



DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES – ENGINEERING SERVICES
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January 27, 2017

**DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES INFORMATION REPORT
ENGINEERING SERVICES 2017-06**

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
SUBJECT: Fairy Lake West Parking (Behind Cachet Restaurant)
ORIGIN: Director, Engineering Services

PREAMBLE

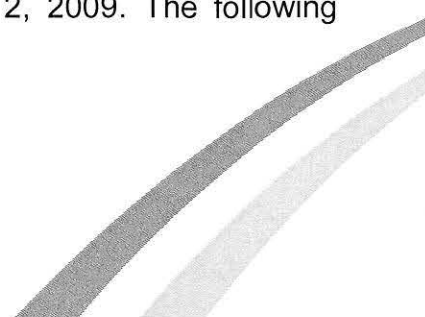
In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request through the Town Clerk that this information report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The possibility of creating additional parking spaces on the west side of Fairy Lake behind Cachet Restaurant (located at 500 Water Street) was studied. It has been determined that an initial investment of approximately \$40,000 will be required, even before the costs to design and construct parking spaces in this location can be estimated. The high cost is due to historical industrial uses on the subject property that have resulted in unknown underground obstacles and challenges, as detailed in the report. Furthermore, after this initial amount, additional costs will be required to accommodate new regulations by the LSRCA for flood protection for parked vehicles, as well as Low Impact Development (LID) requirements, cut and fill balances to account for the impacts of any excavation within the floodplain, lighting for safety purposes, and potential extra costs due to challenging design and construction. The funds could be taken from the Community Centre Lands (CCL) Parking Sub-Committee Studies Budget requested for 2017. However, this may reduce the ability of the Town to achieve other objectives of the CCL Taskforce.

BACKGROUND

Creating additional parking on the west side of Fairy Lake behind Cachet Restaurant (located at 500 Water Street) has been the object of reports to Council since 2009. A joint Planning, Legal and Engineering Services report dated October 8, 2009, entitled "Parking Request at 500 Water Street" (Report # 2009-32), was considered by Council on November 2, 2009. The following resolution was passed by Council at that meeting:



“THAT given the comments from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority specifically that due to flood depth and velocities they would not support additional parking, the request to provide additional parking at the rear of 500 Water Street not be pursued”.

On June 7, 2016, a report entitled “Old Fire Hall and Other Downtown Parking Opportunities”, dated May 17, 2016, was presented to Council. In the report, various parking opportunities in the downtown core were explored, including the creation of 28 additional parking spaces at the Fairy Lake East parking lot, which have since been constructed. One of the other options that was discussed in the report was additional parking at the rear of the Cachet Restaurant.

In the report, Council was reminded that this matter had been considered in 2009, with a decision against proceeding. Council was also informed that, in addition to the LSRCA’s conclusion that they would not support parking behind Cachet at that time, Staff had also recommended against proceeding for other reasons that were unrelated to the LSRCA permit.

For example, the Town was (and still is) promoting the protection of green space in an area where the focus is on providing parkland and open spaces. Also, a parking lot in this area would have an aesthetic impact on the image of Fairy Lake, since it would reduce the naturalized area on the west side of the lake. Another reason was that the proposed new parking lot would be very close to users of the new walking trail on the west side of the lake, and the visual impact that a parking lot has on a natural setting should be considered.

Council discussed the matter in more detail at the meeting of June 7, 2016, and a motion was passed directing staff to re-open the matter of providing parking here. The Council extract of that meeting shows the following resolution:

“THAT staff prepare an Information Report outlining an estimate of costs related to the construction of additional parking spaces in the Fairy Lake lot and behind the Cachet Restaurant;

AND THAT Council approve the construction of up to 22 new spaces behind Cachet Restaurant.”

COMMENTS

After receiving the new directive from Council, Staff proceeded to conduct some research. It was learned that the LSRCA changed its development policy and guidelines in 2015 to eliminate the ban on parking in the floodplain. The modified guidelines established significant new conditions and design requirements to overcome the previous flood depth and water velocity concerns within the floodplain. For example, in order to approve any parking spaces in the floodplain, the LSRCA now requires that several large bollards be installed in a closely spaced pattern and of a height to meet the maximum floodline (which could extend upwards by 2 meters or more in some places) to act as a barrier between the parking spaces and the waterfront. The reason for the bollards is to prevent cars from floating into the stream in the event of a flood similar to what was experienced with Hurricane Hazel. The new conditions for approval also include specialized signage and a strict ban on any overnight parking.

There will be further LSRCA requirements, such as Low Impact Development (LID) elements and specialized plantings, and cut and fill balances to account for the effects of construction within the floodplain, which will add to the costs of construction.

The property on which the Cachet Restaurant is situated (500 Water Street) and the restaurant building itself are owned by the Town. Staff confirmed that during the 1800's, there were several industrial uses of the property, including a railway, a hydro station and an old mill. Although these uses were abandoned in the 1960's, it is believed that much of the former infrastructure remains buried under the surface. The extent of the abandoned underground structures is unknown, but would likely include remnants of underground structures and foundations, sections of steel rails and railroad ties, and some hydro infrastructure.

Upon learning the above, Staff had concerns about the difficulties that might be faced in designing and constructing additional parking spaces behind the restaurant. The first concern was that the subsurface remnants, which could include heavy foundations, steel rail sections, old railroad ties and other buried infrastructure, could pose challenges to the proper grading of the property to accommodate a parking lot and could result in significant difficulties and extra costs for the design and construction. Another concern was that, due to the previous uses of the property, the subsurface soils might potentially contain some unknown contamination. This would depend on how well the site was decommissioned and cleaned up in the 1960's when the industrial activities were ceased.

An additional concern regarding costs, which is unrelated to the subsurface conditions, is that the location is fairly dark and isolated and therefore, for safety reasons, lighting of the proposed parking area would have to be included. The extent of the extra cost for lighting would need to be determined once a conceptual design is done. Furthermore, operating costs will need to be assessed and reported, as the parking lot would need to be maintained by Public Works in winter and in summer.

Based on the above, in order to correctly advise Council on the feasibility and costs associated with designing and constructing the new parking spaces, it would be advisable for the Town to undertake an extensive subsurface site investigation program. This would include geotechnical investigations and a more rigorous overall pre-design program that would be normal in other locations. This would involve a tighter geotechnical drilling pattern with a greater number of exploratory boreholes and possibly techniques such as ground penetrating radar to delineate the extent of the underground obstructions. Furthermore, a Phase 1, and very likely a more stringent Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment would also be needed to confirm the soil chemistry and possibility of contamination in the soils. If such contamination is found, additional costs would be incurred for remediation and disposal of the contaminated materials.

Staff engaged the services of the Town's Consulting Engineer for capital works, Ainley & Associates Limited, to review the situation and provide the Town with an estimate of the costs for all necessary geotechnical, environmental and other pre-design investigations. The price also

includes an assessment of the feasibility of creating a new parking area behind the restaurant, a preliminary conceptual plan showing the possible parking layouts, if feasible, an evaluation of the environmental impact in the event that the additional parking spaces are constructed, and an estimate of the cost for a proper detailed design to be done. There would also be the matter of obtaining a permit from the LSRCA, which will require LID elements, specialized plantings, bollards, and trees to protect Fairy Lake. The consultant's estimate for this preliminary work is in the order of \$40,000.00 before being able to proceed to a detailed design and an estimate of the costs to construct. However, this cost may escalate, depending on what unforeseen level of investigation may become necessary.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

- Well Planned and Connected...strategically planning for the future

CONSULTATION

The Economic Development, Planning and Finance Departments were consulted, as well as the Community Centre Lands Parking Sub-Committee. Should this project proceed to detailed design staff would meet with stakeholders such as the BIA and others as appropriate and would host a Public Information Centre (PIC) to obtain feedback.

HUMAN RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS


No impact on current staffing levels.

BUDGET IMPACT

This pre-design and feasibility investigation to determine the cost of design and construction will cost approximately \$40,000.00. There is no additional impact to the 2017 budget, as the funds will be taken from the 2017 CCL Parking Sub-Committee Studies budget request for 2017. However, this may reduce the Town's ability to achieve other objectives of the CCL Taskforce.

CONTACT

For more information on this report, please contact Rachel Prudhomme, M.Sc., P.Eng., at 905-953-5300 extension 2500; or at rprudhomme@newmarket.ca via e-mail.



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