 - will space the trees 2.5 – 3.0 meters apart, while incorporating the removal of all non-native invasive species that have regrown numerous stems from suckering. These species will be thinned down to 3 – 5 main stems (this work was just completed) and will require successive thinning in future years.
- Phase 2 - will commence approximately 5 years following Phase 1. This thinning will focus on the trees that were reduced to 3 – 5 stems and will thin to a final single dominant stem. Any non-native invasive species that may have been missed or are re-growing will also be targeted.

Given the scope of the work and the size of the areas that require thinning, the work will be done through a 10-year plan, as follows:

YEAR	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
2018	Survey and data collection Removal of multiflora rose Planting of disturbed sites
2019	Thinning Phase 1 (10 hectares) Removal of multiflora rose Selective removal of mature invasive trees
2020	Thinning Phase 1 (10 hectares) Completion of multiflora rose removal Selective removal of mature invasive trees Planting of disturbed sites
2021	Thinning Phase 1 (10 hectares) Removal of Japanese knotweed Selective removal of mature invasive trees
2022	Removal of Japanese knotweed Selective removal of mature invasive trees Planting of disturbed sites
2023	Removal of Japanese knotweed Selective removal of mature invasive trees

2024	Removal of crusher dust Selective removal of mature invasive trees Planting of disturbed sites
2025	Thinning Phase 2 (10 hectares) Removal of crusher dust Selective removal of mature invasive trees
2026	Thinning Phase 2 (10 hectares) Removal of crusher dust Selective removal of mature invasive trees
2027	Thinning Phase 2 (10 hectares) Removal of crusher dust Selective removal of mature invasive trees Planting of disturbed sites
2028	Final survey/result report

Hurricane Dorian made landfall in Halifax on September 7th with heavy rain and sustained winds upwards of 155 km/h. The storm did have an impact on the forested areas of Point Pleasant Park but nothing to the extent of the loss of 2500 trees during Hurricane Juan. Parks' staff removed 15 large trees in the aftermath of the storm in various locations throughout the park that were blocking some of the main trail ways. An additional 80 to 100 smaller trees in the interior were also damaged by the hurricane and needed to be removed. This will not impact the above noted forest regeneration plan. It should also be noted that the impact to the shoreline was more significant than with Hurricane Juan, with erosion and debris being deposited on Sailor's Memorial Way. Work has been completed to reinstate the area.

Cultural Assets

The shoreline dominates and defines a large portion of the boundary of PPP. Accepting that erosion is inevitable and should be expected; stabilization of the shoreline should only be undertaken in areas where cultural features are or are at risk to be compromised and/or pose a safety threat to the public. In areas where cultural features are compromised, they should be removed or entombed after all the assets are recorded.

The four areas of the shoreline that may require some attention include:

- Black Rock Beach to Bonaventure Anchor – the most heavily used section of beach, less vulnerable than other areas of the shoreline as it is somewhat protected from wave action.
- Bonaventure Anchor to Point Pleasant Park Bluff – the most vulnerable section of the shoreline as it faces the prevailing winds. The Point Pleasant Park Battery is at the highest risk of structural failure and consideration should be reviewing the need for studies, before removing or entombing.
- Point Pleasant Park Bluff to Purcell's Landing – this area received extensive remedial attention with rock reinforcement following Hurricane Juan. The east and west sections are affected by differing wave action. Recording of archaeological assets, followed by stabilization are needed.
- Northwest Arm from Purcell's Landing to Chain Rock Battery – a rocky section with bedrock cliffs that mostly requires improved drainage under the existing road. The area near the Chain Rock Battery requires special attention due to the proximity cultural resources significant to the Mi'kmaq community.

The fortifications within PPP represent a rich mixture of historic sites within the forest landscape. These historic features, among 240 culturally significant assets identified from archeological exploration following Hurricane Juan, require monitoring to ensure the conservation and preservation considerations are met.

The creation of a detailed inventory of the cultural resources in PPP is a high priority as detailed in the Comprehensive Plan. Sites of special significance to the Mi'kmaq community, fortifications like Fort Ogilvie, Chain Rock Battery and Point Pleasant Park Battery, the Prince of Wales Tower and other historical

architecture must be part of that inventory, evaluated to understand the significance, consider whether to conserve or preserve and then monitored once the conservation or preservation objectives are met.

Infrastructure & Programming

The Comprehensive Plan describes a development plan which would improve the visual and practical aspects of the Park. The defining characteristics of these assets enhance the natural character of the location by using material related to the natural environment; stone, wood and steel.

The Development Plan addresses entrances, pathways (primary and secondary), a multi-purpose building, wayfinding, signage, lighting and park furnishings. All three entrances of the park require clear definition of when visitors enter the Park. Recent upgrades to the Lower Parking Lot have accomplished many of the goals for the Harbour Entrance, including traffic calming and enhanced greenspace.

Pathways are made up of main paths (upper and lower loops throughout the park), secondary paths (connecting upper and lower loops), minor paths (made up of various materials depending on location) and special paths (potential new paths through areas of interest that are not now visible). Wherever possible, pathways should be redesigned for accessibility, and consideration should be given to increasing existing pathways to bring back views and traditional circulation patterns.

The Greenbank Multi-Purpose Building is a proposed structure that would serve as a potential park and city information center, interpretation center, park office, café, space for recreational programming theatre space, all with access to full accessible rest rooms.

Wayfinding throughout the Park can be provided through brochures or guided tours via the recently redesigned PPP Story Map that will be released in the fall of 2019. Signage should be continued within the visual identity of the park using natural elements with an interpretive aspect that will tell both the ecological and cultural stories found within the Park.

Park furnishings are intended to enhance the park experience by providing places to stop, rest and gather. Furnishings will be built with material appropriate to the Park landscape and in keeping with the visual identity of the Park.

Next Steps

Similar to the Summary of Project Phasing found in the Comprehensive Plan, a proposed Multi-Year Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan (see Table 1), is based on recommendations and discussion between the PPPAC and Parks staff. The items identified below may be combined or re-ordered based on input from the PPPAC. It is recommended that Community Council accept the proposed Operations Plan and direct the Chief Administrative Officer to work with the PPPAC on its implementation.

Table 1.0 – Multi-Year Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan

YEAR	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
2020	Park Identification Signage & Informational Signage – update park ID signage to reflect corporate branding, review and improve park rules and regulations signage to enhance the visitor experience.
2021	Wayfinding – assess and improve park wayfinding signage to improve the visitor experience.
2022	Park Furnishings – introduction and upgrading of existing furnishings, including benches, tables, garbage bins and bike racks.
2023	Lighting – upgrading park lighting to be dark - sky compliant and energy efficient while in fitting with the overall design of the Park.
2024	Pathways – Primary – upper and lower loops in the Park, consider accessibility and redefining the edges with a hard surface.

2025	Pathways – Secondary – connecting the primary pathways, consider redefining the edges as material has crept into the park. Also look at historical pathways that fit in this category that have been lost and consider re-establishing.
2026	Pathways – Minor & Special – consideration to developing tertiary pathways within a more wooded, natural environment using a bio-degradable material to increase the educational experience.
2027	Pedestrian Entrances – assess and consider upgrades to encourage pedestrian traffic into the Park.
2028	Gateways & Parking Lot Entrances – upgraded to create distinctive doorways into the Park.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Any projects requiring expenditures that result from the development of a Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan are subject to approval by Regional Council through established budgeting processes.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks considered rate low. To determine this, consideration was given to financial, operational and reputational risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive community engagement was undertaken as part of the development of the Point Pleasant Park Comprehensive Plan.

At the time of drafting this report, the PPPAC had not held a regular meeting since June 20, 2019. The intent is to update the PPPAC at the fall 2019 meeting and get input on the proposed Multi-Year Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with the recommendation in this report. Many of the actions outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent Operations Plan will help to mitigate erosion and improve the health of the park.

ALTERNATIVES

Halifax & West Community Council may choose not to accept the proposed Multi-Year Point Pleasant Park Operations Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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