

Budget Committee Minutes

February 6, 2023, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Live streamed

Members	Mayor Frank Scarpitti Deputy Mayor Michael Chan Regional Councillor Jim Jones Regional Councillor Alan Ho Councillor Keith Irish Councillor Ritch Lau	Councillor Reid McAlpine Councillor Karen Rea Councillor Andrew Keyes Councillor Amanda Collucci Councillor Juanita Nathan Councillor Isa Lee
Regrets	Regional Councillor Joe Li	
Roll Call	Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer Trinela Cane, Commissioner, Corporate Services Alice Lam, Acting Commissioner, Community Services Arvin Prasad, Commissioner, Development Services Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and Director of Human Resources Bryan Frois, Chief of Staff Kimberley Kitteringham, City Clerk Sumon Acharjee, Chief Information Officer Adam Grant, Fire Chief Stephanie DiPerna, Director, Building Standards	Darryl Lyons, Acting Director, Planning & Urban Design Giulio Cescato, Director of Planning & Urban Design Chris Rickett, Director, Economic Development, Culture and Entrepreneurship Mark Visser, Acting Treasurer Eddy Wu, Director, Environmental Services Richard Fournier, Senior Manager, Parks & Open Space Development Alain Cachola, Senior Manager, Infrastructure & Capital Works Heena Mistry, Senior Financial Analyst Jay Pak, Senior Manager, Financial Planning & Reporting Jemima Lee, Manager, Financial Planning Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Budget Committee convened at 9:04 AM with Councillor Andrew Keyes in the Chair.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. APPROVAL OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES - JANUARY 27, AND 30, 2023

The Committee requested that the January 27, 2023, Budget Committee Minutes be amended to reflect that the Victoria Square Boulevard Environmental Assessment took so long to complete, as staff received a Part II Order for the project and it took the Ministry a few years to find a resolution.

Richard Fournier, Senior Manager, Parks Planning, Design & Construction, clarified that the Parks Redevelopment Strategy focuses on developing an evaluation framework for the redevelopment of existing parks, and that the Parks Renaissance Strategy will likely become part of the Parks Redevelopment Strategy once completed.

Moved by Regional Councillor Alan Ho
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Michael Chan

That January 27, 2023, Budget Committee minutes be approved, as amended; and further,
That the January 30, 2023, Budget Committee minutes be approved, as presented.

Carried

4. 2023 WATER/WASTEWATER RATE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PRESENTATION

Eddy Wu, Director of Environmental Services, and Heena Misty presented the draft 2023 Water/Waste Water Rate Public Consultation Presentation.

Staff advised that the next step is for the presentation to be brought forward to the General Committee for approval prior to presenting it at the Water and Wastewater Public Consultation meeting.

The Committee asked the following questions regarding the presentation:

Can watermains sometimes be repaired rather than replaced at the end of their lifecycle?

Mr. Wu advised that a condition assessment is conducted to determine if a watermain is at the end of its lifecycle. Ductile iron watermains are being replaced towards the end of their lifecycle, while all other watermains are being replaced or rehabilitated (depending on the condition of the watermain) by installing a resin liner inside the pipe that will add 80 to 90 years to the lifecycle of the watermain.

Are watermains are being replaced with larger pipes?

Mr. Wu explained that watermains are being replaced with a similar sized or slightly larger pipe in order to support the demand at the time of replacement, and that stormwater pipes are usually being replaced with larger pipes, as part of Markham's Flood Control Program.

Why is one's wastewater portion of the bill higher than the water portion?

Mr. Wu advised that the water and wastewater rate is set by York Region. The reason for the wastewater rate is higher than water rate is due to higher cost and complexity in wastewater treatment, comparing to water treatment.

Is inflation calculated into the replacement cost of watermains?

Mark Visser, Acting Treasurer, advised that modeling is used to calculate the future replacement cost of Capital Budget items, and that inflation expenses are included in the modelling. Mr. Visser noted that the modelling does not account for current hyperinflation or supply chain issues, as staff anticipate that inflation will stabilize and that supply chain challenges will be resolved in the longer term. Mr. Visser explained that staff continue to track inflation and supply chain challenges, and will make adjustments to the lifecycle modelling if these issues become more permanent in nature.

How will growth impact the City's water and wastewater systems?

Mr. Wu advised that staff are still working through the implications of Bill 23 on the City's water and wastewater system. Mr. Wu advised a report will be brought forward to a future General Committee on this matter.

Moved by Mayor Frank Scarpitti

Seconded by Councillor Juanita Nathan

That the draft 2023 Water/Waste Water Rate Public Consultation Presentation be received; and,

That the draft 2023 Water/Waste Water Rate Public Consultation Presentation be brought forward to the General Committee Agenda for approval.

Carried

5. DEFERRED CAPITAL BUDGET ITEMS

Jemima Lee, Manager, Financial Planning, presented list of deferred projects.

Project No. 23068 - Ada Mackenzie Park Phase 3 Design and Construction

Giulio Cescato, Director of Planning & Urban Design, introduced the item.

Mr. Fournier advised that approximate cost of winterizing the Ada Mackenzie Park washroom is \$200 - 250K.

The Committee recognized that the decision to winterize washrooms is a larger discussion that should occur at a future Standing Committee meeting, but suggested that it may be the right time to proceed with the winterization of some park washrooms as Markham is a growing city with an aging population. The Committee noted that some measures will be needed to determine which park washrooms are winterized, such as the size of the park, the types of amenities, and the usage of the park. The Committee further noted that the operational cost of maintaining winterized washrooms will also need to be considered.

The Committee approved the budget for Ada Mackenzie Park, as presented. Staff agreed to report back on the cost of roughing in the amenities required to permit for the future winterization of the washroom at a future Standing Committee meeting prior to the issuing of the tender. Staff confirmed that they will still have time to update the tender to include provisions for the roughing in of the amenities to winterize the washroom or to winterize the washroom, as the project is in currently in the design phase.

Moved by Councillor Reid McAlpine

Seconded by Councillor Isa Lee

That the Budget Committee approve Capital Budget Project No. 23068 - Ada Mackenzie Park Phase 3 Design and Construction.

Carried

Project No 23072 - Frisbee Golf – Mildred Temple Park

Mr. Fournier confirmed that Chris Ozolins, President of the Ontario Sports Association approved Mildred Temple Park as a suitable site for Frisbee Golf. Mr. Fournier explained that Mildred Temple Park will serve as a component of the future Frisbee Golf site, and that the final site may include other parks.

A Committee Member expressed concern that there would be ecological damage to the park if it is selected as Frisbee Golf site.

The Committee agreed to approve the \$61,000 and changed the name to Frisbee Golf initiative to permit for other more suitable sites to be explored.

Arvin Prasad, Commissioner of Development Services, advised that staff will report back to the Development Services Committee on the site of the park.

Moved Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Seconded Councillor Reid McAlpine

That the Budget Committee approve the Capital Budget Project No 23072 – Frisbee Golf Initiative.

Carried

Project No. 23074 - Off-Leash Dog Area Policy & Implementation Plan

The Committee discussed the following relative to the Off-Lease Dog Area Policy & Implementation Plan Capital Budget Project:

- Expressed concern that it will be difficult for residents to walk in Wismer Park if there is an off-leash dog park feature in the park;
- Questioned why a consultant is needed to design the off-leash dog parks;
- Suggested that the City should have different levels of standards for its off-lease dog parks depending on where they are located and how much they are used, such as a bronze, silver, or gold standard;
- Noted that gold standard off-leash dog parks should serve a larger area than a silver, or bronze standard dog park;
- Suggested that off-leash dog parks should be smaller and located closer to where people live;
- Suggested that simpler less expensive solutions are needed for off-leash dog parks;
- Noted that off-leash dog parks do not stop dog owners from taking their dog's off their leash in other areas, such as on Markham's trails;

- Questioned if seasonal sports fields could be used as off-leash dog parks in the off season;
- Noted that residents in high priority locations cannot wait two year for an off leash dog park, suggesting that the City create temporary dog parks in key locations;
- Noted that dogs require water at off-leash dog parks;
- Noted the importance of having a framework/policy for determining the type and location of the off-leash dog parks;
- Expressed concern regarding the high design cost of the off-leash dog park, suggesting that the funds may be better spent on temporary fencing.

Staff provided the following responses to inquiries from the Committee were provided:

Mr. Fournier advised that an Off-Leash Dog Park Policy and Implementation Plan is needed to provide clear criteria for new dog parks, including where they should be located and the type of dog park that is permitted. Mr. Fournier noted that having a policy will help resolve a lot of the confusion with respect to dog parks. Mr. Fournier explained that the high cost of building and designing a dog park can be attributed to the sub drainage feature, which is required for the dog park to operate in all seasons. Mr. Fournier advised that staff could explore creating gold, silver, and bronze standards for dog parks. Mr. Fournier agreed to investigate the possibility of using recreational amenities for dog parks in the off season, noting that it provides both opportunities and challenges. Mr. Fournier explained that using the fields for a dog park in the off season can damage the grass, making it difficult to get the fields ready for spring usage.

Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer, advised that staff will report back with options for temporary off-leash dog parks that can be implemented prior to the nice weather. Mr. Taylor advised that the City will also proceed with the development of an Off-Leash Dog Park Policy and Implementation Plan to guide longer term and more permanent decisions with respect to dog parks, noting that the policy can refined overtime.

Moved by Councillor Amanda Collucci

Seconded by Councillor Isa Lee

That the Budget Committee approve Capital Budget Project No. 23074 – Off-Leash Dog Area Policy & Implementation Plan, and Project Nos. 23087 –23091.

Carried

Project No. 23084 - South Cornell Parkette

Councillor Reid McAlpine advised that he spoke with staff offline as was fine with this project proceeding.

Moved by Alpine

Seconded by Mayor

That the Budget Committee approve Capital Budget Project No. 23084 - South Cornell Parkette.

Carried

Project No. 23204 - Library Furniture, Equipment & Shelving Replacement

Councillor Karen Rea advised she was fine with the project proceeding as presented, but still did not fully understand why departments have a lifecycle budget.

Mark Visser Treasurer, advised that departments can exceed their lifecycle budget if an asset needs to be replaced or repaired to address a health and safety concern.

The Committee approved the Capital Budget project as presented.

Moved by Councillor Karen Rea

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Michael Chan

That the Budget Committee approve Capital Budget Project No. 23204 - Library Furniture, Equipment & Shelving Replacement.

Carried

Project No. – 23220 – Mount Joy Artificial Turf Replacement

Staff advised that the Mount Joy Artificial Turf Replacement will be addressed at a future Budget Committee meeting, as staff need more time to work with user groups and the consultant to address the matter.

6. NEW BUSINESS

The Committee requested that staff add a few simple and easy to understand bullets to the Budget Public Consultation Meeting presentation on the implications of Bill 23 on the City's finances.

The Committee also requested that Members of Council be provided with some messaging to assist them in their communications with residents in regards to the impacts of Bill 23.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, at 9:00 AM.

Note: the February 15, 2023 Budget Committee meeting was cancelled after the meeting. The next meeting of the Budget Committee will now be held on Friday, February 17, 2023, at 9:00 AM.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Karen Rea

Seconded by Juanita Nathan

That the Budget Committee adjourn at 11:34 PM.

Carried