

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
August 31, 2022 – 3:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present:	Councilor David Witham, Chair Councilor Denis Messier, Vice-Chair Councilor Martin Pepin
Committee Member Absent:	Councilor Kenneth S. Vincent
Administration/Staff present:	City Manager Bob Belmore Finance Director Scott Smith (arrived at 3:53 p.m.) Director of Public Works Michael Bobinsky (arrived at 3:33 p.m.) City Engineer Amber Hall Welfare Officer Kristen LaPanne
Others in Attendance:	The Oaks Principal Operator Peter Harrity The Oaks Course Superintendent Steve Malloy

Chairman Witham called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Councilor Pepin made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 3-0.

OAKS GOLF COURSE PROPOSED PLANS

Peter Harrity provided a handout to the Committee and City Staff of a document titled: The Oaks Facility Assessment and Capital Projects. Manager Belmore provided a brief introduction and background regarding the proposal for timber cut, course enhancements and a request to extend the current 38-year lease term which has about 19 years left. Peter invited the Committee and City Council to attend a site visit or to contact him with any questions.

Peter provided an overview of the timber cut and potential capital projects which included a tree removal plan, list of improvements, cost estimates, and potential vendors expected to complete the work. The course originally had timber cut around 1997-1998 and the remaining trees have since grown thicker and taller. With The Oaks proposing to implement over \$1,000,000 in improvements, discussion around a possible extension of the lease would be necessary in order for the business to have a return on their investments.

Steve Malloy shared knowledge of the negative impact of the trees growing and harming the turf environment including reduced sunlight and air circulation and the large cost of debris removal during Spring, Fall and following wind storms. Steve continued to briefly review each page in the book regarding a proposed timber cut, potential concerns over the health and safety of players from falling tree limbs, as well as turf damage. Councilor Messier questioned the possibility of encroaching on the conservation land areas, Peter Harrity confirmed the proposal does not interfere with these

conservation areas. Harrity added that the thinning of the trees as proposed would increase the sunlight and airflow, therefore allowing for continued reduction of pesticides and fertilizer.

Malloy and Harrity reported the timeline of beginning timber cut in January 2023 should the City Council approve of their proposal. The timber cut is critical and of highest importance in order to avoid unrepairable turf deterioration and would need to be done before continuing on with other enhancements to the golf course. A brief explanation was provided by Harrity regarding the course flaws and ways in which he and his team wish to improve many of the holes as outlined in the provided booklet including removing sand bunkers, improving cart paths, irrigation, buildings and the entryway/parking lot.

Discussion regarding the time sensitive need for tree removal ensued. Harrity explained the total cost of their tree removal plan is \$100,000 but with the tree harvesting credit of \$15,000, The Oaks would be responsible for \$85,000 should the Committee agree to allow them to keep the proceeds. The Committee came to a consensus that they would like to move forward with the timber cut approval while revisiting the other enhancements to the course. With the Committee's concurrence, Chairman Witham requested that City Staff work with Harrity and his staff to review lease extension options. Belmore suggested that a meeting with the Conservation Commission to discuss the timber cut might be another next step.

A brief discussion regarding the 2% discount given to the Oaks for their irrigation water supply took place. The water is not treated and therefore does not go through the City's water treatment facility, the Committee agreed to revisit the discount in future discussions.

Councilor Messier made a motion to support a Resolution for tree removal as proposed by the Oaks Management team and approval of the Oaks to retain the tree harvesting credit. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 3-0.

MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Messier requested an update to the Rocky Hill Road culvert, Amber Hall confirmed that the culvert has almost been completely installed and is on schedule.

Manager Belmore suggested to schedule a Waste Water Treatment Plant tour be made to City Council with a date of September 14th.

Witham noted he presented a list of items needing to be addressed at the previous Committee meeting and thanked the Public Works Department for the completion and follow through of the work.

Witham added that there are a few street areas where gravel has washed out due to the heavy rains, Director Bobinsky reported that staff have and will continue to monitor the roads.

Witham noted that the Traffic Safety Committee had discussed parking concerns at Noble Pine Park with longer vehicles, such as trucks, sticking out further than compact vehicles. The Committee agreed that the issue has since been resolved with newly painted lines defining the parking spaces and that no further action is necessary by this Committee.

Director Bobinsky added that flashing lights at Cemetery Road have been activated in an effort to lessen the speed of travelers.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Pepin made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Messier and passed 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen LaPanne, Welfare Officer