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Item No. 12.1.2
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee
January 16, 2020

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development
Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Denise Schofield, Director of Parks and Recreation

Original Signed

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 13, 2019

SUBJECT: **Lake Banook Water Sport Park and the 2022 Canoe Sprint World
Championships**

ORIGIN

February 21, 2019 Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee Meeting Motion:

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Outhit
THAT the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee request a staff
report to consider the development of a long-term Masterplan for a Water Sport Park at Lake
Banook in partnership with Canoe Kayak Canada and stakeholders. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes
(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 Community Planning and Economic Standing Committee recommend that Regional
Council:

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to plan for the parkland improvements as outlined in this report
in support of the 2022 ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships (Canoe '22) and general public
parkland use; and
2. Assess the need for a new Master Plan for Lake Banook, that would include all stakeholders, after
Canoe '22.

BACKGROUND

Lake Banook is a well-known local recreation hub and world class paddling event hosting venue located within the Regional Centre of Dartmouth (Map 1). The lake is home to several paddling clubs, municipal parks, trails, private and commercial properties. It is recognized as being ideal for holding international paddling events, which has included the 1989 World Junior Canoe Sprint Championships; the 1997 and 2009 Canoe Sprint World Championships; and will be one of the sites for the upcoming 2020 North American Indigenous Games. Also, the National (Canadian) Sprint Canoe Kayak Championships are planned to be hosted on Lake Banook in 2021.

In 2018, Lake Banook was selected as the venue for the ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships (Canoe '22) that will be held in August 2022. It will feature five days of formal competition with athletes and families from 70 countries along with thousands of anticipated spectators.

In February 2019, the organizing committee for Canoe '22, the Canoe '22 Society, made a presentation to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED) about the preparation of a Water Sports Park Master Plan. The purpose of this document was intended to consider ways in which Lake Banook could be improved as a 'water sports park', a venue for regular high-level paddling competitions. CPED subsequently passed a motion requesting information about the preparation of such a plan, which is the subject of this report.

DISCUSSION

Existing Master Plan and 2009 World Championships

The last time the world championships were held at Lake Banook was in 2009. In preparation for that event, in 2007, the municipality prepared the Sullivan's Pond and Lake Banook Master Plan. It involved substantial public consultation and was subsequently approved by Regional Council to serve as a guiding document for venue enhancements and general public parkland improvements for the 2009 championships. With this, the municipality undertook substantial capital improvements, including:

- assistance with lane installations and related technology improvements;
- improvements to Silvers Hill as a spectator venue along with stone wall and plaza enhancements;
- boardwalk and pathways along Prince Albert Road;
- the installation of public art;
- improvements to Oakwood Park, including driveways and fences;
- improvements to Birch Cove Park, including driveways, washrooms, shoreline restoration, and stone wall construction to establish terraced areas; and
- overall landscaping improvements.

With these capital projects, the venue for the 2009 championships included:

- the full use of Oakwood Park for the racing and operations of the event;
- an athlete's village in Birch Cove Park, comprised of tents for the participants that were spread throughout the park;
- a return lane comprised of docks extending from the Judges Tower;
- bleacher seating at the Mic Mac Aquatic Club and along Prince Albert Road;
- the closure of Prince Albert Road as a venue and media centre; and
- seating at Silvers Hill.

The event was well attended by participant countries with thousands of spectators and by all accounts it was highly successful.

Canoe '22 Event and Water Sports Park Master Plan

The municipality is currently supporting Canoe '22 through Regional Council's approval of a grant award amount of \$800,000 through the Marketing Levy Special Events Grants program, administered through AO 2014-020-GOV to be paid over 3 budget cycles, pending Regional Council's approval of future budgets. The first payment of \$400,000 has been made through the current 2019/20 budget. The funding is for the event itself, which will also be supplemented by the involvement of municipal event staff in a coordinating role along with other municipal services.

In addition to the event funding, the Atlantic Division Canoe Kayak Canada (ADCKC), which functions as a training centre and key focal point for Canoe '22, is located on municipal land (34 Boathouse Lane) and has previously received a less than market value lease along with tax relief for non-profit organizations. A new lease agreement for ADCKC was approved by Regional Council on November 26th and considers any enlargements or improvements that the organization may wish to make to this facility. Aside from this, the municipality contributes annual funding of over \$36,000 to the ADCKC for outdoor facility maintenance. It is also known that the organization hopes to replace or improve the Judges Tower. The Canoe '22 Society and other affiliated organizations have sought funding assistance from other levels of government for these facilities.

Municipal Capital Improvements

Following its presentation to CPED, the Canoe '22 Society proceeded to develop a Water Sports Park Master Plan. This included some stakeholder consultation, but the resulting Master Plan has largely been recognized as an internal document and has not been released publicly by the Canoe '22 Society. The majority of the Master Plan concentrates upon potential enhancements around the lake for public access and venue improvements.

In consultation with the Canoe '22 Society, staff has reviewed the Master Plan and focused on improvements to municipal assets that are readily able to be implemented and are necessary to support the 2022 event.¹ From this, the following are viewed as potential municipal capital projects:

Silvers Hill

Silvers Hill has been a spectator's venue with a concrete grandstand and general lawn seating. However, the grandstand is in disrepair and much could be done to improve the site. As previously identified in the 2007 Sullivan's Pond and Lake Banook Master Plan, there are opportunities to create terraced seating that can be incorporated with the topography of the hill. While this can serve as spectator seating for Canoe '22 and be a legacy for other future paddling events, there may be opportunities for it to be used for concerts or other gatherings that could be held with the periodic closure of Prince Albert Road. This has been done in the past but improved terraced seating may lead to renewed interest in this area for such events. In addition to Silvers Hill, assessments of the boardwalk along Prince Albert Road would be undertaken for possible improvements.

Birch Cove Park Improvements

With the Canoe '22 event, Birch Cove Park is intended to be used again for an athletes and para-athletes village. The creation of level areas for tents and potential pathway improvements are envisioned and would be assessed. In addition, Canoe '22 is considering the installation of a temporary return lane that could provide a temporary pedestrian connection between the Judges Tower/Oakwood Park and Birch Cove Park. This would be Canoe '22's responsibility, but aspects such as the land connections would be coordinated with the municipality.

¹ Subsequent to the completion of this report, the Canoe '22 Society submitted a request to the municipality for a grant of \$1.8M to fund "a new Judges Tower; an addition to the high-performance centre; accessibility improvements for para sport; and a return lane that is required for our bid". This will be considered separate to this report.

General Improvements/Upgrades

When the capital improvements for the 2009 championship were made, most entrances, landscaping, and facilities were essentially recapitalized or brand new. It is recognized that many of these more minor but important features will need to be revitalized to ensure there is an appropriate standard of venue experience. An internal assessment of these matters would be undertaken in consultation with the Canoe '22 Society.

Lake Water Quality

Lake Banook as an important urban lake in Dartmouth that offers many recreational opportunities. The supervised beach experiences some closures each summer due to high bacteria counts, and toxin-producing blue green algae blooms have occurred in the last two summers in this watershed. Nuisance vegetation (weeds) have become more prevalent over the years as well, impeding boating and swimming activities.

A Pollution Source Control Study was recently completed for Lake Banook and Lake Micmac to gain insights on bacteria types and sources as well as phosphorous levels and sources. The Municipality has received the final consulting report and is engaging with staff and stakeholders on the recommendations to bring forward to Council for consideration in winter 2020. Based on the findings of the Pollution Control Study, which found that bacteria from dogs was a notable input to the lake, staff developed an education and awareness campaign called Canines for Clean Water (www.halifax.ca/caninesforcleanwater).

Weed harvesting and monitoring has taken place on Lake Banook and Lake Micmac since 2015. Results indicate a continued need for weed management and will result in the development of a long-term weed management strategy.

Work is also underway to determine whether the Municipality should begin a water quality monitoring program as was run in the past, and whether such a program will advance new or existing policy objectives.

Implementation of Municipal Capital Improvements

With a concentration on the improvements identified above, municipal Capital Budget funds have been allocated for initial assessments, designs, and cost estimates for improvements. These would subsequently form the scope for implementation within the 2021/22 Capital Budget. Along with the already allocated municipal event funding and direct staff participation in organizing the event, the municipality would be making a significant contribution in support of Canoe '22.

In addition to the funding sought from HRM, the Canoe '22 Society has sought funding from other levels of government.

Long Term Water Sports Park Master Plan Implementation

As noted above, the immediate focus from a capital budget planning perspective is to concentrate upon improvements to municipal assets that are readily able to be implemented and are necessary to support the 2022 event. This has led to the capital improvements that are proposed in this report. The Water Sports Park Master Plan developed by the Canoe '22 Society contains other possible enhancements around Lake Banook, which may be more challenging due to factors such as land ownership. These can be assessed in the future following the competition of Canoe '22 and with future discussions with organizers and other stakeholders. Staff propose to assess whether a new master plan for Lake Banook is required after Canoe '22 takes place.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications to the recommendations contained in this report. Municipal capital costs for assessments, designs, and cost estimates for improvements to Silvers Hill and Birch Cove Park as outlined in this report for Canoe '22 are identified in the proposed 2020/21 Capital Budget for Regional Council's consideration. The estimated value for this preliminary work is \$75,000 (Capital Budget account CP180001).

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no risks associated with this report. However, there is some risks associated to the event timeline as it relates funding and construction implementation. Other events, such as the preceding 2021 National (Canadian) Sprint Canoe Kayak will coincide with the construction preparation for the 2022 event and will require careful coordination. The recommendation to include assessments, design work, and preparation of cost estimates in the proposed 2020/21 Capital Budget for Regional Council's consideration will help to mitigate this risk.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was no formal community engagement in the development of this report but consultation with event organizers did inform the directions contained herein. The improvements that are cited were previously addressed in the Sullivan's Pond and Lake Banook Master Plan or are normal improvements to the parks.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate environmental implications associated with this report. The water quality of Lake Banook is important for the health of the lake, general public recreation, and for paddling. On-going initiatives related to storm water improvements in the area are important to improving lake water quality.

ALTERNATIVES

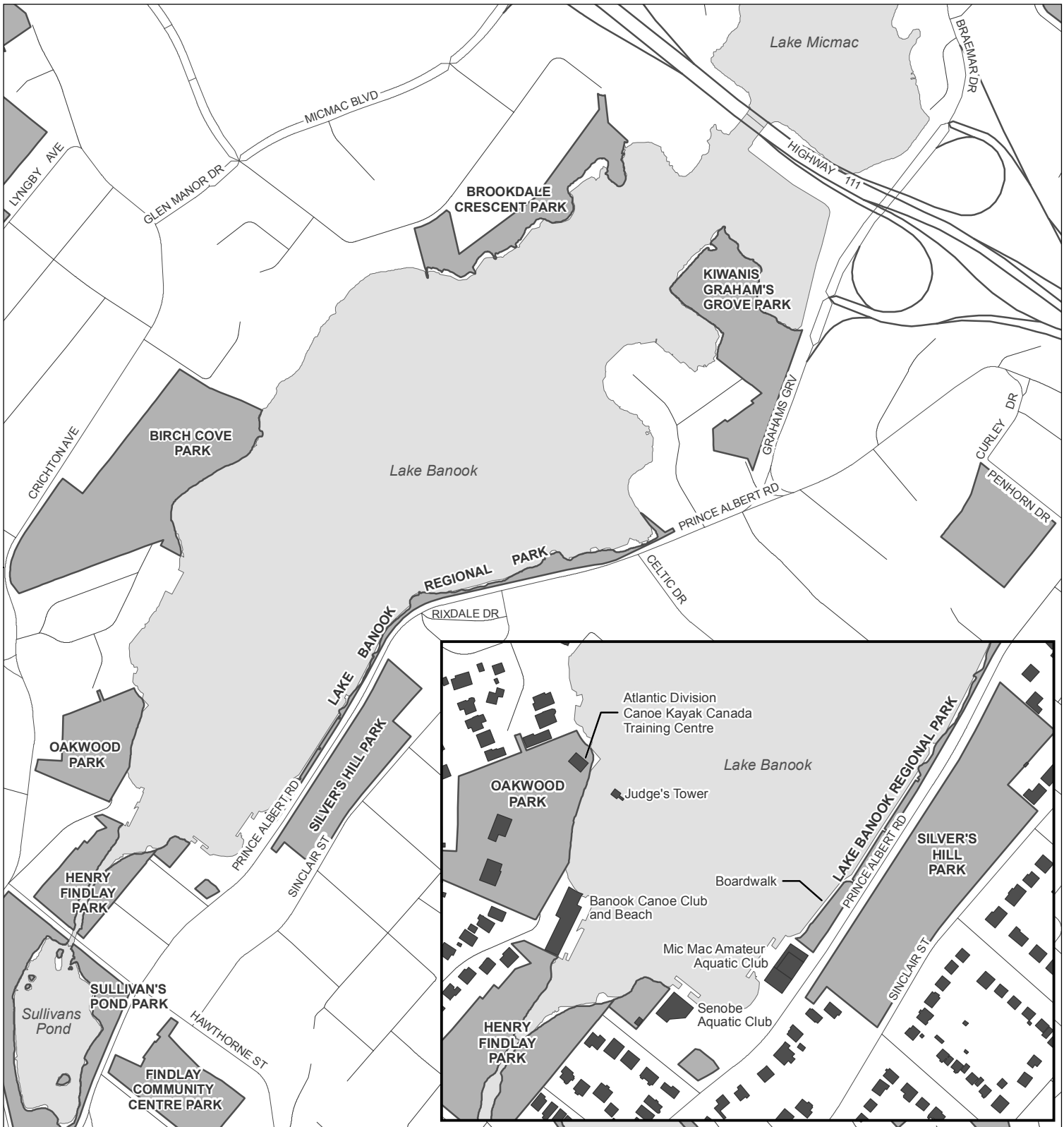
1. Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee could recommend that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to consider other capital projects that have not been identified in this report. This may require additional review and another staff report.
2. Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee could recommend that Regional Council not support the projects that are identified in this report. This is not recommended as the improvements that have been cited are necessary for Canoe '22 and general public use.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A Reference Map

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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LAKE BANOOK - LOCATION MAP & EXISTING FEATURES

- HRM Park
- Water Body
- Existing Building/Structure

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