

Milne Park Report

By

Milne Park Staff

Written By

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Introduction

Over the years Milne Park has grown from an unknown community park into the prime destination for residents within the Town of Markham as well as our surrounding communities. Ever since the strike of parks and recreation in Toronto, Milne Park has become more popular than ever. Each year we see our total sales growing by exponential numbers. On various occasions throughout the summer Milne Park is filled to capacity and there is a limited number of staff to handle the overflow. As a result, with the growth of Milne Park new and troubling situations have developed for park staff members. These problems will be outlined in this report on Milne Park.

Common issues dealt with on the weekly by Milne Park staff.

- Various groups drinking alcohol in the park, leaving broken glass bottles all over the park and driving home drunk.
- People leaving the designated picnic areas at the end of the night full of garbage without so much as an attempt to clean up the area.
- People refusing to leave the park at the end of the night, sometimes resulting in either threats or aggressive action. For example, some have tried to run over staff with their cars and they verbally abuse park staff.
- Fights breaking out between different picnic groups, either verbal arguments or actual physical fighting. Sometimes there are racial disputes and every situation is intensified when alcohol is involved.
- People ignoring instructions given by staff, for example parking instructions. This situation is made worse when there are no parking spots left. The elderly and patrons in general often complain about being too far from their picnic area and unable to transport their things on foot.
- People double parking i.e. along the sides of the parking lot, road side, handicap spaces without permits and driving on the grass.
- Lack of proper traffic control training, as well as crowd control management for the staff at Milne Park.
- Over booking of picnic areas in each of the nine designated picnic spots.
- Additional washroom facilities for the patrons to use are required.

- There is not enough communication between events booked and Milne and Milne Park Staff. There have been occasions where people have booked an area in the park. However, Milne Park staff has not been notified or has not received the permit for the event.
- Milne Park staff should not have to deal with the other events that occur on the weekends in Markham. Each week we are constantly leaving our own area to take care of the garbage on Main St. Unionville as well as Main St. Markham. This proves to be difficult on the weekend with a limited number of staff members that can drive town vehicles and the amount of staff working on the weekend.
- Another major problem at Milne Park is the number of vehicles available to us. We all share one truck however there can be up to ten employees at Milne Park working at any given time.
- Milne Park needs better road signs indicating where the park is located. Many customers complain that they have a difficult time finding the park when they are driving up and down McCowan Rd.
- There is a lack of proper lighting within the park as well as along the road itself.

Suggested solutions for Milne Park

- Milne Park should employ older staff members to work at this facility. An older and better trained staff at Milne will be able to handle the various disturbances that occur at the park throughout the summer. An older staff also means that we will have a greater amount of qualified drivers for the town vehicles.
- Two one hundred and fifty day contract workers. Currently one contract worker for this area is not enough and they have to work many hours of overtime to cover the vacation days of the full time staff.
- An increased amount of signage indicating where the park is located. The current sign outside of Milne Park is not sufficient enough for patrons visiting the park and there has been incidents in the past where drivers have reversed their car back down McCowan Rd in order to enter the park. Another added benefit to the park would be a dedicated right and left turn lane into the park. (We are aware that McCowan Rd is a regional road and this suggestion might be difficult to implement.)

- An increased amount of lighting in the park would provide a safer working environment for the staff that has to close late at night. This would also help patrons exiting the park during special events during the year, for example Canada Day Celebrations.
- A thousand dollar cash deposit on each picnic area will help curb the problems of illegal drinking and an unclean picnic area. If the users of the area are in violation of any of the park rules then they could risk the chance of losing their deposit.
- Better communication between Milne Park staff and the persons booking events at the park has to be established. This will avoid confusion on the weekends with missing permit slips. Also, capping the number of picnickers per area will help with the over crowding situation. If this can not be done then we should consider raising the price of admission to three dollars per person or ten dollars a car. There should also be a price established for patrons arriving on a bus.
- Additional out houses or permanent washroom facilities should be located towards the west end of the park closer to Greenacres. This would solve the problem of people parking in the lane ways by the current washrooms located at the east end of the parking lot. This would also keep people from relieving themselves in the green spaces.

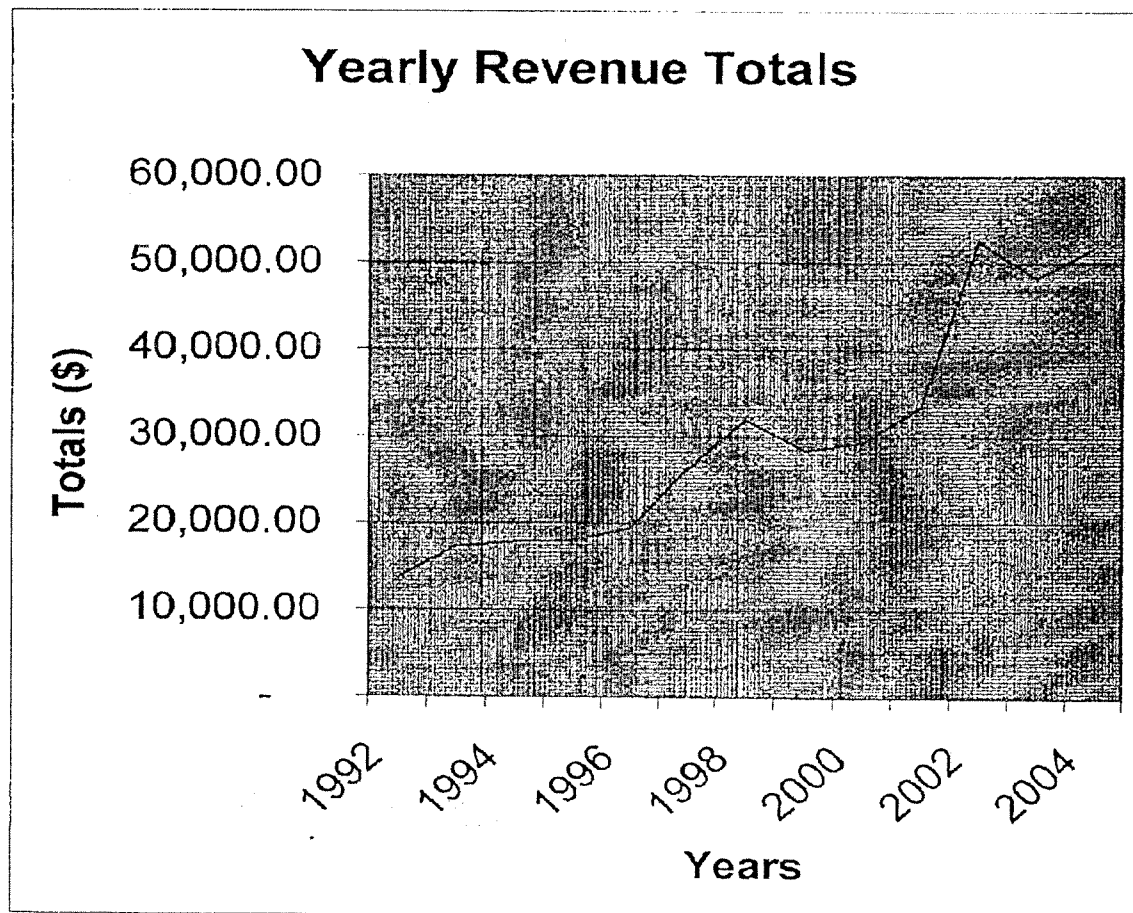
Conclusion

Milne Park is a unique and beautiful facility located in the middle of the Town of Markham. Over the years it has seen an exponential growth, that the current methods of handling the park must be adapted in order to accommodate its continued growth. This past summer saw Milne Park gross roughly sixty thousand dollars a year in revenue from the sale of parking alone. This is up about seven to eight thousand dollars from last years numbers. While the continued growth is good news for the Town of Markham, it has created at times unsafe working environment for staff members at Milne Park. We believe these suggested changes to Milne Park will help create a safe working atmosphere as well as preserve the conservation theme of the park. Some steps have been taken to help better the situation at Milne and it is much appreciated. However, better attention to fine detail at the park should be made in order to keep the park in the best shape possible.

Too many people whom visit the park on a daily basis, Milne Park has become a haven, a place of peace and an escape from a growing and busy

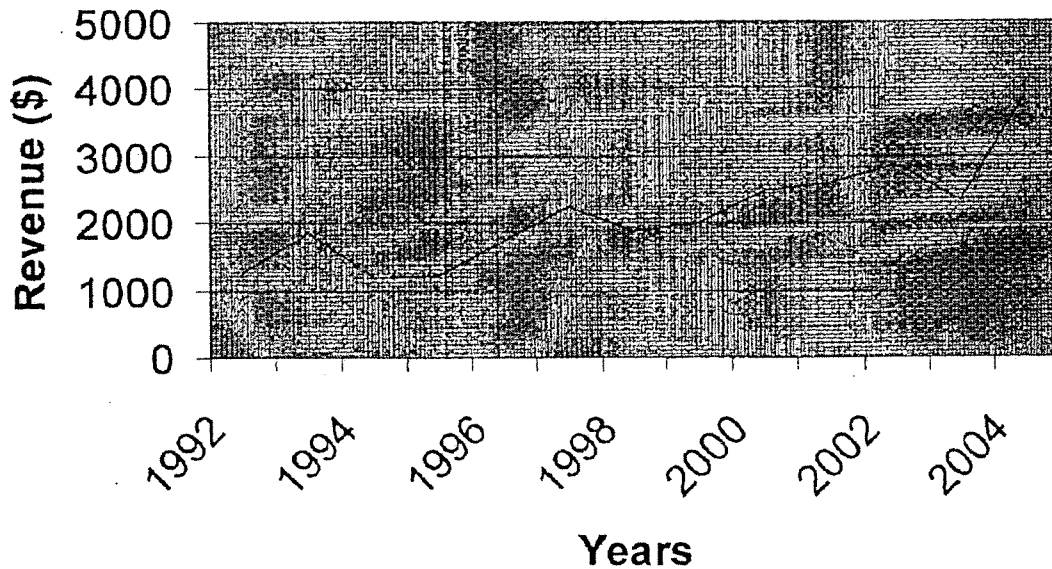
township. Since Toronto Parks and Recreation went on strike several years ago the popularity of Milne Park has grown and we are now entertaining many people from all over the Region of York and Toronto.

Markham is known for having wonderful, accessible and clean parks for its residents to enjoy. The park has become one of the more popular parks in the Markham area and in order to continue this tradition, certain changes should be seriously addressed. Milne Park will continue to grow and be a destination for people who are unable to escape north for the weekend. Therefore, the problems at the park cannot be ignored.



*Note: The total revenue for 2004 is based on only up to August 25, 2004 and will most likely be several thousands of dollars more than it appears.

Busiest Day of the Year (Excluding Canada Day)



Canada Day Versus Busiest Day of the Year(2004), Revenue to Staff Ratios

