



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Committee of the Whole

From: Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services

Meeting Date: September 26, 2016

**Subject: Report CSRS16-008
Maple Leaf Baseball League Proposal**

Purpose

A report to inform of a partnership proposal received from Laker Baseball Properties, to establish a professional-style baseball team in Peterborough, as one of the founding teams in the Maple Leaf Baseball League.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSRS16-008 dated September 26, 2016, of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That Report CSRS16-008 be received for information; and
- b) That the partnership proposal from Laker Baseball Properties to establish a Maple Leaf Baseball League team in Peterborough be rejected.

Budget and Financial Implications

There is no budget or financial implication resulting from the approval of the recommendations of this report.

Background

In February 2016, City Staff were contacted by Peterborough Economic Development, to attend a meeting with a representative from Laker Baseball Properties. The purpose of the meeting was for the City to receive information about a partnership opportunity with a new professional-style baseball organization, known as the Maple Leaf Baseball League (MLBL). Laker Baseball Properties' intent is to provide opportunity for Canadian athletes playing top level college baseball to compete at a level equal to professional Single A baseball, during the summer season. The league is being established now, with the inaugural season planned for 2018. Details of their proposal were received by the City in June of 2016, and are attached to this report as Appendix "A".

Laker Baseball Properties wishes to establish the MLBL founding teams in a minimum of six cities that are known to be vibrant sports communities, with strong baseball roots. The league is seeking a response from prospective host cities in September/October 2016. That time line will provide them with approximately 20 months to select the host cities, and conduct the necessary preparations for the start of the MLBL in 2018.

Impact on the Local Baseball Leagues

MLBL would establish their home at one of the City's two official sized baseball diamonds. Details of the preferred diamond are identified later in this report. The number of days per week the MLBL will require use of the venue will fluctuate. However, use will average 3 days per week from approximately May 15 to August 15 each year. The local baseball leagues that currently utilize the venue will be displaced to accommodate MLBL's activity. Staff believe that considering the impact on the local baseball leagues is of the utmost importance, when reviewing the Laker Baseball Properties proposal.

In 2016, the City in partnership with Trent University, the Peterborough Baseball Association (PBA), and the Peterborough Recreational Baseball Association (PRBA) celebrated the grand opening of the official sized baseball diamond at the corner of Nassau Mills Road and Pioneer Road. The facility was built, at a cost of approximately \$2 million to meet the community's identified need for a second official sized baseball diamond.

City Staff met with representatives of the PBA and PRBA to inform them of the proposal. The league representatives were asked to provide input on the impact to their leagues if they were to lose access to one of the City's two official sized diamonds, for the amount of time required by the MLBL. Both leagues identified that with the second diamond opening in 2016, they are finally in a position to meet existing demand and expand their leagues. Additionally, the PBA has been able to reduce its use of slo-pitch fields by moving activity to the new baseball diamond. That in turn helps address pressures within the slo-pitch user groups. Both Staff and the league representatives agree that giving up one of the two official sized baseball diamonds to the MLBL, will

nullify the recent advancements made in the provision of baseball facilities within the City. For that reason, Staff recommends rejecting the proposal from Laker Baseball Properties.

Review of Existing Baseball Venues in Peterborough

Laker Baseball Properties conducted an evaluation of both venues, and provided the results to City Staff. Please refer to Appendices “B” & “C” for details. Both venues require considerable capital investment to meet the MLBL requirements. However, the Riverside diamond is the preferred option for the MLBL operation.

Estimated Capital Costs

Based on the capital improvements identified in Appendix “B”, to meet the MLBL’s requirements at Riverside ball diamond, Staff has estimated the cost to be approximately \$1.1 million. This figure does not include locker rooms, a business office, or concession facility, as those amenities may be accommodated through an arrangement between the MLBL and the Lions Centre.

City Staff have asked Laker Baseball Properties to identify the amount of investment they are willing to contribute to the capital costs, and what their expectation is related to ongoing cost/revenue sharing. As of the date this report was written, no specific commitment had been identified.

Summary

Staff is recommending that the proposal from Laker Baseball Properties be rejected, due to the negative impact on the recent advancement in the provision of official sized baseball facilities within the City.

Should Laker Baseball Properties wish to expand the MLBL in the future, the opportunity could be revisited. However, commitment by Laker Baseball Properties would be required to enter into a long-term agreement with the City. Such agreement would address sharing in the cost to develop a brand new official sized diamond suitable for MLBL and community use, with mutually beneficial revenue/cost sharing arrangements in place.

Submitted by,

Ken Doherty
Director of Community Services

Rob Anderson
Recreation Division Coordinator

Contact Name:

Rob Anderson

Phone: 705-742-7777 Ext. 1833

Toll Free: 1-855-738-3755

Fax: 705-748-8824

E-Mail: randerson@peterborough.ca

Attachments:

Appendix A - Laker Baseball Properties Proposal Details

Appendix B – Riverside Park Facility Evaluation

Appendix C – Trent Site Facility Evaluation