

Markham Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

August 14, 2020, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Electronic Meeting

Sub-Committee Members	Regional Councillor Jack Heath Councillor Andrew Keyes	Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton (Ex-Officio) Regional Councillor Jim Jones (Ex-Officio) Councillor Keith Irish (Ex-Officio)
Regrets	Councillor Karen Rea	Councillor Amanda Collucci
Council Members	Councillor Khalid Usman	Councillor Isa Lee
Staff	Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer Phoebe Fu, Director, Environmental Services Morgan Jones, Director, Operations	Rob Grech, Manager, Stormwater David Plant, Senior Manager, Parks, Horticulture & Forestry Scott Chapman, Election and Committee Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

Under the authority of the *COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020* (Bill 197) and the City of Markham's *Council Procedural By-law 2017-5*, and in consideration of the advice of public health authorities, this meeting was conducted electronically with members of the Markham Sub-Committee, Council, staff, and guests participating remotely.

The Markham Sub-Committee meeting convened at the hour of 10:05 AM with Regional Councillor Jack Heath presiding as Chair.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None disclosed.

3. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM SUB-COMMITTEE - AUGUST 5, 2020

Moved By Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

Seconded By Councillor Andrew Keyes

1. That the minutes of the Markham Sub-Committee meeting held August 5, 2020 be confirmed.

Carried

4. SWAN LAKE WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

At its June 23, 2020 meeting, Council directed staff to report back to General Committee on this matter through the Markham Sub-Committee in consultation with Friends of Swan Lake Park.

4.1 OVERVIEW OF PROJECT COMPONENTS AND TIMING

Rob Grech, Manager, Stormwater, provided a brief overview and projected timeline for the three project components of the Swan Lake Water Quality Improvement Program, including geese management, park refresh, and water quality treatment. It was noted that the park refresh and water quality treatment initiatives will be addressed through parallel and subsequent phases.

4.2 GEESE MANAGEMENT AT SWAN LAKE - OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS AND PATH FORWARD

Rob Grech, Manager, Stormwater, delivered a presentation on the City of Markham's Swan Lake Geese Management Program, providing members of the Sub-Committee and stakeholders with an overview of the current conditions, program objectives, and consultation undertaken to-date with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), municipal partners, and resident stakeholders. Benefits, considerations, and preliminary staff recommendations surrounding six potential control options were identified and discussed in detail. Next steps were also outlined.

The Sub-Committee and stakeholders discussed the following relative to the staff presentation:

- Potential future assumption of adjacent stormwater management ponds by the City;
- Timing of the proposed habitat modification plan;
- Geese hazing tactics, including possible strategies for deterring geese during overnight hours and potential use of additional bird species;
- Potential impacts of using strobe lights as a geese deterrent on other wildlife in Swan Lake Park, including the mute swan population;
- Developing a volunteer program through the Friends of Swan Lake Park to assist the City in collecting data, decreasing public feeding of geese, and increasing public awareness of the geese population problem; and,
- Pursuing a balanced, multidimensional approach to geese management.

4.3 DISCUSSION AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Fred Peters, representative for the Friends of Swan Lake Park, addressed the Sub-Committee and delivered a presentation outlining resident stakeholders' comments on the Geese Management Program proposed by staff. Mr. Peters expressed the support of the Friends of Swan Lake Park for the staff recommended initiatives, and requested that the use of strobe lights also be considered in a trial capacity for the Fall 2020 season to address migratory geese. Mr. Peters also requested that staff investigate and, where feasible, work to expedite the restoration and redesign of damaged walkways, curbs, and access points to Swan Lake Park which are currently presenting accessibility and safety challenges for residents and park visitors.

There was further discussion on the potential use of strobe lights as a component of the City's Geese Management Program. Concerns were noted regarding potential adverse impacts of using strobe lights to deter geese on other wildlife in Swan Lake Park, including mute swans. Staff advised that the addition of expanded fall hazing activities and the installation/removal of strobe lights will require a budget allocation of \$15,000-\$18,000 for the current year.

The Sub-Committee endorsed the Geese Management Program proposed by staff, with the additional recommendations that a public education volunteer program be developed through the Friends of Swan Lake Park and that strobe lights be deployed for a trial period in Fall 2020. It was also asked that staff investigate existing or potential easements that may be assumed by the City in the restoration of the park pathway system as part of the Park Refresh Plan.

Moved By Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
Seconded By Councillor Andrew Keyes

1. That the Swan Lake Geese Management Program proposed by staff be endorsed; and,
2. That the components of the geese management public education volunteer program be further defined in the staff report to General Committee; and further,
3. That the use of strobe lights be recommended for a trial period during the Fall 2020 season.

Carried

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Markham Sub-Committee meeting adjourned at 12:12 PM.