



**City of Kingston
Information Report to Council
Report Number 16-031**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Luke Follwell, Director, Recreation & Leisure Services
Date of Meeting: December 15, 2015
Subject: Belle Park Working Group Update – Interim Report

Executive Summary:

As per Report Number 14-075 submitted to Council on February 4, 2014, staff is providing an interim report on the progress to date with the Belle Park Working Group.

Recommendation:

This report is for information purposes only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Cynthia Beach, Corporate & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Denis Leger, Transportation, Facilities & Emergency Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President and CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desiree Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion

This is the second interim report to provide City Council with an update on the Belle Park Working Group (BPWG). The working group and staff have met monthly to discuss and provide feedback and advice on the following five (5) Belle Park related functions:

- A. Maintenance & Operations
- B. Programming
- C. Events and Potential Sponsorships
- D. Advertising and Marketing Opportunities
- E. Capital Renovations/Upgrades

The 2015 Belle Park Working Group is comprised of Mary Louise Adams, Jacques Menard, Ken Reimer, John McLean, Dale Pederson and Serena Manson. The working group and staff have used monthly meetings and site visits to discuss the issues on the course and how improvements could be achieved over time. Changes and improvements made with the support of the Belle Park Working Group have been achieved through existing operational and capital budgets. The results of the meetings to date have been summarized below with the action taken or recommended.

A. Maintenance & Operations

1. Golf Industry Standards

- a. During the 2015 season, detailed policies and procedures were developed for the employees working at Belle Park:
 - employee training
 - golf membership sales, marketing and relationships
 - pro shop and driving range operations
 - golf cart fleet maintenance
 - golf course, clubhouse and golf club operations and programming
 - golf course maintenance (a very wide-ranging topic)
 - golf course agronomy and forestry
 - golf industry relationships
 - long-range planning

2. Member Sign In

- a. Upgraded Facility Booking/Membership software to ACTIVE Net – CLASS.
- b. Aligning Belle Park with the entire recreation facilities portfolio in a bid to breed consistency within processes and procedures.
- c. A more robust schedule of audits will be created for the 2016 season based on current year results.

3. Monitoring the Play Off the First Tee

- a. Physical changes to interior space including re-orientation the front counter and the addition of new windows allows staff to monitor the first tee in real time.

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4. Member Rounds Played to Date (as compared to 2014)

Table 1.0: Rounds Played

Month	2015 Member	2015 Green Fee	2014 Member	2014 Green Fee
May	806	348	805	197
June	863	338	938	461
July	965	453	988	467
August	902	379	1,267	549
September	781	311	776	279
October	365	243	535	99
Sub Total	4,682	2,072	5,309	2,052
Total	6,754		7,361	

5. Membership Summary

- a. This represents the total number of memberships as some members have multiple packages (golf, range, locker, cart, etc.).

Table 2.0: Membership Summary (2010-2015)

Year	Restricted				Full			SUB TOTAL	Other			TOTAL
	Couple	Senior	Adult	Junior	Couple	Senior	Adult		Range	Locker	Cart	
2015	2	29	9	5	0	2	1	48	40	29	12	129
2014	6	57	10	12	0	9	1	95	52	29	15	191
2013	13	74	10	4	0	9	6	116	66	31	16	229
2012	15	74	22	1	0	13	6	131	75	33	13	252
2011	0	90	18	5	0	17	8	138	76	35	17	266
2010	0	110	25	6	0	16	8	165	95	32	20	312

6. Revenue Summary

- a. Review of revenues for Belle Park are included in Table 3.0 below.
- b. The BPWG is tasked with addressing the impact on revenues of a 10 year decline in the condition of the course.
- c. The BPWG is unanimously of the opinion that the anticipated positive impact on revenues of all implemented and proposed improvements will not be felt for at least 2-3 years.

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Table 3.0: Revenue Summary

Revenue	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Locker rental	\$2,045	\$1,901	\$2,224	\$2,389	\$2,546
Club rentals	\$2,910	\$2,549	\$1,444	\$7,404	\$16,026
Cart rentals	\$11,491	\$12,985	\$16,874	\$10,637	\$0
Daily green fees	\$31,519	\$31,634	\$44,532	\$60,768	\$61,295
Driving range fees	\$26,654	\$24,587	\$32,989	\$37,689	\$39,168
Cafeteria revenue	\$1,092	\$3,889	\$6,908	\$8,922	\$9,415
Memberships	\$35,903	\$38,450	\$46,060	\$50,417	\$52,050
Merchandise sales	\$831	\$1,414	\$1,773	\$2,406	\$2,933
TOTAL	\$112,445	\$117,409	\$152,804	\$180,632	\$183,433

7. Rates and Fee Review Suggestions

- a. Ongoing comparison of other similar local golf courses to justify the rates applied at Belle Park will be completed as part of the annual Fee's and Charge's review.
- b. New monthly fee's created to encourage usage by transient student population.
- c. New monthly promotional fees are included for 2016 (pending approval) to greatly increase the inventory of what can be offered to golfers.
- d. The new fee structure will ensure that Belle Park is more competitive in relation to what private golf courses offer when considering seasonal variances.

8. Belle Park Financial Review by City of Kingston Financial Services Department

- a. Finance performed an audit on the new policies and procedures as they relate to upgraded Facility Booking/Membership software.
 - Belle Park passed the audit; special consideration given to Belle Park now being aligned with the entire Recreation & Leisure Services Department portfolio.
- b. Specific industry standards were used for procedures and controls for things such as:
 - Cash receipts
 - Cash reconciliation
 - Inventory control
 - Green fee ticketing

9. Operational Performance

- a. Belle Park has been operating with a yearly deficit that ranges between \$134,000 and \$228,000 which is funded through the property tax base. Weather does have an impact on the length of the season and on operations; therefore, it can be challenging to predict the exact revenues as well as financing required to fund the yearly deficit.
- b. Table 4.0 shows the operational performance for the last five (5) years of operations.

Table 4.0: Operational Performance

2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
(\$204,566)	(\$195,248)	(\$227,496)	(\$171,363)	(\$203,090)

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Golf Course Actions

1. Water Restrictions

- a. Pump house log books are kept on file. The information collected includes pump run times and a summary of previous years will be completed. Such information could form a basis for a study of water usage/capacity which is important during dry summers. Staff are examining opportunities to add real time and remote viewing of data to better understand the particulars.

2. New Rough Cut Mower Purchased

- a. As the current mower was nearing end of life cycle it was replaced with a modern unit which helps to address course conditions in a more efficient manner.

3. 100 Yard Markers

- a. Markers were placed in late June of 2015.

4. Aeration

- a. Aeration took place in July of 2015

5. Cross Cut Strategy

- a. Using part time labour in a more strategic fashion, operations were able to add an additional cut to the fairways on a specific trajectory to capture more grass on the cut.

Clubhouse Actions

1. New Flooring

- a. Original floor was removed and replaced with durable vinyl sheet product.

2. Paint

- a. Interior of clubhouse was completely repainted over the offseason.

3. Realign Lockers/Benches

- a. Staff realigned lockers and benches which provided additional lockers for club members.

4. Realign Front Counter

- a. Based on concerns raised in 2014 regarding the orientation of the front counter, recommendations were made to reposition and reconfigure the clubhouse in order for staff to observe and monitor the first tee more easily.
- b. Staff were able to complete the realignment in time for the open of the 2015 season.

B. Programming

1. Clean Up

- a. Staff spent considerable efforts in cleaning up the course/yard before the start of the season. Staff also aided in removing several items from Belle Island that accrued over the winter.

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2. Pitch in Kingston Day
 - a. Belle Park was added to the list of parks and facilities that actively participated in Pitch In Kingston Day in 2015.
 - b. Staff worked with the organizers and Public Works staff to provide garbage bags and to remove the debris once collected.
 - c. Belle Park will continue to be on the list of parks in the future.
3. Member Survey
 - a. Staff are working with the Strategic Communications Department on a survey for current members to gauge the quality of the golfing experience at Belle Park.
 - b. Staff will also create a survey and target past members/users that we have not seen at Belle Park in several years.
4. Hack Golf
 - a. Based on input of the BPWG, staff trialed Hack Golf at Belle Park for the 2015 season. Several media promotions were created to support this initiative to attract new members to the course.

C. Events and Potential Sponsorships

1. High-School Golf (Youth Specific)
 - a. In coordination with Andrea Blackwell, KASSAA golf coordinator for high school instruction and events, an event was held at Belle Park in June of 2015. Over 60 high school students were on site participating in rounds of golf and the driving range. Local media outlets covered the event and the Golf Association of Ontario was on site to help facilitate. Students were offered a reduced rate for this event via a generous contribution from HR Doornekamp Construction Ltd.
2. Monthly Scramble Tournaments
 - a. Staff organized monthly scramble tournaments for members and guests with an average of 27 participants. Additional events will be held during the 2016 golf season in an effort to promote Belle Park.

D. Advertising and Marketing Opportunities

1. Rack Cards
 - a. Staff produced racks cards for distribution to City owned facilities including the INVISTA Centre, Artillery Park and the Tourism Information Centre.
 - b. More focus will be given in subsequent years to distribute through Kingston Accommodations Partners (KAP) and surrounding hotel providers.
2. New Scorecard
 - a. A new scorecard will be required when the 4th green and 5th tee decks are removed from Belle Island (completion in spring of 2016).
 - b. Potential sponsors will be approached for inclusion on the score card to offset costs.

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3. New Bag Tags
 - a. Revised and updated bag tags were produced for the 2015 season.
4. Fit Pass
 - a. Starting in 2016, the annual fit pass membership will include 6 rounds of golf and 2 buckets of driving range balls in a bid to drive new users to Belle Park that are active within Recreation Facilities.
5. Golf Canada (re: Golf Association of Ontario)
 - a. The BPWG suggested that Golf Canada be asked to attend the course after the new holes have been completed.
 - b. Additional engagement is required to better understand the membership opportunities and how this could be applied at Belle Park.
6. Tourism Oriented Directional Signage (TODS Program)
 - a. Installation of signage along the highway 401 corridor was investigated.
 - b. Space is currently not available, but may open up in 2016 on the westbound lanes after construction has been completed.
 - c. Belle Park is on the waiting list for the eastbound lanes.
7. Refreshment Vehicles in Park Lot
 - a. Belle Park was included as a location in the Refreshment Vehicle Policy permitting this type of service in the parking lot along Montreal Street.
8. Belle Park Communication Plan – Recreation and Leisure and Strategic Communications staff have been working together to develop a communication plan for Belle Park which will be implemented in 2016. The plan includes social media strategies to increase awareness and to market Belle Park.

E. Capital Renovations/Upgrades

1. Remove golf activity from Belle Island in support of the City's Agreement with the First Nations
 - a. Work commenced in October of 2015 will be playable in the spring of 2016.
2. New Shingles on Clubhouse and Workshop
 - a. Completed in May of 2015
3. Connectivity Improvements
 - a. Activenet Class was installed at Belle Park for the beginning of the 2015 season. This allows members to use their membership passes to scan in to play their rounds. This also allows staff to use a real time reporting platform rather than quantifying data manually.
 - b. A new fibre internet service was installed for the beginning of the 2015 season.
 - c. A Wi-Fi access point was added to Belle Park for the beginning of 2015.
4. Condition Improvements
 - a. Improvements to large low lying (wet) areas have been identified.

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- b. Detailed mapping of these areas will be completed in cooperation with the Environment and Sustainable Initiatives Department and prepared in a design process for consideration in 2016.
 - c. Replacement of maintenance equipment (green and fairway mowers) was identified for the 2016 season. This would see the replacement of these units moved to 2016 rather than 2019 in a bid to get immediate impact on the condition of the course.
5. Naturalization of Manicured Areas
- a. Areas of Belle Park have been identified for naturalization projects to reduce the amount of manicured fairways, rough and unused areas to decrease maintenance costs.
6. Detailed Course Improvements Areas and Phasing Plan
- a. This will include a detailed analysis on the tees, fairways, rough, trees, greens and other factors surrounding Belle Park.
7. Short, Mid and Long Term Planning
- a. Additional discussion regarding the short, mid and long term planning will continue to be addressed and recommendations will be presented for further consideration.

The Belle Park Working Group and staff will continue to meet to support the improvement of the golf course and surrounding parkland as outlined in the sections above.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

Not applicable

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

Accessibility Considerations:

Not applicable

Financial Considerations:

Changes and improvements made as part of the discussions with the Belle Park Working Group have been achieved through existing operational and capital budgets.

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Adam McCluskey, Manager, Recreation Facilities, Recreation & Leisure Services

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Exhibits Attached:

Not applicable