

Council Highlights

September 5, 2023 Committee of the Whole

Introductions

Drew Hyndman, Executive Director Development & Infrastructure Services, introduced Mark Krysinski, Director, Community Growth to Council.

Parks and Open Spaces Update

Mitchell Hamm, Director, Community Services provided Committee of the Whole with an update on the parks and open spaces within the town.

In 2013, Cochrane's population was just over 18,000 people and the Parks Department managed 246 ha of parks and open space. A decade later in 2023, Cochrane's population has almost doubled to just under 35,000 people and the Parks Department manages 531 ha of parks and open space. With community growth and the rate of development currently underway, in the next 3 years Cochrane's population is on track to reach over 38,000 people and the Parks Department will receive another 63 ha of parks and open space.

In 2013, the Parks Department had a staffing compliment of 6 full time operators and 27 seasonal staff. The total Parks budget was \$1.4M which converts to a unit rate of approximately \$5,800 per ha. In 2023, 10 years later the Parks Department has a staffing compliment of 8 full time operators and 27 seasonal staff. The total Parks budget is \$2.5M which converts to a unit rate of approximately \$4,700 per ha.

In the last decade the Parks department has only increased its full-time staff by 2 people and its seasonal compliment has remained unchanged. Although the overall budget has increased, Parks is maintaining over double the parks and open spaces it had 10 years ago and is doing it with \$1,100 less per ha.

Once the seasonal staff leave in September, full time staff begin winterizing parks assets, and transitioning equipment to prepare for winter snow and ice clearing. Currently Parks is responsible for the snow and ice management on 80km of paved pathways, nine Town parking lots and over ½ km of bridges and stairs.

With more pathway connectivity, more recreation spaces, and more development currently identified in the 3 year outlook, the Parks & Open Spaces department will continue to develop more efficient ways to contend with growth.

The goal of the Parks & Open Spaces team is to deliver a quality product that aligns with Council's strategic Plan, the Parks & Open Spaces Master Plan, and Council's vision for Cochrane's future.

Soccer Dome Update

The Cochrane Wolves and Sanctuary Project are requesting a location for a full-sized soccer dome. They estimated \$3.8M for dome and turf installation. Council requested more information from Administration about the feasibility and potential locations. Administration has received comparisons from Soccer Domes in Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton. Administration identified several challenges to consider including finding suitable land space and location, high cost to build and prepare the site, large size of land required with adequate parking, impact to views and sightlines and is there sufficient population to support it such a facility.

Administration recommended that a recreation needs assessment will help determine the needs of the community. Once the assessment is complete, administration can continue to look for opportunities for a Dome in the next 10 years.

Council Highlights

Expense Policy Guiding Principles

As directed by Council on May 8th, and as part of our ongoing commitment to transparent and responsible municipal governance, Mike Derricott, CAO, presented to Committee of the Whole the process of developing an expense policy. This policy aims to establish clear guidelines for expenditures while aligning with Cochrane's values and principles. To ensure a comprehensive and effective policy, Administration are seeking input from Council regarding the guiding principles and values that should shape this policy.

Traffic Construction Update Report

Drew Hyndman, Executive Director, Development & Infrastructure Services informed Committee of the Whole that 85% of the paving on the Highway 1A project had been completed, including the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Avenue intersections, the paving of Centre Avenue and the east bound lane of 1A will be carried out outside of peak time and will be completed by Wednesday, September 6. The line painting will be completed by the weekend. It was Administration's intended plan that the Highway 1A project was to have been completed fall 2022, delays beyond Administration's control led to delays and it was never intended to have so many of the roads closed at one time. Moving forward, Administration is looking at our contractual ability at holding the Contractors responsible for the Highway 1A delays. The Centre Avenue project is being carried out by a different Contractor and Administration is confident that this project will be completed and opened by the beginning of October.

In Camera

An In-Camera item was presented to Committee of the Whole pertaining to future growth.