



Corporate Report

Report from Parks, Recreation and Culture Services, Administration Services

Date of Report: July 2, 2015

Date of Meeting: August 24, 2015

Report Number: PRCS-194-2015

File: 68.31.161, 68.31.10

Subject: Request to Change Name of Municipal Beach to Sunset Beach

Recommendation

That Council consider the options contained in the staff recommendation. FORTHWITH

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend that Council approve one of the following motions:

1. That Council approve the request to change the name of Municipal Beach to Sunset Beach. FORTHWITH

or

2. That Council deny the request to change the name of Municipal Beach to Sunset Beach. FORTHWITH

Summary

This report provides an overview of the request to change the name of Municipal Beach to Sunset Beach, including comments received from the public and the Heritage Advisory Committee.

Background

At its meeting on April 27, 2015, Council received correspondence requesting that the name of Municipal Beach be changed to Sunset Beach, see Appendix 1. This name was previously suggested through a 2012 article about Municipal Beach in the St. Catharines Standard.

Municipal Beach is an approximately seven hectare City-owned beach located at 1 Lombardy Ave. The park includes a beach, parking lot, playground, washroom, and boat launch. The City purchased the beach from the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority in 2003 for \$2. Staff have no information about when Municipal Beach received its name or why; however, it was identified as Municipal Beach on City maps as early as 1961.

On January 23, 2004, Council approved a report on a policy and procedure for naming City parks, arenas and facilities; this report is attached as Appendix 2.

The request to change the name of Municipal Beach to Sunset Beach has been reviewed under the natural features criteria. Staff have followed the approved procedure and obtained input from the public in preparing this report.

Report

Following the request to change the name of Municipal Beach to Sunset Beach, a public notice was posted on the City's website and in the St. Catharines Standard on June 4, 2015; two weeks were provided for comments. In response to this notice, staff received correspondence from 111 individuals; these comments are generalized below.

Ninety-seven individuals supported the name Sunset Beach

A total of 97 individuals responded that they support changing the name of Municipal Beach to Sunset Beach. The following summarizes the comments made by these individuals to support their position:

- The name Sunset Beach is more personal, creative, youthful, and descriptive than Municipal Beach
- The name Sunset Beach evokes a beautiful image, has pleasant connotations, reflects the beauty of the site, and is appropriate due to the fantastic sunsets
- The name Sunset Beach will be a positive step in attracting locals and tourists to the beach and breathe new life into the beach itself
- The name Municipal Beach is awful, dreary, mundane, uninspiring, dull, bland, institutional, and banal

Nine individuals felt the name should not be changed

Nine individuals responded that they felt the name Municipal Beach should not be changed. The following summarizes the comments made by these individuals to support their position:

- No money should be spent on changing the name or reviewing the name change, especially considering that Arthur Street wading pool has been closed
- Changing the name may make the beach more popular which would create parking and traffic issues and increase the operating costs incurred by the City
- The name Sunset Beach reflects that there are a lot of seniors in St. Catharines
- There is nothing wrong with the name Municipal Beach
- People will continue to refer to the beach as Municipal Beach even if the name is changed

Five individuals and Heritage Committee recommended alternative names

Five individuals as well as the Heritage Advisory Committee recommended alternative names for Municipal Beach. The list of these names is included in Appendix 3. These individuals provided the following comments on the name Sunset Beach:

- The name Sunset Beach is cliché, common, boring, non-descript, unoriginal, and unimaginative
- The name Sunset Beach does not reflect the heritage or beauty of the City

Heritage Advisory Committee does not support the name Sunset Beach

Staff consult with the Heritage Advisory Committee when a park, arena and facility name is being considered from the List of Significant Local Individuals.

Since the name Sunset Beach is not derived from the List of Signification Local Individuals, this consultation is not required; however, the Heritage Advisory Committee reviewed the renaming request as part of the overall request for public comments.

There was consensus among the committee that the name Sunset Beach did not have a strong local identity and that a name rooted in St. Catharines' heritage would be better suited. The committee approved the following motion on June 11, 2015:

“That the St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee does not support the proposed renaming of Municipal Beach to Sunset Beach, and that the List of Significant Individuals be used as a guide for naming city streets, parks, arenas and facilities, and that the appropriate City staff be provided with Garden City Beach or Muir's Point as alternative names.”

It should be noted that, while a name can be taken from the List of Significant Individuals, the policy and procedure for the naming of City parks, arena, and facilities identifies this as only one of five naming options and assigns a higher priority to names that reflect geographic location, site history or natural features.

Financial Implications

The cost to review the request to rename Municipal Beach included \$140 to place a notice in the newspaper and staff time.

If the beach name is changed, the cost to provide a standard replacement sign is \$150. Any enhancement of the standard sign that may be requested by the community would be facilitated with funding through the community members requesting it.

Maps and literature would not be purposely reprinted; however, the name would be updated for any future printing.

Conclusion

Council received a request to change the name of Municipal Beach to Sunset Beach. In response to this request, comments were solicited from the public in accordance with the policy and procedure for naming City parks, arenas and facilities. Comments were received from 111 individuals, with the majority of comments being provided in support of the name Sunset Beach. The Heritage Advisory Committee reviewed the request and does not support changing the name to Sunset Beach and instead recommends using a name from the List of Significant Individuals. The policy and procedure for naming City parks, arenas, and facilities allows names under five criteria: geographic location, site history, natural features, a person (non-living), and sponsorship. This request was reviewed under the natural features criteria.

Prepared by: Kristen Sullivan Project and Development Planner

Submitted by: Amy Tomaino, B.B.A., Manager of Administration Services

Approved by: David Oakes, Ec.D., MAES, Director
Parks, Recreation and Culture Services

Dear Mayor Sendzik and City Council;

Spring has sprung and summer is just around the corner. At the Vanderkuip house, my kids, wife and I are anxious to get on our bicycles and find new and wonderful areas here in our community. Over the last few years, this has become a weekly ritual and we continuously find ourselves at one of the city's best kept secrets: Municipal Beach.

Last year, the beach was definitely a highlight in our lives and we had to have visited over a dozen times. The sand is pristine, the entry is shallow and child friendly, and the shoreline was immaculately kept — thanks to many volunteers and city staff.

It was so exciting to see people use the public dock to put their boats and Sea-Doo's in the water or watching the kite surfers skim over Lake Ontario on windy days.

As the season went on and my family and I built countless sand castles. Eventually, we began going more and more to watch the beautiful sunsets over the water. Those sunsets are certainly special, cascading over the water with the rest of the Golden Horseshoe on the horizon. And my wife and I weren't the only ones basking in the beauty of our community beach and those sunsets. We were surrounded by legions of people sitting and taking it all in.

We started wondering, "Why do people need to go on vacation to see beachside sunsets when we have some of the most special sunsets in our own backyard?" And this is why I'm writing to you today.

We would like City Council to consider a name change for Municipal Beach and adopt the moniker so many people are already using: Sunset Beach.

This dreamy new name fits this stretch of beach to a tee. The renaming of the beach to Sunset Beach has all kinds of branding opportunities associated with it and will certainly raise awareness to one of Niagara's great hidden gems.

As summer approaches. Sunset Beach will certainly be on the top of our end-of-day agendas. We are already looking forward to spending summer evenings watching tranquil sunsets with our family.

Sincerely,

Karl Vanderkuip

approved.

CARRIED.

ITEM NO. 57

**Report from the Recreation and Community
Services Department, Dated January 23, 2004
Re: Policy and Procedure for the Naming of
City Parks, Arenas, and Facilities
File: 60.31.10**

Council requested at the December 15, 2003 meeting that staff bring forward a report concerning the official naming of parks, arenas and recreational facilities.

Statement:

Recreation and Community Services recognizes that the names of parks, arenas, and recreational facilities owned by the City can have a significant influence on the sense of community within an area. With this in mind, a policy process to establish a systematic and consistent approach which respects and acknowledges the area's history, heritage, and environment, should be incorporated into the official naming of parks, arenas, and recreational facilities.

Objectives:

To ensure that parks, arenas, and recreational facilities are easily identified and located.

To ensure that given names to parks, arenas, and recreational facilities are consistent with the identity, values, and character of the area or neighbourhood served.

To encourage public participation in the naming, renaming, and dedication of parks, arenas, and recreational facilities.

To encourage the dedication of lands, recreational facilities, or donations by individuals and/or groups.

Current Criteria/Policy:

Since 1978, the General Committee of Council has been asked to approve the names for parks, arenas and recreational facilities based on a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Department (Recreation and Community Services). This staff recommendation was generally based on name recognition and geographic identity using the existing name of the major street that the park had access from. With this type of identification users are able to locate the facility relatively easily.

Policy Research:

The majority of municipalities throughout Canada have specific criteria for naming parks, arenas and recreational facilities. Generally, the use of geographic location, site history or persons with significant credentials to the specific park are common criteria in almost all the municipalities surveyed. Also common to the process is the formation of an Advisory Committee that uses the criteria to form a recommendation to Council.

Naming parks after people or groups of people is commonly done but under rigid guidelines. It should be noted that in a number of jurisdictions outside of Canada (United States) it is not appropriate to memorialize individuals unless there is a clear relationship between the park and the individual. The test of such a relationship is whether the individual has an appropriate place in the interpretive program as a person integral to or instrumental in the history of the park. The exception to this model is the recent trend in Public/Private partnerships where municipalities

exchange naming rights for additional funding. Sponsorship dollars acquired through the exchange of naming rights can provide municipalities with the ability to supplement their budgets, acquire property, develop, expand and renovate public facilities, and make capital investments in exchange for mutually approved marketing opportunities.

Proposed Criteria:

Based on the research, combined with the existing municipal policy it is clear that a naming process that provides clarity and consistency is desirable. From this, Recreation and Community Services will provide Council with names for parks, arenas, and recreational facilities that emphasize geographic location, site history, environmental significance, local cultural history, local name recognition, community values, and character.

1. The following criteria is organized in priority, and shall be used in determining the appropriateness of the naming designation.
 - a) Geographic location (neighbourhood and/or street location)
 - b) Site History (previous uses, local name identification, area cultural significance)
 - c) Natural Features (creek names, topographical names within the designated area)
 - d) A person (non-living) with a link to the neighbourhood should have made a significant contribution beyond the normal course of duty directly to the local area, specifically to the advancement of parks and recreation, largely in a voluntary capacity. The nominee must have given extensive and distinguished service to the community that goes beyond the particular local government (eg. service to other organizations, voluntary and community groups) in a voluntary capacity. Names can be taken from the approved Council Historical Character List, but will be subject to the same criteria as persons not on the list.
 - e) Sponsorship Option: Special conditions of property donation, construction or monetary donation as agreed upon by the donor and the municipality, shall be honoured regarding the naming of parks, arenas, and facilities. This item may take precedence over all other suggested names.
2. The naming of parks will be included as part of the public input process during the park development phase.
3. Names that are similar to existing parks, properties or facilities in the City system (or other systems in the municipality) should not be considered in order to minimize confusion.
4. The City reserves the right to change the name to maintain consistency with these policies.

This list refers to the List of Significant Local Individuals

Procedure:

1. A request for naming of a park, arena, or recreational facility shall be submitted in writing to the Recreation and Community Services. In the absence of any naming requests Recreation and Community Services shall adhere to the criteria stated in this policy and recommend a name.
2. Those submitting a naming request, should show how the proposed name is consistent with the criteria stated in this policy. When naming after a person or persons, the application will describe in detail the contributions to the City. Written documentation of approval by next of kin to be honoured (if available/possible) is required as part of the proposal.

City staff will review the proposal for adherence to the stated criteria and, check the Historical Characters List for pre-approval. If the name is not on the list, authentication of statements relative to contributions in the case of an individual, will be required from the those submitting the name.

If the request is incomplete, Staff will contact the applicant, in writing and provide them with the opportunity to resubmit a revised request.

3. Recreation and Community Services will offer the opportunity for public input on the proposed naming.
4. Recreation and Community Services shall forward their recommendation to City Council for final decision.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the recommendations for the naming of city parks, arenas, and facilities, as outlined in the report from the Recreation and Community Services Department, dated January 23, 2004, be approved.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MORRA:

That Council select names for City-owned property and facilities based on specific criteria and consideration of public comment;

and that this policy establish the process and criteria used in selecting names, and a method by which the public may provide suggestions and comments;

and that preference be given to names which:

- reflect the location of the facility
- recognize the historical significance of the area
- reflect unique characteristics of the site
- honour, posthumously, the significant contribution of an individual to the community;

and that the Recreation and Community Services Department solicit public comment through notices in the newspaper;

and that names be proposed by members of the public, elected officials, or staff;

and that suggestions for names in honour of individuals must be accompanied by a written description of the individual's contribution beyond the normal course of duty directly to the local area, largely in a voluntary capacity;

and that unused names be forwarded to the Director of Recreation and Community Services for inclusion on the Historical Character List, which is referred to when selecting names;

and that a referral be made to the Heritage Committee for consideration of both the staff recommendation and the public comment;

and further, that the Heritage Committee make a selection and forward this name to Council for approval.

CARRIED.

Alternative Name Recommendations for Municipal Beach

- Garden City Beach (3 recommendations)
 - o In the 1940s this name was used for the shoreline west of Municipal Beach
- Hostetter Beach/Hostetter's Flats (2 recommendations)
 - o This was an earlier name for the area adjacent to the beach (1860s?)
- Badgeley Beach
 - o From the List of Significant Individuals
 - o In recognition of Sidney Rose Badgley – architect who designed the old Carnegie library, the Welland Avenue Methodist Church, Toronto's Massey Hall, and several churches, theatres, and music halls in the United States
- Beech Grove
 - o In the 1920s this name was used for Port Weller. At that time a number of Beech trees were planted in the area that are still alive today
- Burtynsky Beach
 - o From the List of Significant Individuals
 - o In recognition of Edward Burtynsky – artistic photographer and environmentalist
- Muir's Point
 - o This is among the oldest historical names found for the beach. It was named after Captain Bryce Muir, of the Port Dalhousie dry dock family, who owned land on Arthur Street including the beach strip in the 1870s.
- Pleasant Valley
 - o As early as 1802-05 this name was used by the Hostetters for the area adjacent to the beach
- Port Weller Beach
- Smiley Beach
 - o From the List of Significant Individuals
 - o In recognition of Sampson and/or Charles Smiley – early settlers in Port Dalhousie; labourer; blacksmith; early member of St. John's (Anglican) in Port