

January 19, 2010

NEWS RELEASE

Mountain Grove Park Development

Recent events have presented the opportunity for both Council and the community to address future outdoor recreational activities within the Hamlet of Mountain Grove.

In 2007 a 17.5 acre site was purchased in Mountain Grove by the municipality (immediately east of the Land O Lake Public School) to provide space for a needed local Fire Station. Since that time the station has been constructed and work has commenced to establish an outdoor fire training facility behind the station. Although this development has utilized approximately 4 acres of the site, still much of the property remains available for other possible uses.

The Olden Park Road ball-field is presently on a site that is also home of the township's largest public works garage and the Olden Park landfill site (which became busier after closure of the Arden landfill site in 2007). As the Township grows there will be an increase of traffic on the site and a need to expand public works facilities as is evident by the new sand storage building. Although the ball-field remains fully functional, the site is less than desirable for a number of reasons related to the incompatible uses on the property referenced above. Also, the ball-field is some distance from Mountain Grove and the access off busy #7 highway is another detraction.

These events have resulted in the opportunity for Council, in conjunction with the Olden District Recreation Committee to launch a local site planning process for the surplus lands adjacent to the fire hall. This process is intended to explore the viability of building a new ball-field and other recreation development options at this location which is much more accessible to the hamlet.

To assist Council and the Recreation Committee to meet this site development challenge the township has retained the services Ms. Kristine Hebert who has had extensive recreation development experience while working with the City of Kingston. Her role in the exercise is to facilitate local discussion regarding potential recreational uses for the site and to prepare a "concept" plan for the property which will include both Fire Department considerations along with input received from the public, members of local Recreation Committee and other stakeholders who will be identified as the process unfolds.

An initial meeting was held January 18th to confirm next steps, including the importance of issuing a news-release/news letter to explain where the process sits. Another important decision made at this initial meeting was the creation of a local "working committee" to help guide the process. This committee (which may certainly be expanded as interest grows) is made up of :

- Recreation: Cory Thompson, Anita Hole
- Councilor: Norm Guntensperger
- Fire Department: Art Cowdy
- Township Staff: Crystal Nedow, Mike Richardson
- Planners: Kristine Hebert, Joe Gallivan

Future meetings/events by the Committee will be advertised and it is hoped that a concept plan for the site will be completed by April, 2010. This plan will then form the basis for initial budget estimates, fund raising activities, grant applications, and final site design work.