



## **BOARD OF PARK MANAGEMENT**

A meeting of the Board of Park Management was held on **Monday, September 11, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.** in the **Community Hall Lobby Meeting Room** at the Rotary Complex.

**PRESENT:** Chairman Dave Hanly, Maureen Cocksedge, Sheri Maguire, Vice Chair Kimberley Richardson, Councilor Beatty, Councilor Henderson.

**ABSENT WITH REGRETS:** Carolyn Cuerden.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Quin Malott - Manager Parks, Forestry & Cemetery.

### **MINUTES**

#### **2771. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF:**

None declared.

#### **2772. PRESENTATION: LABYRINTH LESLIE & JOHN WRIGHT:**

**Objective:** The Wrights to discuss concept to create a 40ft 11 circuit labyrinth in the Birnam Wood Arboretum close to William Street and provide more information on project scope including location, size, funding and expectations on recognition format.

**Background and Analysis:** The original request [Item #2703 May 2, 2022] was approved "in concept" adjacent to the Ted Blowes Memorial Pollinator Peace Garden between the garden and Gallery Stratford. Ted Blowes vision was to create a labyrinth in the Catherine East Memorial Garden off John Street across from Avondale Cemetery years ago. Barb Hacking recognized that the Board would not approve two labyrinths and as such requested that the original proposal be permitted to be relocated from Ted Blowes Memorial Peace Garden to the Birnam Wood Arboretum location. The Wright family has conduit of funding that would assist in facilitating a larger labyrinth.

There are more than 6000 labyrinths in over 90 different countries around the world including over 100 in Ontario. The Wrights believe a public labyrinth in Stratford would benefit the community as a welcoming space that can be used by people of all ages, beliefs and abilities promoting reflection and relaxation. Many potential uses including celebrations, ceremonies and milestones and are used in a variety of settings including hospitals and schools. John and Leslie have acquired advanced training through Veriditas a not-for-profit organization devoted to increasing awareness of labyrinths.

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The Wrights propose a 42-foot paving stone labyrinth ensuring accessibility, durability with use for a large part of the year. The cost for a local contractor to supply and install a labyrinth sourced entirely from local paving stones would be approximately \$140,000 versus a precut labyrinth shipped from the USA at an approximate cost of \$120,000. The prices include provision of a certain amount of soft-scaping and educational signage. The preferred location remains the south end of Birnam Wood Arboretum where there is an existing flat circular space surround by trees with proximity to the river, Ted Blowes Garden, Festival Grounds and parking nearby.

John and Leslie Wright are in the process of establishing a team to raise the funds and spearhead the project.

**Staff Recommendation:** To support the project concept in the original location approved by the Board in May 2022.

Leslie Wright provided benefits of the proposed labyrinth for the community. They have visited many including Collingwood, San Francisco, and Toronto. A well-made labyrinth attracts many people and could be included in daily walks and are essentially maintenance free.

K. Richardson enquired why this location is preferred. L. Wright indicated it is a natural setting, flat, does not affect any trees and is a peaceful location. The Ted Blowes Garden location is too small to accommodate the proposed design particularly due to the slope. K. Richardson inquired whether it could be incorporated into the design of the Indigenous Medicine Garden. K. Bonnell indicated that this would need to be discussed with the Indigenous community leadership on that project.

Councillor Beatty questioned the funding stream. L. Wright advised once the space has been secured partnerships will be established to proceed with the project through to construction. B. Beatty indicated that sponsorship signs will not be considered as part of the design as they are prohibited in the Board of Park Management Bylaws. L. Wright clarified that this is understood and that any signage would be educational potentially including a QR code. Further there may be a 3D finger-tracing sign to include persons with low vision.

M. Cocksedge proposed a stone dust base as a less expensive alternative. John Wright clarified hard surface is more maneuverable whereas stone dust involves maintenance. Councilor Henderson expressed her enjoyment in her visit to the Wrights labyrinth feeling very relaxed following, indicating that from an accessibility standpoint a hard surface is preferable, and receipts could be offered to donors.

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Chairman Hanly questioned what infrastructure would be required in the future to accommodate events such as wedding ceremonies and family gatherings as this is a multi-use space. Further, whether there is a circuit design between 7 and 11, example 9 circuit. L. Wright indicated that she is not aware of any such design in existence.

K. Richardson referenced the labyrinth at Spruce Lodge that to her knowledge realizes little use and that the Board should consider if this location is optimal. J. Wright informed the Board that the installation of Spruce Lodge labyrinth was not completed properly and as such is not user friendly.

**Resolution: Direct staff to consult with the Wrights and provide summary of pros/cons of both locations including estimated costs following installation at which time the Board will revisit the proposal.**

**Mover: Councilor Beatty**

**Seconder: B. Henderson**

**Carried.**

2773. PRESENTATION: REG WHITE:

**Objective:** Chairman of Friends of the Shakespearean Garden to address the Board.

**Background and Analysis:** Discussion regarding formation of the group, the mandate, collaboration with park staff, suggested goals and enhancements, pandemic interruption, peony donation and the visitor brochure.

Reg White and members of Friends of the Shakespearean Garden discussed current projects. Mr. White distributed an information package to the Board which included his presentation remarks, Shakespearean Gardens brochures, their history and achievements to date. Fall 2023 100 clumps of donated peonies from Peony Society of Canada will be planted by city staff. The donation was a celebration of the Society's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. R. White indicated that a service club in Stratford has expressed interest in collaborating to install a flood light on the Dufton Chimney Tower, the project would also include a 6ft seasonal wreath in December facing Huron Street. R. White indicated the Friends are proposing at time of entrance rehabilitation the paint colour be changed from Tudor Brown to green representing the environment. The Friends are going to apply to the American Public Garden Association for membership.

K. Richardson questioned if the lighting proposed would be up-lighting or down-lighting as there is a movement to introduce down-lighting reducing light pollution. B. Henderson offered that this would also dissuade vandals.

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Chairman Hanly expressed appreciation on behalf of the Board for their enthusiasm and energy on past, present and future projects.

Staff will continue collaboration with Reg White and the Friends in advancing the projects discussed.

### **2774. PRESENTATION: ZAC GRIBBLE:**

**Objective:** Destination Stratford Executive Director Zac Gribble to detail proposal for Lights On Stratford [LOS] for the upcoming season.

**Background and Analysis:** LOS was launched in 2020 during the pandemic. December 14, 2023 – January 14, 2024 Tom Patterson Island proposed as venue for “TOROID” (Lunar Lampposts). Access is open and free to the public from 5 – 10pm Thursday through Sunday for self-guided tours. Festival staff will manage the space, reinforce direction of travel and monitor crowd size during operation. TNT Security will monitor the site outside of operational hours. Special Event Application submitted on 2023-08-08.

Discussion surrounding the project scope and logistics including the heart in Veterans Drive Bandshell, way-finding lighting from Market Square to the Island, Lunar Lampposts on Tom Patterson Island along with the return of the Solar System installation. Z. Gribble clarified that all costs including security are under the umbrella of Lights On Stratford.

40,000 visitors were recorded on the Island last year and the installations are receiving international attention. M. Cocksedge commented on the steepness of the bridge in terms of visitors accessing. Z. Gribble recognized that the pitch is not optimal for accessibility but that de-icing rubberized mats are installed during the event duration.

Councillor Beatty expressed his gratitude to the team for their work. He recognized that LOS has been nominated for an award in the lighting category.

**Resolution: To support project as proposed for 2023-2024 season.**

**Mover: K. Richardson**

**Seconder: S. Maguire**

**Carried**

### **2775. PRESENTATION: INDIGENOUS-LED MEDICINE GARDEN & SACRED FIRE LOCATION:**

**Objective:** Kevin Bonnell, Manager of Inclusion, Equity & Indigenous Initiatives concept proposal and approval for dedicated greenspace west of the Meadowrue natural area

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parking lot and establishment of a Sacred Fire Location. The space will provide a location for Indigenous people to practice traditional healing methods and honour the medicinal plants of cultural significance.

**Background and Analysis:** As the City moves toward long-term reconciliation this is the first step in building permanent park infrastructure for Indigenous people and as an education platform for non-Indigenous people. Providing a designated space for a Sacred Fire will allow for ceremonial practices, storytelling, and cultural events for the community.

Specifications:

- 18ft by 18ft circle for medicine wheel and fire space
- Fire department approval of Indigenous fire space
- Medicine wheel

Collaboration will necessarily include guidance and expertise of Indigenous community, leaders, elders and knowledge keepers in the design, planning and ongoing management to ensure authenticity and integrity of the space. The project will require a compensated Indigenous Committee ensuring that all steps of the project are aligned with Indigenous Residents. Adherence to legal and environmental regulations.

K. Bonnell further indicated the space needs to be adjacent to water for viewing. Further that Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers and the Community will need to voice their views on the optimal location.

Chairman Hanly requested more details on the look of the project. K. Bonnell indicated that it is a four-part garden, representing the difference seasons. There will be a certified fire pit with a fire watcher always present when in use. B. Beatty questioned why the Falstaff fire pit is not sufficient. K. Bonnell clarified that a public space was requested so non-Indigenous persons could also have access to the reflection space as the Falstaff Centre is private property.

M. Cocksedge questioned whether the proposed location large enough to accommodate attendees. K. Bonnell clarified the intent is not for large groups but rather for peaceful reflection.

Councilor Henderson questioned whether the labyrinth location proposed is sufficiently close to water. Further questioning what could be burned in the fire pit. K. Bonnell responded that he is working with the Fire Department on what materials would be permitted. M. Cocksedge questioned who would provide maintenance. K. Bonnell advised that discussion with the elders will address their participation.

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K. Richardson questioned if a committee had been established. K. Bonnell indicated that there is interest, and it is in process.

**Resolution:** To approve the proposal in concept and directing K. Bonnell to consult with Indigenous community identifying a list of possible locations, scope of usage, and design of the proposal. Further, to seek out grant funding for the project and report back at a future meeting.

**Mover: Councilor Beatty      Second: Councilor Henderson      Carried.**

### 2776. MINUTES:

**Objective:** The minutes from the June 5, 2023 meeting provided for approval.

**Suggested Resolution:** That the minutes of the June 5, 2023, meeting be approved.

**Mover: Councilor Beatty      Second: S. Maguire      Carried.**

### 2777. ANNUAL PERPETUAL EVENTS IN PARK SYSTEM:

**Objective:** To inform the Board of upcoming events.

**Background and Analysis:** Special Event Applications and letters of request provided by Events Coordinator Heather Denny for the Board's awareness. All events are recurring and have received historical approval in principle.

- October 14, 2023 Annual Lantern Parade [revisions from June 5, 2023]
- October 21, 2023 Walk 'n Roll With L'Arche Stratford
- November 11, 2023 Remembrance Day
- January 26-27, 2024 Stratford Winterfest
- June 9, 2024 Kinsmen Car Show 2024

### 2778. OTHER BUSINESS:

The following staff updates provided at the request of the Chair:

Upper Queen's Park Concession Booth Plans: interested parties have come forward for the 2024 season. The down time is being utilized to complete much needed renovations in order to be ready for the spring. Staff are working on the RFP process.



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Winter Tennis Club Status: Tree removal is not completed as park space must dry up first. The dome is on track for installation late October.

Goose Management Program Status: Egg work is completed. 178 geese relocated and weekly maintenance management is ongoing. The Chair acknowledge the efficacy of the program.

Swan Herd Management: Herd population has diminished due to Avian Flu in 2022 and lack of cygnet survival. Q. Malott advised that the vision is to allow the herd to revitalize naturally. B. Beatty questioned whether it would be advisable to confine one mated pair and cygnets in yard quarters to enhance survival.

Next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board is Monday, October 16, 2023 3:30pm in the **Community Hall Lobby Meeting Room**. [motion Kim, second Maureen]

**Motion by K. Richardson, seconded by M. Cocksedge to adjourn at 5:02pm.**