

DATE OF MEETING APRIL 22, 2024

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SUBJECT PARKS AND RECREATION FEES AND CHARGES AMENDMENT

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To amend Parks, Recreation and Culture Fees and Charges Bylaw 7336 to reflect recommended changes to “City Parks, Plazas, Pavilions, Amphitheatres, Grounds, Parking Lots and Trails” fees and additional housekeeping modifications related to fields

Recommendation

- That “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2023 No 7336.08” (a bylaw to amend the fees for City Parks, Plazas, Pavilions, Amphitheaters, Grounds, Parking Lots and Trails) to the pass first reading.
- That “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2023 No 7336.08” pass second reading.
- That “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2023 No 7336.08” pass third reading.

BACKGROUND

On 2024-MAR-20, an amended pricing structure for “City Parks, Plazas, Pavilions, Amphitheatres, Grounds, Parking Lots and Trails” and housekeeping amendments to fee charts and sports fields was presented at the Finance and Audit Committee meeting (see Attachment “A”).

The amended pricing structure was initiated based on feedback from regular users around the barriers that were created by the structure change. Staff recognize that each park and open space rental request is unique in the programs/services being offered, the size required to meet the request, and the impact the request has on both the community and the space being requested. After reviewing the current structure, staff determined that ‘Not-for-Profit’ groups were disproportionately impacted by the changes especially when the program, event, or service was smaller in size.

As a result of the review, Staff identified a two-tiered rental structure for parks and open spaces. The amendments presented at the Finance and Audit Committee meeting addressed the identified barriers and included a two-tiered system, based on whether the parks and open spaces booking is considered a high or low impact booking according to the predetermined criteria, and an adjustment to the approximate discount from the commercial rate to be applied to Not-for-Profit 1/Children (NP1-75% off) and Not-for-Profit 2/adult (NP2 – 50%) for parks and open spaces. As well, for clarity and ease of understanding, the amendment removes the

“Current” column from the PRC fee charts, as they are outdated and refer to 2022 fees, and identified an implementation day, month, and year for all PRC fees.

Additionally, since the adoption of the Bylaw the status of some facilities has changed, requiring the following updates to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Fees and Charges Bylaw 7336 including:

- Adding Mariner’s Field (Serauxmen Field 4) to Field A category of Sports Fields.
- Adding the new Harewood Artificial Turf Fields East and West (formerly Sherry Field) to Artificial Turf Field category of Sports Fields.
- Remove Sherry Fields from the Field A category.
- Replace Robbins Park with Robins Park in Field B classification.

The pricing structure updates, fee chart amendments, and field changes were supported by the Committee and endorsed by Council on 2024-APR-08. The bylaw is now before Council for consideration (see Attachment “B”) |

DISCUSSION

|With Council’s direction to move forward, Staff are bringing the Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw forward to authorize an adjustment to the fees associated with City Parks, Plazas, Pavilions, Amphitheatres, Grounds, Parking Lots and Trails and the associated housekeeping changes related to the fee charts and field status changes. If adopted, the new fee structure would come into effect 2024-MAY-01 (see Attachment C). |

OPTIONS

1. That “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2023 No 7336.08” pass first reading; and That “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2023 No 7336.08” pass second reading, and That “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2023 No 7336.08” pass third reading.
 - The advantages of this option: The new fees will address financial barriers that were identified with the initial amendment to the fees and encourage the use of parks and open spaces by Not-for-Profit groups. The option aligns with the goals of the City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined, with strategic priorities related to A Healthy Nanaimo and Empowered Nanaimo.
 - The disadvantages of this option: There may be a slight reduction in the revenues to account for the adjustment in fees for low impact rentals, when hard costs such as custodial and parks maintenance fees remain the same.
 - Financial Implications: There may be a slight reduction in revenues related to parks and open spaces.
2. That Council retain the existing Parks and Open Spaces fees as indicated in the Fees and Charges Bylaw 2338.
 - The advantages of this option: No Bylaw amendment is required.
 - The disadvantage of this option: Not-for-Profit groups may not be able to access parks and open spaces for the programs and services they normally offer to the community. Increased negative communication from user groups and an escalation in requests for fee reductions, fee waiving, and financial grant support. Additionally,

- increased conflict between parks users when groups choose to run their event without reserving the space.
- Financial Implications: Reduction in revenues related to parks and open spaces as groups decide not to offer events and programming.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Not-for-Profit groups have indicated that the current fees are a financial barrier for smaller, less impactful parks bookings.
- New Parks and Open Spaces fees will be in effect beginning 2024-MAY-01 through 2027-AUG-31.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A: Parks and Open Spaces Fees and Charges Amendments Report
Presented at 2024-MAR-20 Finance and Audit Committee Meeting
- Attachment B: Bylaw 7336.08 – Fees and Charges Amended Bylaw

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