



SUBJECT: REVISED - LaSalle Park Community Marina

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Recreation Services Department

Report Number: RS-06-20

Wards Affected: 1

File Numbers: 945-02

Date to Committee: NA

Date to Council: June 22, 2020

Recommendation:

Receive and file Recreation Services report RS-06-20 regarding the LaSalle Park Community Marina and the public boat launch.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the operating status of the LaSalle Park Community Marina and public boat launch for the upcoming boating season.

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

Background and Discussion:

The LaSalle Park Marina Association (LPMA) is a non-profit organization that has operated the LaSalle Park Community Marina (Marina) since the early 1980's under an agreement with the City of Burlington (City). LPMA had been in discussions with the City for several years regarding the replacement of an aging floating wave break that protects boats and the Marina infrastructure.

In 2019 Council approved the purchase of a new floating wave break for the Marina. Subsequently, staff negotiated a new license agreement with LPMA giving them the authority to operate the Marina in a similar manner as in the past and included an annual license fee to pay for a portion of the new wave break. Staff also issued a tender for the construction and installation of the wave break that was anticipated to be completed in early April 2020.

The completion of the wave break was delayed due to impacts of COVID-19. The wave break installation was completed on June 5, 2020. During the delay in the completion of the wave break, LPMA's Board indicated to staff that the Marina would not open for the 2020 boating season due to concerns and restrictions related to COVID-19.

The Burlington Sailing and Boating Club (BS&BC) which provides storage for boats, sailing programs, camps and races indicated to staff that their Board decided programs would not operate this year due to COVID-19. As well, since boats will not be put in the water due to the Marina closure, the storage compound for boats will remain in place on a portion of the parking lot used for boat trailers.

Following a recent discussion at Committee regarding the status of the Marina, Councillor Galbraith and staff spoke to both organizations. The purpose of this discussion was to determine if they would reconsider their decision not to operate following the Provincial announcement allowing marinas to open. Both organizations confirmed the Marina and sailing programs would not operate this year and was for the most part, supported by their members. Reasons for not operating are included below:

- COVID-19 delayed the installation of the wave break initially planned for early April. The wave break was completed in early June and LPMA estimates it takes 4 – 5 weeks to put docks and boats in the water. As a result, the Marina would not open until late July and the boating season would be significantly shorter. Typically, the boating season starts in May and ends in early October.
- LPMA would incur the same costs to install the Marina infrastructure as in previous years but would anticipate a reduction in revenue. Some boaters will not put their boats in the water for a shorter season in consideration of COVID-19 measures. LPMA is concerned that operating the Marina with a shorter season in addition to COVID-19 measures and impacts would result in a significant loss.
- Volunteers from LPMA install the Marina infrastructure. LPMA expressed concerns with volunteers working in an environment where they are unable to physical distance in work boats when installing the docks. Some of the volunteers stated that they would not volunteer to do this work due to COVID-19.
- LPMA is concerned that if there is a second wave of COVID-19 in the fall and the Province implements stricter measures, there may be challenges removing docks and boats from the water prior to winter.

- LPMA received comments from boaters indicating that it's not worth the effort and cost to put their boat in the water for a shortened boating season. As well, for many people boating is a social activity and physical distancing will restrict having visitors on board.
- BS&BC sailing lessons cannot be held with physical distancing measures in place. Physical distancing also restricts boaters and organizers of races.

Staff have not received any complaints from boaters since LPMA announced the Marina would not open this year.

Staff will report to Committee and Council in the fall on matters related to recovery of fees payable by LPMA pursuant to their license agreement and other agreements with LPMA and BS&BC.

There is also a City owned public boat launch at the Marina. The public boat launch is free to use and is not monitored or supervised.

Strategy/process

There have been inquiries about the opening of the boat launch from the public. With the closure of the Marina, staff have investigated several items related to the boat launch including the installation of docks, signage, traffic flow and parking at the Marina and in LaSalle Park.

After considerable discussion regarding the operation of the boat launch, staff decided to close the boat launch to boats that require a trailer and only kayaks and canoes can use the boat launch. Typically, kayaks and canoes are transported on vehicle roof racks and do not require parking for a trailer. Large cement blocks will be placed in front of the boat launch to prevent trailers from entering the launch but will allow boaters to carry kayaks and canoes to the water. Reasons for restricting the use of the boat launch include:

Lack of Parking for Trailers: The parking lot at the Marina is considerably smaller because the docks that are stored on the parking lot in the fall and winter will remain there for the summer. These docks take up 16 parking spaces and the exit lane. As well, boats will remain in the storage compound for the summer that eliminates all 12 trailer parking spaces. Appendix A contains an aerial view of the parking lot identifying these impacts.

With all trailer parking eliminated in the Marina parking lot, there is no other area in LaSalle Park to accommodate trailers. In the past, a grassed area off the parking lot in LaSalle Park by the bocce courts was used for overflow parking for 4 – 5 trailers. Staff investigated enlarging this area and determined it cannot accommodate additional parking spaces for vehicle and trailers.

Impeded Traffic Flow: The Marina parking lot typically has separate lanes for entry and exit but because the docks and boat storage compound infringe on the parking lot, parking and traffic flow are impacted. Vehicles are not able to circulate through the parking lot but now must turn around. The revised parking lot now has a single lane that acts as a two-way entry/exit and cannot accommodate any vehicles with boat trailers because there is not enough space to turn around. As well, vehicles with trailers can only maneuver into the boat launch if additional parking spaces are removed by the LPMA office.

Safety and Liability: Staff anticipate LaSalle Park will be extremely busy this summer even though the Marina is not operating. Managing the boat launch with impacts to parking and traffic flow along with a lack of trailer parking presents safety concerns when considering the amount of vehicle and pedestrian traffic in and around the area.

Options Considered

Marina: Staff considered engaging the services of a contractor to install docks in order to open the Marina. The installation of docks is labour intensive, requires the use of a crane and work boats and takes a considerable amount of time. LPMA does not have the funds to support this and staff recommends the City not provide the funding. With a shorter boating season, it is highly unlikely the cost of installing the docks would be recovered. Therefore, this option was not recommended.

Boat Launch: Staff considered operating the boat launch in the same manner as in the past; no charge and without staff on site to monitor its use. For the reasons listed above in strategy and process, this option was not recommended.

Staff investigated options for the paid use of the boat launch that would include a fee for launching a boat with a parking space. Options for payment included ticket or pass purchase through a pay and display terminal or book a launch time through Recreation Services' scheduling software Perfect Mind. For the reasons listed above in strategy and process, this option was not recommended.

Staff considered having Park Ambassadors on site throughout the summer on weekends and holidays to manage the use of the boat launch and parking. For the reasons listed above in strategy and process, this option was not recommended.

Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact

Staff will arrange to place barriers on the boat launch and have signage for traffic flow, parking and the boat launch installed at the Marina, in LaSalle Park and along the road leading to the Marina at an estimated cost of \$1,000.

Staff installed temporary fencing around the docks on the parking lot of the Marina to prevent vandalism until the end of September at a cost of \$1,600.

Source of Funding

These items will be funded through the COVID cost centre 429300.

Climate Implications:

There will be less vehicle traffic in the area with limited parking at the Marina less use of the boat launch.

Engagement Matters:

Staff will educate the public and boaters through information on the City's website and signage at the Marina by the boat launch.

Conclusion:

It is unfortunate that the Marina and sailing programs will not operate this year at the LaSalle Park Community Marina. With the reduced size of the parking lot and lack of trailer parking the public boat launch will not be available to boats but can be used to launch kayaks and canoes for this season.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Pladsen

Recreation Planner

905-335-7600 ext. 7627

Appendices:

- A. Marina Parking Lot Impacts

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Council. Final approval is by the City Manager.