



City of
Peterborough

TO: Members of the Arenas Park and Recreation Advisory Committee

FROM: Rob Anderson, Recreation Division Coordinator

MEETING DATE: February 15, 2011

SUBJECT: Report APRAC11-004
Toboggan Hills Risk Management Strategy

PURPOSE

A report to inform the Arenas Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee of the findings and recommendations resulting from a liability risk inspection of several locations within the City, where tobogganing, snowboarding, and other sledding-type activities are known to occur.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Arenas Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee endorse the recommendations outlined in Report APRAC11-004 dated February 15, 2011, of the Recreation Division Coordinator, as follows:

That risk mitigation actions be undertaken at City owned hills where tobogganing and other sledding activities are known to occur, specifically as follows:

- a) That signs be erected at Armour Hill West and Kiwanis Park cautioning the public that the hills are unsupervised, and identifying prohibited activities and safe sledding tips;
- b) That measures be taken to shorten the length of the sliding area on Armour Hill West, by approximately 50 metres;

- c) That during the winter months, Public Works continues daily inspections of Armour Hill West from Monday through Friday and on weekends, except during inclement weather, and weekly inspections of the Kiwanis Park hill;
- d) That signs be installed at Armour Hill North and Cedar Grove Park, identifying that tobogganing and other sledding type activities are strictly prohibited.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All expenses related to the addition of appropriate signage and hill safety maintenance can be accommodated within the approved 2011 budgets of the Recreation and Public Works Divisions. Additional funding may be required to shorten the sliding area of Armour Hill West. If necessary, such funds would be requested through the appropriate authority.

BACKGROUND

On November 23, 2010, City staff from Legal, Emergency Management, Public Works, and Recreation, along with a representative from Frank Cowan Company – Risk Management Services conducted inspections of eight locations within the City, where tobogganing, snowboarding, and other sledding-type activities are known to occur. The purpose of the inspections was to identify potential risks and to develop an appropriate risk management strategy.

Of the eight locations inspected on November 23, 2010, the following are located on City owned land:

- Ashburnham Memorial Park, Armour Hill West (Appendix “A”)
- Ashburnham Memorial Park, Armour Hill North (Appendix “A”)
- Cedar Grove Park (Appendix “B”)
- Kiwanis Park was later inspected on January 27, 2011. (Appendix “C”)

The remaining five inspections conducted on November 23, 2010 were for the following non-City owned lands:

- Prince of Wales School – Owned by Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
- Victoria Park – Owned by the County of Peterborough
- Riverview Park – Owned by Peterborough Utilities Commission
- Kinsmen Park – Owned by Peterborough Utilities Commission
- Towerhill – Owned by Peterborough Utilities Group

The Risk Summary report produced by Frank Cowan Company was received by City Staff on December 20, 2010. The full report is attached as “Appendix D”. The report lists the Liability Priority Ratings and risk mitigation recommendations for each location inspected on November 23, 2010. It is important to recognize, the report incorrectly refers to Armour Hill West as Armour Hill East.

City Staff has shared the Risk Summary report with the owners of the non-City owned sites. Those owners have been encouraged to review the Risk Summary report and to consider taking actions consistent with the risk mitigation recommendations provided by Frank Cowan Company.

Liability Priority Ratings for City Owned Sites

The Risk Summary Report provided a Liability Priority Rating to each site. The City-owned sites received either a Liability Priority Rating of 1 or 2. The Risk Summary Report identifies that risks with a priority 1 rating should be addressed immediately, while the priority 2 ratings should be addressed as soon as reasonably possible.

City Sites with a Liability Priority Rating 1

The following two City-owned sites received a Liability Priority Rating 1, with a recommendation from Frank Cowan Company that both sites be deemed unsuitable for tobogganing, snowboarding and all other sledding type activities:

Armour Hill North

- This hill is steep and dangerous, with only a nine foot wide path that leads directly on to a roadway. The path is immediately surrounded by a heavy growth of shrubs and other vegetation.

Cedar Grove Park

- This hill is located immediately along side a high traffic roadway. There are several manholes protruding along the south slope, with a retention pond located at the bottoming out portion of the hill.

Priority Rating 1 - Risk Mitigation Actions

In response to the Risk Summary Report, staff recommends the following actions be taken to deter sledding activities at the following sites:

Armour Hill North

- That signage, as identified in “Appendix E” of this report, be installed at the top and bottom of the hill indicating that tobogganing, snowboarding, and sledding activities are not allowed.

Cedar Grove Park

- That signage, as identified in “Appendix E” of this report, be installed strategically at several locations along the perimeter of Cedar Grove Park indicating that tobogganing, snowboarding, or sledding activities are not allowed.

- Permit the grass to grow on the slope, to make the hill unsuitable for tobogganing type activities.

City Sites with a Liability Priority Rating 2

The following two City owned sites received a Liability Priority Rating 2, with a recommendation from Frank Cowan Company that both sites be deemed suitable for tobogganing, snowboarding, and sledding type activities:

Armour Hill West

- This hill is the most popular hill for tobogganing and sledding type activities. The hill is quite steep, with a curved sliding area of approximately 103 metres long and 28 metres wide, with a minimum bottoming out area of approximately 57 metres. The sliding area is bordered on each side by mature trees. Two light posts have been installed on the south edge of the sliding area, to provide some lighting for evening use.

The hill was shortened by approximately 47 metres several years ago, to reduce the speed to which sliders could attain. However, sliders can still gain considerable speed from the top of the current sliding area.

Kiwanis Park

- This park contains a man-made, mound shaped hill situated in the south west section of the park. The hill is approximately 5 metres high, with a top to bottom distance of approximately 20 metres on all sides, with varying grades on each side. The bottoming out area varies from approximately 12 metres to 41 metres.

Priority Rating 2 - Risk Mitigation Actions

In response to the Risk Summary Report, staff recommends the following actions be taken at the following sites, where tobogganing, snowboarding or sledding type activities are to be allowed:

Armour Hill West

- That signage, as identified in “Appendix F” of this report, be placed at the top and bottom of the hill.
- That the top of the current sliding area be lowered by an additional 50 metres. This can be accomplished by planting trees across the sliding area, approximately half way between the top and bottom, where an informal walking path is currently situated.
- That the Public Works division continues to conduct daily inspections of Armour Hill West, during the winter months and on weekends, except during inclement weather. The inspection involves cleaning garbage and broken sleds off the hill, checking the existing garbage barrels and emptying if required, and determining whether condition of the hill is safe for tobogganing type activities or whether it

should be sanded to prevent usage. Public Works keeps a record of each inspection.

Kiwanis Park

- That signage as identified in “Appendix F” of this report, with site specific modifications, be placed strategically at the site.
- That straw bales be placed in front of a cluster of trees located at the bottoming out area on the east side of the hill.
- That Public Works inspects the hill on a weekly basis, to ensure the straw bales remain in place and that no jumps or other risks are present.

Staff would be pleased to receive input from the Arenas Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, at this time.

SUMMARY

While the City of Peterborough encourages its residents to participate in tobogganing and other sledding type activities, it is recognized that potential risks do exist in relation to this type of activity. As such, formal inspections of several local toboggan hills were conducted. The inspections included City owned and non-City owned hills. A Summary report of those inspections was produced, which identified risks, the severity of the risks, and recommendations to mitigate those risks. City staff supports taking actions in accordance with the recommendations of the Summary report, and have encouraged the owners of the non-city owned hills to consider the recommendations and to take action accordingly. Staff is seeking endorsement from the Arenas Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to move forward with the recommendations of Report APRAC11-004.

Submitted by,

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Recreation Division Coordinator

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Attachments:

Appendix A – Aerial Maps of Ashburnham Memorial Park (Armour Hill North & West)

Appendix B – Aerial Map of Cedar Grove Park

Appendix C – Aerial Map of Kiwanis Park

Appendix D – Risk Summary Report Prepared by Frank Cowan Company

Appendix E – Sample of a “No Sledding Allowed” Sign

Appendix F – Sample of a “Sledding Allowed” Sign