

CM-13-16 CCS September 12, 2016
File no. 945-10

Dear Chair Lancaster, Mayor Goldring, Members of Committee, City Staff and Burlington citizens.

I am pleased to delegate today on behalf of BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association regarding the City Manager's update report on the LaSalle Park Marina Wave Break Project Update.

It is clear to us that the financial deficiencies and policy compliance issues attached to the LPMA and their joint venture agreement should result in a decision by this Council to reject the proposal for a marina expansion at Lasalle Park.

We also suggest that Council look at this issue in a broader context that goes beyond the business case, namely planning and public engagement.

The City's Strategic Plan states that "Parks and green spaces are multi-use. Residents and visitors will be able to use them in a number of ways." The initiative stated in the Strategic Plan to achieve this is "The Parks Master Plan will be updated to reflect growth objectives and changing density in the city"

We understand that there is currently no master plan for LaSalle Park where the use of the waterfront and importance of the aquatic habitat can be dealt with more holistically.

We believe that the overarching question for LaSalle Park is one of planning....the city should not be making such a significant decision on a financially risky private entity proposal, that has far reaching and likely irrevocable implications without first preparing a master plan for the park, a key part of which includes gathering meaningful input from the public about what activities and infrastructure are highest priority.

Just as an example, we understand that the town of Monticello, Minnesota actually celebrates and cherishes the swan population that inhabits their shores. Burlington could showcase to the world how local volunteers have managed to rescue a species from extinction. Not many cities can demonstrate and showcase such a feat. Such a feature would help preserve Canada's biodiversity right here at home and provide a focus for eco-tourism at the Park.

Whether it's the overdue transportation master plan, climate change action plan or park specific master plans, the sooner all of these can be advanced, tying directly to the strategic plan, the less reactive decision making will occur. While we respectfully recognize that this Council needs to continue to make difficult decisions until these overarching planning documents are in place, certainly proposals such as that of the marina expansion, which are not considered urgent in the larger community, should wait. Meaningful public engagement, ensuring the best use of our natural and community assets, and due diligence to ensure the requirements of the Environmental Assessment decision are being advanced, all trump consideration of a marina expansion that serves so few Burlington residents.

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Our request to this Council is that given the findings in the report before you the LaSalle Park Marina Association's proposal for an expansion be rejected and also that direction be given to staff to take steps to advance a master plan process for the park meaningfully engaging the citizens of Burlington in helping to determine what features and opportunities they want to see at the area.

Thank you.