



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 18-003**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Luke Follwell, Director, Recreation & Leisure Services
Date of Meeting: January 9, 2018
Subject: Belle Park Working Group Update

Executive Summary:

As per Report Number 14-075, submitted to Council on February 4, 2014, staff is providing the fourth progress report from the Belle Park Working Group (BPWG).

The 2017 BPWG is comprised of Mary Louise Adams, John McLean, Mariah Hamilton, Tracey Johnston and Frank Dixon. In contrast to previous years, high lake levels and flooding experienced on Lake Ontario & Cataraqui River meant that the 9-hole golf course was open for only four (4) days in 2017. The driving range and practice green were unaffected and remained operational until the season ended on October 16th, 2017.

The working group and staff held monthly meetings and site visits to discuss opportunities related to Belle Park, reviewing high water levels and their effects on the course and discussed/reviewed the public engagement process and results.

In 2017, the BPWG contributed to the public engagement process and recommendations for the future of Belle Park. Based on the input of about 1,300 respondents staff provided report 17-249 on September 19th, 2017 where Council approved the following recommendations:

That Council direct staff to eliminate the operations and maintenance of the 9-hole golf course at Belle Park at the end of the 2017 season and continue to operate the driving range and practice putting/chipping green functions in 2018; and

That Council direct staff to incorporate the reduction in golf operations as described in Report Number 17-249 for the purpose of the 2018 operational budget process; and

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That Council direct staff to initiate discussions with the Kingston Panthers Rugby Club to explore partnership models for Belle Park and to report back to Council; and

That Council direct staff to initiate discussions with the Kingston Pickleball Association to explore partnership models for Belle Park and to report back to Council; and

That Council direct staff to undertake a master planning exercise that includes the recommendations as described in Report Number 17-249.

As a result of the proposed changes in use at Belle Park, staff is recommending that the current terms of reference for the BPWG be changed to allow for focused contribution to the park vision and to ensure the BPWG members are ambassadors for the project.

Recommendation:

That Council endorse the revised terms of reference for the Belle Park Working Group (BPWG) to reflect the master planning exercise as described in Exhibit A to Report Number 18-003; and

That the City Clerk be directed to invite the public to submit applications to participate on the Belle Park Working Group including at least one First Peoples representative; and

That the applications be forwarded to the Nominations Advisory Committee for consideration and recommendation to Council for approval.

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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:

Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required
Denis Leger, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	Not required
Mark Van Buren, Acting Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

This is the fourth Belle Park Working Group (BPWG) progress report provided to Council. The working group and staff met monthly throughout the year 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 2017 BPWG was comprised of Mary Louise Adams, John McLean, Mariah Hamilton, Tracy Johnston and Frank Dixon. Starting in early spring, Kingston was inundated with record levels of precipitation. As a result, Lake Ontario rose to its highest level since 1918. Given Belle Park’s location on the Cataraqui river flood plain, significant flooding was observed on the course. The conditions forced the closure of the golf course after only being operational for 4 days in very wet conditions. The course remained closed for the entirety of the season as Lake Ontario peaked in late May and then slowly declined up until the end of October. As the lake water receded, significant damage was observed to those areas under water and areas where staff could not access to maintain. A golf course designer was retained in September to detail the damage and potential repair costs and provided a class D estimate which was upwards of \$500,000.

A. Maintenance & Operations

- 1. Member Rounds Played to Date (as compared to 2016 & 2015)

Table 1.0: Rounds Played

Month	2017 Member	2017 Green Fee	2016 Member	2016 Green Fee	2015 Member	2015 Green Fee
May	27	7	1,097	367	806	348
June	-	-	1,127	390	863	338
July	-	-	1,023	479	965	453
August	-	-	954	356	902	379
September	-	-	973	320	781	311
October	-	-	283	108	365	243
Sub Total	27	7	5,457	2,020	4,682	2,072
	34		7,477		6,754	

Membership Summary

- a. The driving range was used 3,211 times throughout the season with 1,929 visits from drop

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in users and 1,282 visits from members.

Table 2.0: Membership Summary (2010-2017)

Year	Restricted				Full			SUB Total	Other			TOTAL
	Couple	Senior	Adult	Junior	Couple	Senior	Adult		Range	Locker	Cart	
2017	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	63	6	0	69
2016	3	44	10	2	0	6	1	66	29	2	8	131
2015	2	29	9	5	0	2	1	48	40	2	12	129
2014	6	57	10	12	0	9	1	95	52	2	15	191
2013	13	74	10	4	0	9	6	116	66	3	16	229
2012	15	74	22	1	0	13	6	131	75	3	13	252
2011	0	90	18	5	0	17	8	138	76	3	17	266
2010	0	110	25	6	0	16	8	165	95	3	20	312

Revenue Summary

- a. A review of revenues for Belle Park is included in Table 3.0 below.
- b. Registration Fees represents golf lessons offered to the public through our programming staff and a certified instructor.

Table 3.0: Revenue Summary

Revenue	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Locker rental	\$320	\$2,046	\$2,045	\$1,901	\$2,224	\$2,389
Club rentals	\$0	\$2,122	\$2,910	\$2,549	\$1,444	\$7,404
Cart rentals	\$0	\$12,758	\$11,491	\$12,985	\$16,874	\$10,637
Daily green fees	\$366	\$32,155	\$31,519	\$31,634	\$44,532	\$60,768
Driving range fees	\$23,991	\$26,727	\$26,654	\$24,587	\$32,989	\$37,689
Cafeteria revenue	\$800	\$969	\$1,092	\$3,889	\$6,908	\$8,922
Memberships	\$275	\$31,089	\$35,903	\$38,450	\$46,060	\$50,417
Merchandise sales	\$50	\$787	\$831	\$1,414	\$1,773	\$2,406
Registration Fees	\$1,663	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	\$27,468	\$108,653	\$112,445	\$117,409	\$152,804	\$180,632

1. Operational Performance

- a. Belle Park has been operating with a yearly deficit that ranges between \$134,000 and \$236,000 which is funded through the property tax base. With the course closed for the season there is a significant loss of revenues from membership and green fees.
- b. Table 4.0 shows the operational deficits financed by property taxes for the last five (6) years of operations.

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Table 4.0: Operational Deficit

2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
*\$209,947	\$236,424	\$204,566	\$195,248	\$227,496	\$171,363

*While revenues were certainly affected by the closure of the 9-hole golf course, this loss is offset by labour savings since large areas of Belle Park were inaccessible for maintenance, resulting in significantly less staff time onsite compared to previous years.

B. Programming

During the 2017 season, staff promoted golf lessons to the public to be held at Belle Park and facilitated through an instructor certified by the Canadian Golf Teachers Federation (CGTF). With the closure of the course due to high water, lessons were restricted to the driving range and putting green. While the closure of the course would have affected the number of golfers taking advantage of this program, staff saw 36 users participate in this program.

C. Events and Potential Sponsorships

The closure of the course did not allow for scrambles, tournaments or youth specific events at Belle Park that were enjoyed in previous years.

D. Advertising and Marketing Opportunities

With the high water and course closure, staff limited the advertising of the driving range to social media to minimize costs.

E. Capital Renovations/Upgrades

1. Tee Decks - Based on feedback from the membership, staff submitted an RFP early in 2017 to repair and rebuild two of the tee decks at Belle Park. The tee deck for the 9th was scheduled to be leveled while the tee deck for #7 was to be repaired and expanded to provide a better golfing experience to the members. Work was scheduled to be completed prior to the start of the season; however the high water and flooding interrupted the completion of work on #9.
2. Tree Planting Strategy - In the spring/summer of 2017, in partnership with the Real Estate & Environmental Initiatives Department, approximately 4,500 hybrid poplar trees were to be planted at Belle Park to assist with ground water management on the site. To ensure the locations were appropriate with respect to the golf course, a conceptual map (Exhibit A) showing the locations was present in the Belle Park clubhouse throughout the 2016 season where we invited golfers to add their comments and suggestions to the plan. The site was staked to physically show the locations and walked with golfers and maintenance staff in a final bid to confirm locations and to take into account any final adjustments to the implementation plan. Due to the high water, the final count was reduced to approximately 4,030 trees planted.

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Public Engagement

In consultation with the BPWG, staff developed a public engagement plan to run from May to August of 2017. The intent was to reach out to as many members of the public as possible through public meetings, focus group sessions and surveys. The goal was to report back to Council in September with recommendations, so that any budget implications could be included in the 2018 budget. The consultation schedule included the following events/meetings:

- Public Workshops: May 31, June 1, and June 8, 2017
- Focus Group Meeting with Golfers: July 6th
- Pop Up Events: Completed on July 25th, July 30th and August 3rd
- Online Public Survey: Available from July 17th to August 9th
- Focus Group Meeting with Community Stakeholders: August 18th
- Public Session Recap: August 22nd
- Belle Park Working Group Recap: September 6th

During each phase of the public engagement process; communications, results and presentations were uploaded to the City of Kingston website. A debrief of each session was discussed with the working group at the monthly meetings throughout the process. The public consultation surrounding the future of Belle Park engaged nearly 1,300 people and the survey received 1,090 respondents.

As a result of the public engagement process Council approved Report Number [17-249](#) with the following recommendations:

That Council direct staff to eliminate the operations and maintenance of the 9-hole golf course at Belle Park at the end of the 2017 season and continue to operate the driving range and practice putting/chipping green functions in 2018; and

That Council direct staff to incorporate the reduction in golf operations as described in Report Number 17-249 for the purpose of the 2018 operational budget process; and

That Council direct staff to initiate discussions with the Kingston Panthers Rugby Club to explore partnership models for Belle Park and to report back to Council; and

That Council direct staff to initiate discussions with the Kingston Pickleball Association to explore partnership models for Belle Park and to report back to Council; and

That Council direct staff to undertake a master planning exercise that includes the recommendations as described in Report Number 17-249.

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Belle Park – Next Steps

Staff issued a request for proposal to hire a consultant in December 2017 to assist in the master planning process and will build the engagement plan early in 2018.

Recent successful parkland master planning exercises (examples: Doug R. Fluhrer Park and Grass Creek Park) utilized community led working groups whom approached the future design process to address broader community interests. This was made possible through the working group’s mandate which was reflected in their terms of reference. Staff is recommending that the terms of reference for the BPWG be changed to include the following: (see Exhibit A for new terms of reference):

- six (6) members of the public,
- one (1) member identifying as First Peoples,
- Contribute toward the process to develop a park vision,
- Ensure inclusive community consultation,
- Be ambassadors for the project,
- Assist in key public participation process related decision making,
- Inform the City of related community issues and
- Assist in developing alternative recreational uses as described in Report number 17-249 to complement the existing driving range and practice green.

Staff will work with the City Clerk to invite the public to submit applications to participate on the Belle Park Working Group.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

Not applicable

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

Accessibility Considerations:

Not applicable

Financial Considerations:

Not applicable

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Contacts:

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Luke Follwell, Director, Recreation & Leisure Services 613-546-4291 extension 1815

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

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

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A Belle Park Working Group New Terms of Reference

Exhibit B 2017 Tree Planting Strategy for Belle Park

Belle Park Working Group Terms of Reference

The Corporation of the City of Kingston owns and operates Belle Park which is an 80 acre park in the core of the City of Kingston. In 2017, the Belle Park Working Group (BPWG) contributed to the public engagement process and recommendations for the future of Belle Park. Based on the input of about 1,300 respondents staff provided report 17-249 on September 19th, 2017 where Council approved the elimination of the 9-hole golf course, retention of the driving range and practice areas and to complete a master planning process for the park.

As a result of the proposed changes in use at Belle Park, the following terms of reference for the BPWG be focused on the park vision and to ensure the BPWG members are ambassadors for the project.

- six (6) members of the public,
- one (1) member identifying as First Peoples,
- Contribute toward the process to develop a park vision,
- Ensure inclusive community consultation,
- Be ambassadors for the project,
- Assist in key public participation process related decision making,
- Inform the City of related community issues and
- Assist in developing alternative recreational uses as described in Report number 17-249 to complement the existing driving range and practice green.

Recreation and Leisure Services will be the lead department assigned to meet with the Working Group. Other departments and divisions such as Environment, Communications, Legal, Finance, etc. may be invited to attend some of the meetings depending on topics of discussion. The Belle Park Working Group will receive monthly updates on the master planning process.

The Working Group will work with staff to submit a report to Arts Recreation and Community Policies committee at the end of the term.

