

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Meeting #4/19, Friday, April 26, 2019

FROM: Michael Tolensky, Chief Financial and Operating Officer

RE: **PROPOSED APPROACH FOR LOCUST HILL SCHOOL HOUSE AND CEDARENA AS PART OF TRANSFER OF LANDS TO PARKS CANADA FOR THE ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK**

KEY ISSUE

Results of discussions between Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), Parks Canada and the City of Markham relating to the Locust Hill School House and Cedarena properties.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT staff be directed to enter into discussions with Parks Canada and the City of Markham regarding the transfer of the Locust Hill School House property including an additional area for parking, of less than 1 hectare in size, to the City of Markham as part of the TRCA transfer of lands to Parks Canada for the Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP) and report back;

THAT staff be directed to convey the Cedarena property to Parks Canada for the Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP) subject to Parks Canada agreeing to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Markham, Parks Canada and the Cedar Grove Community Club regarding future access and operations of the Cedarena outdoor skating rink and community club, located in the Hamlet of Cedar Grove.

BACKGROUND

The majority of the 2,226 hectares (5,600 acres) of land are scheduled to be conveyed to Parks Canada next month. Certain properties have been subject to additional more nuanced discussions between the City of Markham, TRCA and Parks Canada due to stakeholder and TRCA Board of Directors interests.

At Authority Meeting #11/13, held on January 31, 2014, Resolution #A239/13 as amended by Resolution #A240/13 approved the conveyance of 2,266 hectares (5,600 acres) of land to Parks Canada for the Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP). The Resolution included the following recommendation:

e) Locust Hill School House and Cedarena properties shall be subject to further discussions between TRCA, Parks Canada and the City of Markham prior to being conveyed;

Locust Hill School House

The Locust Hill School House located at 8949 Reesor Road, Markham, was built in 1864 and was originally a single storey building that served the community of Belford and neighbouring farmsteads. The school is a significant example of Classical Revival Style architecture.

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Some character defining elements of the building include:

- formal, symmetrical architecture with a centre door and symmetrical windows;
- full height exterior masonry brick walls;
- full height arched windows which were infilled during the 1960's renovation;
- quoined detailed brick corners in contrasting colours;
- rusticated masonry foundation;
- medium peaked timber framed gable roof;
- arched full height windows;
- coloured architectural coursings over arched windows;
- coloured architectural coursings at the corners of the building; and
- pediment painted wood roof eaves and cornice.

TRCA acquired the school from the Province of Ontario in 2004. At the time of acquisition, the building was unusable.

In 2012, TRCA retained Barry Bryan Associates (BBA) engineering firm to undertake a structural assessment of the school house. Based on this assessment, work on the roof of the building was completed. In 2015, TRCA retained BBA to undertake a stabilization and remedial repair assessment of the building in order to carry out future construction work. The assessment identified failed structural components of the overall structure including some deficient exterior masonry brick that compromised the exterior walls. Based on a review of the assessment in consultation with the City of Markham and Parks Canada a preferred option was chosen to shore the building and perform selective demolition. The selective demolition included the removal of the recent additions made to the original building, such as the chimney, vestibule and masonry infilling of the original windows and doors, together with the removal of all interior finishes that were severely damaged. Additional work included mechanical and electrical repairs to restore climate control to decelerate further degradation of the building. The restoration work was funded by the City of Markham, Parks Canada and TRCA.

City of Markham staff have indicated an interest in acquiring and operating the school. The original school property is small and with the tree cover doesn't provide enough area for parking for large groups, therefore the City of Markham staff are requesting an additional area at the rear of the property be added for parking. TRCA at this time is seeking to transfer all of its holdings surrounding the Locust Hill School House with the understanding that the school house and proposed parking lot will be conveyed to the City after future discussions between TRCA and City of Markham.

Cedarena

Cedarena located at 7373 Reesor Road, Markham was established in 1927 and has been run by volunteers until the 2015/2016 season. Cedarena was originally operated by rink creator Arthur Lapp until his death in 1941. Operation of the facility was then taken over by the Cedar Grove Community Club. Cedarena stopped operating in the 2015/2016 season due to lack of volunteer support and degrading equipment and has remained closed since.

Both Parks Canada and City of Markham staff support the conveyance of Cedarena to Parks Canada subject a Memorandum of Understanding being established between the City of Markham, Parks Canada, and the Cedar Grove Community Club. The main purpose of the MOU is to form a working group, made up of a minimum of one representative from each party, to develop the vision, establish roles for each party, explore funding opportunities and develop operating and management models for the facility for the future.

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Generally, the working group will:

- develop terms of reference for the project for approval of the parties;
- develop a business plan, funding model, life cycle management plan and appropriate governance structure for the facility, including the rehabilitation of the current buildings and infrastructure.

The MOU will be in effect until May 31, 2022, at which time it may be extended by mutual agreement.

Attachments 1 and 2 provide a sketch and orthophoto illustrating the general location of both properties. Attachments 3 and 4 provide a sketch and orthophoto illustrating the detailed location of Locust Hill Schoolhouse. Attachments 5 and 6 provide a sketch and orthophoto illustrating detailed location of Cedarena.

Extensive discussions have occurred between the City, TRCA and Parks Canada and all three parties seem satisfied with the proposed approach for these specific sites. TRCA is actively working to ensure the majority of the 2,266 hectares of RNUP properties are conveyed to Parks Canada by May of 2019.

RATIONALE

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategy set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

FINANCIAL DETAILS

No additional costs will be incurred by TRCA in connection with this resolution.

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Attachments: 6

Attachment 1: Sites sketch

Attachment 2: Sites orthophoto

Attachment 3: Locust Hill Schoolhouse detailed sketch

Attachment 4: Locust Hill Schoolhouse detailed orthophoto

Attachment 5: Cedarena detailed sketch

Attachment 6: Cedarena detailed orthophoto