



Date: 2020-09-02

From: Zach Carson, Facilities Coordinator

Subject Sutacriti Park

Report OPS2020-038

Recommendation

That Council direct staff to continue operating Sutacriti Park as open greenspace for passive recreational purposes, and

Further, to implement methods of restricting vehicular access to the shoreline, including installation of barriers and signage.

Background

The open space that is referred to as Sutacriti Park is in fact two properties. Block 41 was dedicated by the developer as Public Open Space. In the Sarawak Official Plan (1996) this park was referred to as the 'Shoreline Park at Presqu'ile', and is described as a small public park with facilities limited to picnicking. The second property, often referred to as 'the boat launch' or 'beach area', was conveyed to the Township for the purpose of locating a pump house for the communal shore well. While the casing still exists, the shore well is no longer in service as the community is connected to the East Linton Water System. As Council has heard during Committee of the Whole on August 5th, 2020, this small area experiences incompatible uses, specifically recreational uses such as swimming and other passive waterfront interests conflicting with motorized access to launch small boats or to pump water from the bay for agricultural and landscaping purposes. While there is a gravel base leading to the shoreline, the Township has not maintained this driveway or the site line, specifically on the north, for this purpose. Staff has heard that many families access this shoreline for recreational purposes, which raises a concern for their safety if motorized vehicles are permitted to continue accessing the shoreline through this property.

Analysis

The Township of Sarawak's Official Plan (1996) described Parkland and Open Spaces as "valuable assets in any community as they represent a key element in providing residents with a healthy physical environment. The Township is fortunate to have active and passive parkland and open space areas which contribute to the overall attractiveness of the Township as a healthy community to live in and a popular seasonal destination." There is no mention in either the subdivision plan or Sarawak Official Plan to develop these properties as anything more than open space or for passive recreation. The Sarawak Official Plan was repealed and replaced by the Township of Georgian Bluffs Official Plan (2014).

While Block 34 once served a purpose as a communal well, since its decommissioning the area is now used for differing recreational and commercial uses. During site visits, as well as from park user comments, staff has observed swimming, picnicking, and other passive activities. In addition to these uses, motorized access to launch small watercraft and vehicles backing down the property to pump water from the bay is also a common occurrence. The clearing down to the water that motorized vehicles can access is about 25 feet wide, as half of the property cannot be accessed by vehicles due to the casing located on the middle frontage of the property.

Staff is recommending the prohibition of vehicles from accessing the shoreline on this open space as the mixed use poses a risk to those seeking passive recreational use of the property. In addition, this would be consistent with the Township's Use of Unopened Road Allowances Policy, specifically Section 2, "It is the general policy of the Township that road allowances, shore road allowances or existing public rights-of-way that provide access to water will not be unobstructed and will be kept in municipal ownership for the following reason:

1. Future transportation needs where warranted;
2. Public access where appropriate;
3. Protection of the environment including adjacent source waters;
4. Recognize and allow resolution of First Nation Treaty Rights."

Furthermore, the policy states in Section 7 (4) "No person shall erect a dock or any kind of structure on an unopened shore road or road allowance leading to the water so as to have the effect of restricting public use of the unopened road allowance and (5) No person shall store any vehicle, boat, trailer, etc. on an unopened road allowance or shore road."

Continuing to maintain the open space for strictly passive recreational purposes and prohibiting motorized entry will limit risks involved compared to if it continues to be a shared space. Park users will be able to move about the open space freely without having to worry about vehicles potentially driving in to access the shoreline.

Additionally, by no longer allowing vehicles (often larger trucks for pulling boats and trailers), the lands approaching the shoreline will not be degraded to the extent that they currently experience. While some people will be inconvenienced by no longer being able to access the shoreline to launch a boat or to pump water from the bay at this location, the Township is able to offer these service at more controlled and properly maintained facilities such as Balmy Beach Boat Launch and Big Bay Dock which are clearly designated for this purpose.

Financial Impact

Maintaining Sutacriti Park as open greenspace ideal for passive recreation will be at little cost to the Township. Staff intends to investigate minimally intrusive barriers for preventing motorized access such as large stones or cedar posts that wouldn't diminish the natural state of the park. Some signage and amenities such as picnic tables and bike racks would also add to the park's passive recreational aesthetics at minimal cost.

The park will continue to see its grass cut weekly, similar to other comparable greenspaces' service level.

Strategic Priorities

4. Increase Available Community, Recreational and Social Opportunities

The Township of Georgian Bluffs is committed to building community through investment in recreation and community centres, and flexible use of community centres and playgrounds.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Provide enhanced recreational opportunities for residents
 - (d) Continually improve public/open spaces to ensure accessibility and safety.

Conclusion

In consideration of public comments and staff report PL.2020.39, Council requested staff to report back on motorized access to the shoreline as well as addressing signage

and other issues at Sutacriti Park. Staff is recommending that measures be taken to prohibit vehicular access including placement of barriers and signage clearly stating that motorized access is not permitted. The park will also continue to be treated as open space for passive recreational purposes. The amenities and signage placed at the park going forward should reflect this.

Original signed by: Zach Carson, Facilities Manager

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Sutacriti Park.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	August 27, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jenn Burnett, Senior Planner

Tyler Jahnke, Director of Operations

John Norton, Chief Administrative Officer