
GRIESBACH COMMUNITY LEAGUE SPECIAL MEETING

JUNE 11, 2018

Minutes

Topic: Potential refurbishment of the original playground

Call to order by Brad Tilley at 7:10.

15 community members in attendance at beginning of meeting.

PRESENTATION

Brad introduced himself and the plan to vote shortly after 8:00 pm tonight. Voting open only to GCL members.

Brad presented the history of this project. Several people had expressed a need to maintain the older playground, and some have raised the need specifically for the 2-5-year-old age group. Plan to keep original part of metal structure, put on new slides, paint, fix anything that is loose, fix pilings, new sand and curbing with slightly modified dimensions. New equipment has been selected in consultation with the City and all meets safety standards while still building motor skills and encouraging physical activity. Community members has also expressed their appreciation for trees and benches, will also be incorporated into the design. Parts being removed are the older portions that don't meet safety standards – the wooden structure and the metal climbing dome. South-facing slides are no longer permitted to be built due to the possibility of heating to the point of burning a child.

Aaron reviewed the financial background. City of Edmonton owns the playground land, but under the terms of the land swap EPSB is obligated maintain the playground equipment until the area is remediated to sod at EPSB expense. For the City to accept a structure into its current inventory, it has to meet today's standards, and the old playground does not meet those standards as is. The quote they have given us is ~\$83,000 to accept into inventory a portion of the playground, with no new upgrades. City gave us the opportunity to add additional equipment into the playground without having to do additional consultation or infrastructure, and would be able to build in a 6-8 week time frame. Two main structures are about \$57,000. Board has voted to approve up to \$160,000. We have existing funds left over from the new playground, that would have to be forfeited if not spent (\$72,000). We have another \$11,000 coming in from bingos. The \$160,000 budget allows some margin for risk, and adding additional benches. We could afford 4 benches and 2 picnic tables with no other overages. The benches can be ordered after all other construction costs are known. City is looking at donating the trees.

Play space is highly utilized during evening sports, and the new playground in the northwest corner is too far away for supervision for younger children. Colour design for the revitalized playground will echo the design of the new playground.

To upgrade to wood fibre from sand would be about \$30,000, so sand is the more economical choice.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Comment: feedback from community has not made it to the board. Impression that this project focuses activity in this specific area of the neighbourhood. Another board member concerned that the aesthetic of two playgrounds in the same neighbourhood is unsightly and unseemly, not seen in other communities. Doesn't think that the city needs another playground. Concern that it is only a 7-year life span, and there are better ways we could spend that \$72,000, such as a transfer to another AGLC-funded group such as the parent council at the school.

Response: window for 2-year expansion has passed. Board hasn't heard community members expressing concern that other areas are missing out. Other areas would require a full community consultation. GCL does want to include

the rest of the neighbourhood. President announced that Canada Lands has verbally offered \$400,000 toward a spray park on the west side of the neighbourhood. GLC intends to work with the Catholic school board to start planning early for their playground, so that we are prepared for design when that new school construction funding comes.

Question: Is it possible to transfer the funds to the parent council? Clarifying that the money must be spent or forfeited.

Response: GCL did not file paperwork to make such a request, so yes, those funds must be spent or returned. We have just done another casino and those funds have no destination. Also clarified that the 7-year life span is a conservative estimate from the City on the refurbished portion. Newer portions will have a longer life span, and the repairs to the older structure are likely to last much longer than 7 years.

Question: Have safety and mobility concerns about sand been concerned? Is there a possibility of shade other than trees, which take a long time to grow? Are there ways to tie in the playground aesthetically to the new playground, perhaps with a path? Will teeter-totters be gone?

Response: Cost is a major factor in the choice to keep the sand. Future pathways are an option, but the City has not so far been willing to forfeit any green space for fields. May be able to put benches near existing trees. Gazebo is very expensive. City is aware we want to incorporate the same colours from the new playground. Teeter-totters will be taken away.

Question: Why is there a feeling that preschoolers can't use playground during the day?

Response: They are certainly allowed to use the playground, but some parents don't like to have their kids there at the same time as the older kids. That feedback doesn't necessarily come from all parents of preschoolers.

Question: Who owns the property?

Response: EPSB. City councillor helped to advocate to keep EPSB from demolishing it. The City will own the playground once the repairs are done, and it will not be GCL inventory. No maintenance agreement.

Question: What is the parent council?

Response: Within Major General Griesbach School, helps fundraise and oversee expenditure of those funds.

Question: Is there a time limit on this money?

Response: Our understanding is that we would have to make a new application to AGLC, and we would need to have an alternate plan for how to spend those funds in the very near future.

Question: Can funds be directed to adding more to the new playground?

Response: The City would not permit us to put anything else at that playground.

Question: In the experience of the Facilities Director, is there a way to move the funds to another AGLC account holder?

Response: In that Director's experience, has not seen such a request denied. Another board member pointed out that not all Griesbach resident children go to the school and would not necessarily benefit from funds being transferred to the MGG Parent Council.

Question: Is there an option to have a basic playground with wood fibre instead of sand? Or spend more to upgrade to the wood fibre?

Response: The focus is rehabilitation. Timeliness of decision prevents more design considerations.

VOTING

Must be a member of the Griesbach Community League to vote. First vote: to proceed or not? Potential second vote: if proceeding, which of the three proposals?

Aaron reviewed the three proposal options, which were also outlined with costs on sheets at each table.

Proposal 1: Minimum city requirements. \$83,077.66

Proposal 2: Minimum city requirements + 2 big play structures. \$140,416.38

Proposal 3 (Board recommendation): Minimum city requirements + 2 big play structures + benches and picnic tables. \$160,000.00

Results of first vote:

How many would like to move forward with the refurbishment of the original playground?

27 in favour

1 opposed

Motion carried

Result of second vote:

Proposal 1: 0 in favour

Proposal 2: 0 in favour

Proposal 3: 27 in favour

Abstention: 1

Proposal 3 carried

Treasurer encouraged attendees to bring forward their ideas for capital spend to Brad.

Brad Tilley adjourned the meeting at 8:12 pm, seconded by Aaron Gregson.