



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF PARKS, FACILITIES, RECREATION & CULTURE

MISSION STATEMENT: *Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.*

Author's Name: Heidi Baillargeon	Report Date: February 23, 2023
Author's Phone: 519 736-5712 ext. 2128	Date to Council: February 27, 2023
Author's E-mail: hbailargeon@amherstburg.ca	Resolution #:

To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: Walter Ranta Memorial Park Proposed Boat Ramp Information Report

1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. The report from the Director of Parks, Facilities, Recreation & Culture dated February 23, 2023 and entitled Walter Ranta Memorial Park Proposed Boat Ramp **BE RECEIVED** for information.

2. **BACKGROUND:**

Walter Ranta Memorial Park is a 6.9 hectare (17 acre) park located along the banks of the Detroit River. The park is a beautiful greenspace with rolling terrain, large trees, a parking lot, some walking paths and a playground. This parkland was originally conveyed to the Township of Anderdon from Allied Chemical in August 1984. The conveyance of the deed was a "donation of parkland."

At this time the entire park consisted of two parcels as outlined under **Appendix A:**

The subject property is described as follows:

(Marina) Concession 1, Part Lot 28, RP12R-7626, Part 1
(Park Area) Concession 1, Part Lot 28, RP12R-7626, Part 2
Town of Amherstburg

The former Ranta Marina, now named River Canard Yacht Club, was sold by the Town of Amherstburg in 2010 to a numbered company, 1797530 Ontario Limited which ran the Marina for a number of years. Tax records indicate that, in 2017, the property was sold to

another numbered company, 2562915 Ontario Limited and further, that in 2021, it was sold to its current owner, Jones Realty Inc. the current Owner of the marina.

In 2022, Council began to receive correspondence and delegations from residents and former user groups of the Marina regarding the increase in seasonal passes and day passes for use of the boat launch, but of course, because the Marina is a private enterprise, Council has no jurisdiction regarding the pricing for these services. Some residents also requested that the Town invest in installing a boat launch in Walter Ranta Memorial Park, located directly South of the marina, in order to provide boat launch facilities in the Town as an alternative to the private marinas, and or public ones in neighbouring communities such as LaSalle.

This park has the potential to support a number of recommendations from the Parks Master Plan as well as address some needs voiced from the community and residents. These include access to the Detroit River for fishing, canoe/kayak use, create a recreational trail through the park. There is also an opportunity to provide critical habitat improvements in partnership with ERCA and Detroit River Clean-Up.

The Parks Master Plan outlines the following recommendations that are directly and indirectly referenced to Walter Ranta Memorial Park:

- Recommendation 53 (medium priority) – investigate viability of kayak/canoe launch at Walter Ranta Memorial Park;
- Recommendation 72 (medium priority) – consider other uses for Walter Ranta Memorial Park such as expanded opportunity to access the waterfront.

From January 25 to March 1 2022 a public survey was launched by the Town to collect information regarding re-development options for the park when the dog park was proposed to go to this location. A total of 108 survey responses were collected and desired uses and amenities were as follows:

Results:

Public washrooms -86%
Benches -77%
Beach Access-76%
Walking Trail-74%
Accessible Kayak Launch-72%
Fishing Pier Platform-68%
Shelter Pavilion-67%
Picnic Area-61%
Dog Park-32%
Beach Volley Ball-31%
Frisbee Golf-15%

Other comments of amenities not listed but requested by the public included food trucks, water refill station, camp ground and boat launch.

3. DISCUSSION:

Council Resolution 20220613-06 directed Administration to plan for a boat launch at Walter Ranta Memorial Park.

'Request for Public Boat Ramp at Ranta Park - Rodney Ferris, AMA Sportsmens' Association Resolution

*Moved By Councillor McArthur
Seconded By Councillor Courtney*

That:

- 1. The delegation **BE RECEIVED**; and,*
- 2. Administration **BE DIRECTED** to plan for a boat ramp and water access at Ranta Memorial Park inclusive of considerations for Provincial and Federal funding opportunities.*

The Mayor put the Motion.

Motion Carried'

It should be noted that no funding was identified or approved for this initiative at the time the resolution was made, and therefore only a high-level preliminary analysis has been conducted.

Administration contacted several contractors to inquire about pricing for an access road to the water with turn around and parking lot for approximately 10 to 15 trailers. The basic cost to install a gravel access road with turnaround and parking area ranged between \$250,000 and \$300,000 depending on soil conditions and the amount of stone required.

Cost to install a basic concrete boat launch on top of the access road ranged from \$60,000 plus depending on the engineering required and soil conditions at the launch access point which was undeterminable. Other factors that will affect this cost will be studies and testing that are required prior to the commencement of work.

The Town will need to conduct the following studies, tests and reporting in advance of work being done; an archeological assessment, a biological assessment, ERCA and DFO approval as well as perhaps Ministry of Natural Resources and Parks approval depending on the outcome of some of the other studies. In addition to the assessments and studies mentioned soil testing and some geotechnical work are also required for this property.

This is specialized work that requires consulting services from various professionals. Below is a list and breakdown of additional estimated costs for this work:

- Consulting Services for Ministry Approvals -\$30,000
- Archeological Assessment Phase 1 and 2. \$35,000 -\$50,000
- Biological Assessment at shoreline -\$25,000
- Soil Sampling and Geotechnical work -\$30,000

-Park Survey work -\$30,000

Administration also performed some preliminary investigation into the historic files for this site and determined that this property may have old brine wells located below the surface from long ago. Of further importance is the fact that this site has extremely high archeological significance as does all waterfront property especially since Amherstburg played a pivotal role in the British defense during the War of 1812 and the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837-39 and Amherstburg was also a vital link in the underground railway in 1786 in which black slaves who escaped or were freed, fled to Canada.

Given the above noted studies that have to be completed before any work can be done in the Park, the overall cost to construct a boat launch at Walter Ranta Memorial Park would be in the approximate range of \$460,000 to \$525,000 or more depending on the outcome of this work.

Administration would also recommend that this Park warrants further public and stakeholder consultation along with input from the Amherstburg Accessibility Advisory Committee, Parks Committee, and other committees of Council before proceeding with this initiative.

For the past five years the Town has invested a significant financial, time and resource commitment to the Duffy's waterfront property. Waterfront development of this nature requires similar time and financial commitment. With limited resources it is therefore recommended that the focus for the Town's waterfront development remain committed to the Duffy's waterfront development at least until this property is open as public park space before embarking on another waterfront development initiative.

However, should Council wish to proceed with re-development of Walter Ranta Memorial Park in any capacity, Administration recommends some investigative work be executed including an Archeological Assessment, geotechnical and survey work including soil testing and sampling. This will provide greater clarity and direction for Administration to formulate a plan and next steps regarding park re-development and the following resolutions would be appropriate:

That:

1. Council **DIRECT** Administration to proceed with necessary Archeological Assessment, geotechnical and survey work required for re-development of Walter Ranta Memorial Park;
2. Council **DIRECT** the studies be funded from the Ranta Memorial Park Bequest Reserve to a maximum of \$170,000; and,
3. Council **DELEGATE** authority to the Chief Administrative Officer to award and issue purchase orders and or sign and execute any agreements or contracts as may be required to execute the scope of work for the Archeological Assessment, geotechnical and survey work including any soil sampling, satisfactory in financial content to the Chief Financial Officer, and in technical content to the Director of Parks, Facilities, Recreation and Culture.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

Further investigative studies, testing and public consultation are required in order to proceed with a public boat launch at Walker Ranta Memorial Park some of which have the potential for significant financial risks and commitments of time and resources depending on the outcome of these assessments and tests.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Walter Ranta Memorial Park has a dedicated reserve fund from a bequeath specific to the park. In 2021 Council approved \$170,000 for improvements to Walter Ranta Memorial Park, as of yet these funds have not been spent.

Should Council wish to proceed with any improvements as outlined in this report, Administration recommends redirection of the funding identified in the above noted account to be used for the studies to be completed.

6. CONSULTATIONS:

Legislative Services
Director Development Services/Deputy CAO
Director of Corporate Services/Chief Financial Officer

7. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, due to the significant financial commitment for this project Administration does not recommend proceeding with the installation of public boat launch at this time.



Heidi Baillargeon
Director of Parks Recreation Facility & Culture

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Walter Ranta Memorial Park Proposed Boat Ramp Information Report.docx
Attachments:	- Appendix A Ranta Park Original Parcels before Marina Sale.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Feb 27, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature found

Melissa Osborne

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Tracy Prince".

Tracy Prince

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie Critchley".

Valerie Critchley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Fox".

Kevin Fox