



Working together with our community

Council-In-Committee Meeting – November 14, 2023

Subject: Port Dover Beach – 2023 Summer Season Recap and 2024
Items for Consideration
Report Number: CAO-23-117
Division: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Department: CAO Office
Ward: Ward 6
Purpose: For Decision

Recommendation(s):

That report CAO-23-117 be received for information; and

That staff be directed to return to Council with an update and recommendations for the 2024 summer season.

Executive Summary:

Following Council's direction to staff earlier this year, leases were signed with the largest private landowners of the Port Dover Beach for the 2023 summer season, with options to extend the leases annually. With the lease agreement commitment, Norfolk also passed a bylaw governing the conduct of beach goers on the beach and commenced an active education / awareness / enforcement campaign during the summer season.

Following the 2023 summer season, in early October, Norfolk staff met with Port Dover beach landowners to review how the first year of the lease went, discuss successes, opportunities for improvement, next steps for 2024, etc., should parties to the lease agree to renew the lease.

Discussion:

Norfolk and the major private landowners of the Port Dover beach reached a tentative agreement and commitment on a lease in late spring / early summer of 2023.

In essence, the lease formalized much of what had been ongoing for years, and incorporated some enhancements to arrive at an acceptable situation for all parties to the lease. In summary:

- Norfolk pays the private landowners \$1 plus HST annually;
- Lease dates are from July 01 to September 30 annually;
- Parties must notify each other of the intent to renew the lease for the next summer season by December 30 of each year;
- Norfolk continues to provide general custodial / maintenance services on the beach;
- Norfolk creates a bylaw to regulate behaviour on the beach;
- Norfolk provides active enforcement / ambassador efforts on the beach;
- Beach hours are from sunrise to sunset;
- Joint insurance and liability coverage.

As anticipated, being the first summer of this new arrangement, the summer of 2023 provided some challenges but also produced many successes. Due to the time crunch created between an agreement and start date of the summer season, Norfolk outsourced the ambassador / enforcement duties to a 3rd party contractor.

An overview of the 2023 summer season is summarized below:

- Pilot introductory program ran for 43 dates – June 29 – September 04
- Included 3 Holiday Mondays
- Program commenced with 2 ambassadors / officers working Thursday – Sunday (and Holiday Mondays)
- Last 2 weeks of the program, coverage evolved to:
 - 7 day coverage, with single officer Mon – Fri and
 - 2 officers working weekends and Holiday Mondays
- Hours of coverage were 11am – 5pm
- Total interactions with the public exceeded 5,000
- Bylaw education / awareness / enforcement interactions totaled 1,089 (approx. 25 per day on average)
- As the summer carried forward, daily interactions trended lower as beach goers seemed to better understand the rules
- Interactions / warnings included:
 - Tents (40%)
 - Dogs (22%)
 - Smoking (18%)
 - Umbrellas (12%)
 - Alcohol (6%)
 - BBQ (1%)
 - Glass containers (1%)
- 4 instances in total that required OPP intervention:
 - Intoxication involving 3 males
 - Smoking / Intoxication involving party of 35 people
 - Dog issue

- Tent issue at far west side of beach area
- Zero tickets written
- Zero revenue in fines / collections
- Province has yet to approve proposed fines for bylaw violations
- Many interactions with beach goers inquiring about washroom locations
- Inquiries concerning lost and found

A meeting was held on October 10, 2023 with the parties to the leases to discuss the 2023 beach season. In general, the feedback was positive and the 2023 season was deemed to be an improvement over previous summer seasons and a success. Some of the feedback received included:

- Update social media / County website to educate the public further concerning bylaw restrictions and desired behaviours for the beach / encourage more tourism
- Review of lighting on the beach for increased safety after dark
- Public washrooms:
 - Location closer to the beach would be desired
 - Cleanliness needs to be improved
- One point of contact for the ambassadors / enforcement staff
- Improved signage on the beach for awareness
- Consider commencing lease earlier and ending later (climate change)
- Review guidelines concerning service dog identification
- Consider increased ambassador / enforcement coverage hours
- Review / improve waste receptacle clean up times / frequency
- Consider harsh environmental conditions for ambassadors / enforcement staff

For the 2023 season, the following is a preliminary summary of costs:

ITEM	ANNUAL COUNCIL APPROVED BUDGET
Initial Beach levelling	\$1,000
Beach rake operations (all summer)	\$6,600
Beach cleaning / litter barrels	\$19,300
Loader rental	\$7,500
Disposal Bin rental	\$6,100
Install/removal of swim buoys	\$9,300
Seaweed removal	\$2,000

Beach accessible mat (install/removal/upkeep)	\$1,000
Signage – repair, install, repair, etc.	\$900
Fuel for equipment	\$200
Beach barrel replacements	\$200
General admin time	\$1,000
	\$55,100

2023 ADDITIONAL COSTS:

ITEM	PRELIMINARY COSTS
Legal fees to draft leases	\$8,200
Ambassadors / Enforcement	\$13,600
	\$21,800

TOTAL 2023 COSTS **\$76,900**

Financial Services Comments:

As itemized within the body of this report, staff have identified operating costs totalling approximately \$55,100 for the 2023 beach season applicable to this arrangement as at the time of the report. This includes allocations for internal staff time, materials and supplies and external service providers to provide maintenance and custodial services for the beach area in accordance with the agreement. It should be noted that the Approved 2023 Levy Supported Operating budget already contains allocations for most of these maintenance items; Therefore, the act of formalizing these commitments is not expected to have a material impact on future budget requirements.

Additionally, the County incurred legal costs of \$8,200 to establish a formal lease agreement with the Port Dover beach landowners, as well as \$13,600 for third party security and by-law enforcement activities for the first year. These are considered one-time costs and are not expected to be required in the same capacity going forward. These unbudgeted expenditures are expected to be accommodated within the projected 2023 operating surplus per the June 30th variance report presented to Council.

Interdepartmental Implications:

N/A

Consultation(s):

Internal stakeholders were consulted and contributed to this report.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2022-2026 Council Strategic Priority Sustaining Norfolk - Creating a sustainable community and a positive legacy.

Explanation:

Having a publicly accessible waterfront in Port Dover is advantageous to contributing to a strong economy helping draw tourists to the area and giving Norfolk residents an opportunity to enjoy the waterfront.

Conclusion:

Leases were signed with the largest private landowners of the Port Dover Beach for the 2023 summer season and a bylaw governing the conduct of beach goers on the beach was passed by Council. Norfolk commenced an active education / awareness / enforcement campaign during the 2023 summer season.

The summer season was deemed a success and staff will be looking to renew the lease for 2024 and make further refinements to ensure a successful 2024 season.

Attachment(s):

N/A

Approval:

Prepared by:
Al Meneses, CAO