



Moved By

EMILY CHORLEY

Resolution No.:

Last Name Printed

CHORLEY

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Seconded By

AARON BURCHAT

Council Date:

Last Name Printed

BURCHAT

June 6, 2022

**WHEREAS** at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on May 30, 2022, Council considered a Memo from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee regarding the Waterfront Nature Park Recommendations;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Council receive and endorse the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee's (PRAC'S) recommendations for the 'Waterfront Nature Park' as summarized in the table attached to the PRAC memo; and

**FURTHER THAT** the recommendations be forwarded to the Community Services Director for tracking and operationalizing (pending budget approval when warranted); and

**FURTHER THAT** Council ask Staff to report back to PRAC when each item is completed; and

**FURTHER THAT** the recommendations be forwarded to PRAC's Unfinished Business Schedule.

Waterfront Nature Park Recommendations	Notes & References
<p>The Town of Cobourg should “minimize intervention, as it [the Waterfront Nature Park formerly known as the West Beach and Headland area] already possesses key desirable attributes.” To accomplish this, the following recommendations are made:</p>	<p><b>WUN</b> p. 37</p>
<p><b>1. Dogs:</b> Signage should emphasize that all dogs must be kept on-leash and that people should stay on designated paths. Signage should also indicate the location of the Cobourg (leash-free) Dog Park.</p>	
<p><b>2. Equipment Storage:</b> There should be no storage of dredging pipes or other maintenance equipment in any part of the Waterfront Nature Park.</p>	<p>See <b>WUN</b> p. 40, Key Consideration: “Ensure maintenance and management protocols are conducive to encouraging a healthy ecosystem including respecting requirements of wildlife (i.e., nesting and roosting locations).”</p>
<p><b>3. Parking:</b> Prohibit parking on the area referred to as the Old Field Meadow south of the boardwalk, including during the restoration of the West Breakwater.</p>	

<p><b>4. Amenities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Washrooms:</b> A seasonal portalet should be maintained at the east end of the boardwalk beside the boat storage compound.</li> <li>b. <b>Change Rooms:</b> There shall be no change rooms provided.</li> <li>c. <b>Bird Blinds:</b> There shall be no bird blinds installed in the Waterfront Nature Park.</li> <li>d. <b>Eco Centre:</b> There shall be no eco centre constructed in the Waterfront Nature Park.</li> </ul>	<p>The portalet should not be located immediately beside the Ecology Garden as this previously led to the garden being used as a washroom.</p> <p>Do not construct an enviro washroom in the Waterfront Nature Park (although the <b>PMP</b> p. 27 and 48 would “allow” them, the <b>WUN</b> p. 38-43 significantly does not suggest them). Providing such an amenity might encourage people to use the West Beach as a major swimming destination; this is counter to the designation of this area as a nature park. Furthermore, the nearby Marina building has accessible public washrooms available.</p> <p>Although <b>PMP</b> p. 48 suggests change rooms, <b>WUN</b> pp. 37-42 does not recommend them.</p>
<p><b>5. Access Points:</b> Although connectivity and accessibility must be kept in mind, formal access points to the Waterfront Nature Park should be limited to the current ones from the north (Ontario, Bagot, and Durham Streets) and east (Hibernia Street) and west (Ontario Street).</p>	
<p><b>6. Easement:</b> The Town should ensure that the easement across the School Board property south of the playing field remains in place and be ready to act should the opportunity arise to acquire right of way for the boardwalk between Ontario Street and Peace Park.</p>	

<p><b>7. Sequence of Work:</b> The Town should complete repairs to the west breakwater, presently scheduled for 2024, before any rehabilitation work is done on the Headland area.</p>	
<p><b>8. Soil Study:</b> The Town should conduct an environmental soil study of the composition of the West Headland before finalizing the rehabilitation process. In particular, this study should include analysis of core sampling by augur.</p>	<p>Note that <b>WUN</b> recommends: “Clean up headland to remove concrete debris and miscellaneous waste” (p. 39). Note also that <b>BEA</b> 6.2.6 recommends Shoreline Clean-Up, “specifically the western pier [the West Headland] and breakwall” (p. 15). <b>BRI</b> (p. 4) explains that “The west headland exhibits a long history of disturbance. Various types of rock and debris have been deposited in this area to reinforce it and to help to protect the harbour. The lack of native topsoil in the headland constrains the establishment of plants. From an aesthetic standpoint, this area of the waterfront would benefit from clean-up and restoration, and on-going maintenance.”</p> <p>A suggestion would be for Staff to approach the Fleming College Environmental Technician Program to see if they could provide assistance, and if not, that Council fund such a limited-scope environmental soil study.</p>

<p><b>9. Land/Soil Rehabilitation:</b> Once results of the environmental soil study are received, plans to rehabilitate the land and soil should be undertaken.</p>	<p><b>WUN</b> p. 39: “Clean up headland to remove concrete debris and miscellaneous waste.”</p> <p><b>BRI</b> (p. 4): “Clean up existing debris.” “Augment selective portions of the headland with sufficient topsoil to facilitate plant establishment and restoration plantings. Locally indigenous plant species should be used to supplement the existing vegetation. Include thicket-forming shrubs (red-osier dogwood, willow, bramble, serviceberry, viburnum) to provide additional cover/food for birds and other wildlife species.” “Incorporate additional riprap/armour stone at south end of headland to create small coves or embayments for shorebirds and waterfowl.”</p> <p>Community partnership with the Willow Beach Field Naturalists (WBFN), the Cobourg Ecology Gardeners, and the general public should be encouraged.</p>
<p><b>10. Dredge Deposits:</b> Dredging of the harbour should continue, but any sand so removed should not be deposited in the Waterfront Nature Park.</p>	<p><b>WUN</b> p. 40: “Discontinue dumping and alteration of soils and plants on the headland.”</p>
<p><b>11. Invasive Species:</b> Invasive species should be removed.</p>	<p>Examples: the colony of European Reed presently found in the Willow Mineral Thicket Swamp (the little wet area immediately southwest of the parking lot stretching over to the east side of the boat storage area) or the dog-strangling vine found on the Headland in various spots.</p>

<p><b>12. Headland Walkway:</b> The Town should construct a meandering accessible pedestrian walkway along the Headland, complete with occasional benches, composed of limestone crush wide enough to accommodate access by maintenance vehicles.</p>	<p>This was a primary initiative of <b>WUN</b>: “Minimum 3 metre wide compacted stone dust walkway, alignment to meander slightly to sensitively integrate pathway to landscape, seating nodes at key locations” (p. 37).</p> <p>Furthermore, <b>BRI</b> (p. 4) recommends: “Establish a meandering pathway along the headland.”</p> <p>This walkway should start west of the boat storage area. Access to the Headland from the small beach area just west of the boat launch should be along the sand beach or along this western walkway.</p>
<p><b>13. Pavilion:</b> The Town should construct a pavilion, comprised of a basic hard floor, waist-high walls, open sides, and a cedar-shake roof. This pavilion/overlook should be located at the end of the Headland walkway, just before the West Breakwall.</p>	<p>The <b>PMP</b> suggests this as a place for education, an outdoor classroom, and small group gatherings (p. 48). It also recommends “Expand gathering space at harbour” (p. 43).</p> <p>The viewing area at the breakwall is a primary initiative of <b>WUN</b> (p. 37). <b>WUN</b> further suggests that the design “be slightly elevated” and recommends to “construct from natural materials ... to sensitively integrate into headland aesthetic” (1.6, p. 39). On page 40, <b>WUN</b> suggests this location could be an opportunity for revenue generation (e.g., weddings, photography).</p>
<p><b>14. Interpretive Signage:</b> The Town should install appropriate interpretive, wheelchair-accessible signage at various points along the Boardwalk and the Headland trail.</p>	

<p><b>15. West Breakwall:</b> The Town should consider the recommendations found in <b>WUN</b>, <b>BRI</b>, and <b>ZUZ</b> and specify that these should be taken into account when rebuilding the West Breakwall. All plans stress that it should be inaccessible to the public.</p>	<p><b>WUN</b> (p. 37), <b>BRI</b> (p. 4), and <b>ZUZ</b> (p. 4)</p>
<p><b>16. Accessible Dock:</b> It is important to note that an accessible floating dock (canoe, kayak, paddleboard launch) near the north end of the West Headland beach is not precluded by nature park guidelines; however, it would be best if it were seasonal and removed when not in use.</p>	<p>It is understood that surfers would probably access the West Beach via the pathway on the west side of the boat storage area.</p>

**17. Boardwalk Features:**

- a. **Pathway Fingers:** As part of the boardwalk replacement, construct three meandering limestone paths (wide enough for Public Works access) south from the boardwalk to the West Beach. There should be one at each end of the boardwalk and one south of Bagot Street. There should be wheelchair-accessible off-ramps from the boardwalk onto each pathway.
  
- b. **Railings:** Rope barriers should be installed along both the south and north sides of the boardwalk except for the following gaps:
  - The openings onto the three limestone paths
  - The area on the north side abutting the Ecology Garden.
  
- c. **Boardwalk Benches:** Install donated benches facing the water at the end of each of the limestone pathways.

**WUN** (1.4, p. 39): “Provide new pathway fingers to extend access from existing boardwalk south, closer to water.” “Install a toe rail on both sides [of boardwalk, provide seating opportunities at end of fingers.” And “Provide seating opportunities at the end of fingers...”

**BRI** (p. 3) recommends “Establish boardwalks (with railings) to discourage creation of ‘informal’ paths and trails to the beach, and to protect remnant vegetation.”

**BEA** (6.2.2, p. 14) re Formalized Beach Access Pathways recommends only one or two pathways and recommends they be restricted to the Old Field meadow community “with no pathways in the sensitive Wormwood Gravel Open Beach Community” (p. 14).

**BEA** (p. 13): A fence of natural material (i.e., wood or rope) could be installed along the southern limit of the boardwalk easement... to deter human encroachment into the community...”



<p><b>18. Beach Vegetation:</b> Enhance the environmental quality of the native beach vegetation in the area known as the Wormwood Gravel Open Beach through appropriate plantings.</p>	<p><b>PMP</b> (pp. 43, 48 and 52): “planted with native beach vegetation to mitigate sand migration, the boardwalk is sensitively integrated into the West Beach Environment...”</p> <p>See <b>WUN</b> 1.2, p. 39 for suggestions and <b>BEA</b> 6.2.1 Gravel Beach enhancement Planting of native species like Field wormwood, Seaside spurge, Sea rocket, Marram Grass, and Sand Cherry.</p> <p><b>BRI</b> (p. 3) recommends: “Augment the beach with locally indigenous plant species.”</p> <p><b>ZUZ</b> Appendix A, Reach 7, p. 4 recommends: Cobourg West Beach: maintain boardwalk and continue with naturalization with dune vegetation and shrubs. Appropriate options are mentioned in the reports referenced.</p> <p>These plantings could be done in community partnerships with such organizations as the WBFN or the Cobourg Ecology Gardeners.</p>
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<p><b>19. Meadow Vegetation:</b> Enhance the quality of plantings in the Old Field Meadow.</p>	<p><b>BEA</b> (p. 14-15) recommends enhancement with native species like Common Milkweed, Butterfly Milkweed, Wild Bergamot, Hairy Beardtongue, Purple Coneflower, Arrow-leafed Aster, Early Goldenrod, and Round-headed Bushclover” (p. 14). “There is a benefit to maintaining this cultural meadow community on the landscape” (p. 15).</p> <p><b>BRI</b> (p. 3) recommends: the “open meadow area provides an important opportunity to restore the vegetation and wildlife habitat function of the west beach.”</p> <p>Community partnerships for planting should be encouraged.</p>
<p><b>20. Website:</b> The Town should develop a website specific to the Waterfront Nature Park, similar to the one presently supported for the Cobourg Ecology Gardeners.</p>	

Carried