

## Rotary Community Waterfront Friends Park Project

July 22, 2015

Background – summary points:

- Both North Bay Rotary Clubs had earmarked funds to participate in the *Community Waterfront Park Plan* (Schollen & Company Inc., March 1, 2006). North Bay with the Splash Pad and Nipissing with the Children's Safety Village.
- After the March 2014 *North Bay Community Waterfront Park: Strategic Plan* Consultants Report (Sierra Planning and Management) was presented, plans for some of the elements of the park and specifically the Children's Safety Village were shelved because there did not seem to be a business case to support them.
- In April 2014, the North Bay Club initiated informal discussions with the Nipissing Club about the possibility of partnering on the splash pad project as part of each Club's goal of exploring a community project to promote the "Rotary Brand".
- In July 2014, a small-unnamed group of individuals spearheaded by Shark Communications, launched a Facebook campaign stating, "We need a splash pad in North Bay" and wanted to build one in 2015; and suggested Lee Park as the location.
- A meeting was arranged that same month with the North Bay Rotary Club, Community Waterfront Friends (CWF) and Mayor Al McDonald, to provide Shark Communications and their group with the background information about the CWP plan and the Strategic Plan and the fact that the Rotary Club of North Bay was already working towards the establishment of a pad on a site as designated in the Park Plan (adjacent to the Kiwanis Spiral Mound). The Shark Communications group was encouraged to work with the Rotary club in some capacity vs. going it alone and at a different location.
- The North Bay Rotary rep (Hagborg) met with Gordan Rennie, Chair, Heritage North Bay in August 2014 to advise that Rotary was still interested in proceeding with the project and would work on preparing a brief business plan for HNB's review and support to be forwarded on to city officials. It was stressed that any proposal would have to be revenue-neutral (i.e. at no cost to HNB). The discussion also covered looking at an alternate site on a portion of the park behind the museum vs. adjacent to the Kiwanis Spiral Mound.
- In October 2014, the Rotary club convened a follow-up meeting with the same attendees to again strongly encourage all interested parties to work together on establishing a single splash pad facility. It was made clear that it was not feasible to prepare the business plan, secure the necessary capital funds, prepare the site plans/design, permits, etc. to allow for construction to commence any earlier than late 2015 and more realistically in 2016. The Mayor and CWF's agreed that Rotary would be the lead proponent.
- The key challenge raised at both meetings was around operating funds that would be required. One option briefly discussed would see a 'phased in' approach with funds raised for operating expenses by a yet to be identified organization (although Shark Communications have commented that this might be an area for their group to focus on) for the first 5-10 years of operation. After an agreed upon time, the city would end up assuming full responsibility as part of the Parks and Recreation budget.

- Shortly after this 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting Shark Communications agreed to work with Rotary.
- In January 2015, The Nipissing Club requested the reps for each club (Hagborg, Limina) meet to formally see if we could work together on the Splash Pad Project and during that initial discussion it became clear that both clubs were interested in partnering on the project and inviting the Rotaract Club of North Bay-Nipissing to join them – but with an interest in implementing a broader concept with the Splash Pad as just one of the components. It was also agreed, that a site behind the museum, if feasible, would be preferred over the current location as proposed in the Park Plan.
- The Rotary club reps (Limina, Hagborg), along with a CWF rep (Madigan), met with city officials (John Severino, Ian Kilgour) on January 29/15 to advise them as to Rotary's interest in moving forward with the splash pad, and was contemplating a more comprehensive concept to include other activities and ideally on a year-round basis. The key purpose of this initial meeting was to get a sense of what level of support might be anticipated, especially associated with ongoing maintenance and upkeep costs.
- A short meeting was held with the Rotary club reps (Hagborg, Limina) and HNB (Rennie, in February 2015 and it was agreed that a site on the parcel of parkland behind the museum would be considered. This was, in part, influenced by HNB's board signing a 5-year agreement with Vision Sports & Entertainment Group to establish a volleyball and event facility on the site originally proposed for the pad.
- A steering committee of four (4) Rotarians, two (2) from each club has been meeting since early 2015 to develop a concept that would respect the recommendation made in the North Bay Community Waterfront Strategic Plan.

In this plan two (2) scenarios were presented.

- Scenario One - Passive Parkland

Original Community Waterfront Friends Concept that had been presented to various organizations in order to obtain funding.

- Scenario Two - Highest and Best Use

Leaves the Southern Tract of the Park intact with the Spiral Mound, Splash Pad/Skate Park and Amphitheater while proposing that the Northern Tract be developed in partnership with private and institutional sections to create one or more buildings along with pedestrian walkways and congregation spaces that encourage passive enjoyment of the space.

- A second meeting was held with the Ian Kilgour in June/15 to discuss Rotary's preliminary proposal. In summary, if Rotary fundraises for the splash pad on the CWP lands, then Rotary will be asked to make a contribution towards maintenance for the medium to long term. The addition of some other water feature (e.g. pond/rink) would be conceptually feasible and possible opportunity to achieve savings on maintenance costs (water/water treatment). The development concept for elements of a "Rotary Commons" on the west side of pedestrian walkway received a positive response. Next steps – 4-step approach > outreach to other groups/potential partners including Aboriginal Community and University/College re: development concept; development of a prioritized list for construction of elements; followed by a Business Plan/Staging Plan; and a Sponsorship

Plan. Ian committed to forwarding the concept to Jerry Knox and John Severino to see if city support for the concept would be forthcoming in principle.

- Since late June our Steering Committee has been consulting with: CWF, HNB, City of North Bay, Shark Communications, Educational Sector - Nipissing, Canadore. And we have reached out to The Business Sector Chamber of Commerce, First Nations Community and Rotaract.
- A meeting with representatives of the groups mentioned (w/o the City of North Bay) was held on July 16/15 to work on what was referred to as:

- Scenario Three

This scenario may change the location of some of the elements present in Scenario One while including elements proposed in Scenario Two.

Rotary wants to develop a proposal that will meet the Communities need to position North Bay as a Regional Recreation, Culture, Service and Tourism Centre. This area of the Community Waterfront Park has the capacity to strengthen the link between the City's Core and the Waterfront thereby acting as a catalyst in becoming the commercial, residential and cultural core of North Bay.

- A follow-up meeting to brief HNB (Rennie, Ferguson) on the outcome of the July 16<sup>th</sup> meeting discussion was held on July 17/15 with Jeff Celentano.
  - HNB will only consider letting Rotary work with the most westerly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the site behind the museum (closest to Marina Point complex) vs. our proposed plan/understanding in a previous discussion with HNB that a larger footprint (i.e. the easterly 2/3rds of the site) was an option.
  - Any proposal coming to HNB must be 'fully detailed' (funding sources, anticipated revenues, operations plans and staffing) and, since HNB has 'exclusive' rentals/sales rights for the site, would be considered as a straight up 'rental', unless Rotary is prepared to own and operate/maintain or make payments to HNB.
  - HNB does not have the capacity to be involved in any additional 'planning' exercises, nor do they have the organizational capacity to be involved in any aspect of operations or programming.

A follow-up meeting to clarify these points has been suggested.

Prepared by: Bill Hagborg & Tony Limina

## **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION – PRE-CWP PLAN**

**From:** Bill Hagborg <bhagborg77@gmail.com>

**Subject: Re: Final Version - Rotary Commons Joint Planning Committee Briefing Report**

**Date:** January 3, 2016 at 9:37:07 AM EST

**To:** Jeff Celentano <jeffcelentano@cogeco.ca>

I 'finally' had some time this morning to go back through my files, to in particular see if I could answer your question about when the clubs were first approached by CWF.

I came across the following info that may provide some additional background reference material to reference [if required] when presenting the Briefing Note.

- In 2000, CWF started as a grass roots group to come up with an alternative to commercial development of the recently acquired rail lands between the downtown core and the waterfront park along Lake Nipissing. It was incorporated as a non-profit corporation February 9, 2001.
- CWF developed a vision for the parklands and in 2003 the City of North Bay passed a resolution adopting the vision as the plan for the future development of the rail lands. I believe Rotary was approached around this time to be part of that vision (Splash Pad, Safety Village).
- The business plan, dated March 1, 2006, provided the initial design with detailed drawings outlining the landscaping, railway and miniature train underpass.
- In 2006, our club committed \$125,000 to establish a "Waterfront Water Park" on the former rail lands "*near the North Bay Museum*" (quote from March 2011 Nugget '100 Years of Rotary in Canada' publication insert).

I am not sure if you also have this document (as above) on file, but it also provides some additional background that includes the meetings with Shark Communications, CWF and the city early in 2015.

FYI, I had forgotten about all the media we had put out there over the last 6+ years that publicly stated our commitment towards the establishment of a splash pad, until I started going through my files. And the fact we eared-marked proceeds from the 2012 Mayor's Gala specifically for this project.