

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

Public Works Committee: August 10, 2022

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR J. FARR.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR T. JACKSON.....

Enhanced Safety and Security Measures at John Rebecca Park, 76 John Street North, Hamilton (Beasley Neighbourhood) (Ward 2)

WHEREAS, CCTV cameras installed in public parks where criminal acts occur have assisted, in partnership with other parallel reasonable security measures and as investigative tools for law enforcement, to mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence and impact of the criminal behaviour to the property and its local community.

WHEREAS, John Rebecca Park, located at 76 John Street North in Hamilton, is a recently completed multi-million-dollar urban parkette that replaced a surface asphalt parking lot and received substantial public input on design to serve residents and visitors;

WHEREAS, John Rebecca Park has become an unsafe environment due to an increase in criminal acts that include but are not limited to theft of and vandalism to City property and adjacent properties and businesses, alcohol and drug use, physical altercations, violence, vulgar and offensive graffiti, wire and power theft, encampments, illegal dumping and excessive litter, human defecation and urination, harassment of staff and local businesses;

WHEREAS, City of Hamilton staff cannot ensure a safe play environment at John Rebecca Park;

WHEREAS, all City of Hamilton Staff with work assignments at John Rebecca Park must not attend to the work without the presence of the Hamilton Police Service, as further detailed in Appendix "A";

WHEREAS, many assets within the park such as fixed metal chairs and components of the spray pad have been repeatedly vandalized and stolen and due to the high cost to replace these items and likelihood of repeated damage they have not been replaced and will not be replaced until the vandalism and theft incidents are controlled;

WHEREAS, often, when individuals at John Rebecca Park are approached during multiple daily visits from the Hamilton Police Service, Municipal Law Enforcement, Various Health Outreach teams and City of Hamilton Encampment staff they refuse to welcome the help being offered;

WHEREAS, a recently planned festival for John Rebecca Park was relocated by request of the City of Hamilton Special Events Advisory Team (SEAT) due to the concern for public safety at the park; and

WHEREAS, adjacent businesses to the park have incurred substantially higher maintenance costs due to the same incidents that are occurring in the park and would benefit from support by the City to deal with the impacts on their properties.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That following a project specific Privacy Impact Assessment on the use and application of CCTV technology, CCTV cameras be installed including all reasonable mitigating measures recommended through the Privacy Impact Assessment at John Rebecca Park, 76 John Street, Hamilton, at the upset limit of \$35,000, to be funded through the Ward 2 Area Rating Capital Reserve account # 108052 along with an annualized \$1,000 operating impact for PM maintenance.
- (b) That staff from Public works, with requested Hamilton Police Service assistance, be authorized and directed to meet with the businesses adjacent to John Rebecca Park, 76 John Street North, to work on a plan for reducing the negative impact to their properties and report back to Public Works Committee on these and any future measures that could be instituted along with the associated costs;
- (c) That the General Manager of Public Works be authorized and directed to approve and execute all required agreements and ancillary documents, with such terms and conditions in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

APPENDIX "A"

- The City of Hamilton has an obligation to provide a healthy and safe work environment for employees
- Staff have expressed safety concerns about aggressive behavior of those encamped at John Rebecca Park
- Businesses and the public in the immediate area have also expressed concerns about aggressive behavior of those encamped at this location
- Recent aggressive acts in the park including verbal threats to staff, have resulted in management instructing staff to not enter John Rebecca Park without police presence until conditions at the park improve
- The mover (Councillor Farr) has sought, but is unable to find any examples from the past where City staff have been instructed to do their jobs only if police are present at any one location and on an ongoing basis
- The City of Hamilton has a Zero Tolerance Policy