

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JUNE 2, 2009

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RECREATIONAL SPORTS INJURY PREVENTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Recommendation

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri and Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco, Co-Chairs of the Recreational Sports Safety Task Force, in consultation with the Commissioners of Community Services and Legal and Administrative Services, recommend:

1. That Council approve the “Terms of Reference” of the Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee as identified in Attachment 1 of this report; and,
2. That an advisory committee be established with members of the Recreational Sports Safety Task Force and City staff from appropriate/relevant departments; and,
3. That the Legal Department amend the Parks Bylaw to enforce injury prevention measures and safe practices while participating in tobogganing, in particular, through the mandatory use of helmets while partaking in this sport within the City of Vaughan;
4. That the Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee continue to examine the feasibility of enforcing injury prevention measures and safe practices for other recreational outdoor sports, such as snowboarding, skating, in-line skating and skateboarding; and,
5. That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign the amended by-law.

Economic Impact

There will be costs associated with the installation of signage to communicate the mandatory use of helmets, the identification of safe and unsafe hills/sites throughout the City and the general advertising costs to promote the program. An estimated \$10,000 will be requested in the 2010 Parks Operation Budget to pay for signage and promotional information for the program. A goal of the Advisory Committee will be to identify a minimum of one site per Ward each year to sanction as a “safe hill” or to sign as a mandatory helmet-use site for outdoor tobogganing.

Communications Plan

The program will be promoted on the City’s website and City facilities, including signage at outdoor parks and recreational spaces/sites used for activities such as tobogganing, snowboarding, skating, in-line skating and skateboarding throughout Vaughan.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of the “Terms of Reference” governing the proposed Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee; to initiate the recruitment of an Advisory Committee and to establish a by-law that will enforce safe practices and injury prevention measures, in particular through the use of mandatory helmets, within the City of Vaughan’s public parks and recreational spaces.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Recreational Sports Safety Task Force (RSSTF) was created in March, 2007 by Ward 4 Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri. Its mandate is to develop and execute an education program aimed at safety and injury prevention in recreational sports and activities such as tobogganing, skateboarding, skiing, snowboarding, etc. The committee is comprised of a coalition of concerned residents, York Region Public Health, the York Region

District School Board, the York Catholic District School Board, York Region Police, City of Vaughan Fire and Rescue, Safe Kids Canada and health professionals, including Dr. Charles Tator, a Neurosurgeon at Toronto Western Hospital and Founder of ThinkFirst Canada. Please see Attachment #2 for a complete member list of the Recreational Sport Safety Task Force. The RSSTF also has the support of the City of Vaughan's Safe City Committee.

A public awareness campaign launched in the City of Vaughan in January 2009 called *Helmets Save Lives* aims at reducing unsafe sports practices. The program's principle premise is that our children are our future and while we can't protect them from everything, we can take steps to protect them from preventable accidents. This initiative also reflects the City's corporate objective of enhancing and ensuring community safety, health and wellness.

The program is the main component of the Recreational Sports Safety Initiative launched two years ago and developed by Regional Councillor Mario Ferri and Ward 4 Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco, who serve as co-chairs on the Recreational Sports Safety Task Force. In 2009, the Recreational Sports Safety Task Force sent a pamphlet promoting recreational sport safety to every household and school in Vaughan. A website has also been developed at <http://www.helmetssavelives.org/> promoting helmet use. Sponsorship for the program was recently provided by Wal-Mart and SmartCentres.

In Canada, an estimated 2,000 children a year suffer head injuries in tobogganing accidents alone. Research shows that tobogganing has been ranked fourth in Ontario as a high-risk sport, behind diving, snowmobiling, and parachuting; it outranks hockey, skiing and bicycling. Head, spinal, abdominal and facial injuries were the major types of injuries that occurred.

In researching injuries and fatalities from recreational sports, the task force has been engaged with:

- ThinkFirst Canada: founded by Dr. Tator. This organization offers a comprehensive elementary school-based program for students focused on preventing injuries; and
- Safe Kids Canada: Focused on municipal issues in child injury prevention. This is a public policy body and advocates helmet safety. Safe Kids Canada recommends helmet use for such activities as skateboarding, as well as skating, tobogganing, skiing and snowboarding.

Goals & Objectives of Advisory Committee

The Committee will be mandated with the goal of ensuring that citizens enjoying outdoor recreational sports at City parks, recreational spaces and facilities, will do so in safe conditions. To this end, the Committee will develop standards and procedures for signage, inspection and maintenance of outdoor recreational spaces, including tobogganing/snowboarding hills, skating, in-line skating and skateboarding sites.

The Committee will identify safe tobogganing/snowboarding hills that are located at a safe distance from dangerous areas such as roads, rocks, rivers, lakes and parking lots; free of obstacles such as trees, rocks, fences, benches, metal poles; have a sufficiently long, clean run-out at the bottom of the hill, free of obstacles; and have dedicated areas for climbing up the hill.

Additionally, it will develop and communicate an educational program for parents and children to ensure safety when tobogganing, snowboarding and other outdoor sports. Importantly, it will ensure a by-law to enforce the mandatory use of sport appropriate helmets when tobogganing, snowboarding, skating, in-line skating, and skateboarding, especially for children and youth, is developed and enforced in the municipality.

Implementation Process

The implementation process for the Committee's mandate will be a three-step process:

1. Assessing and identifying appropriate sites –Advisory Committee
2. Ongoing inspections of sites to ensure they meet safety standards-Parks Department
3. Ongoing monitoring of sites to ensure they are being used according to Safe Use Practices

Item number 3 will be implemented through patrol by our Public Works Roads staff, Bylaw Enforcement Staff and Volunteers such as the City's Parks Ambassadors.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health & Wellness.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, however, necessary resources to implement this program have not have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

The development of a Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee will ensure that citizens enjoying outdoor recreational sports at City parks, recreational spaces and facilities will do so in safe conditions. The Committee will develop standards for signage, inspection and maintenance of outdoor recreational spaces included tobogganing/snowboarding hills, skating, in-line skating and skateboarding spaces and enforce closures if conditions are dangerous. Furthermore, it will develop an educational program for safe tobogganing, snowboarding, in-line skating, skating and skateboarding targeting parents, schools, daycares and community agencies in ensuring children and youth in Vaughan enjoy recreational sports in a safe environment. In particular, the enactment of a by-law to enforce the use of helmets when participating in outdoor recreational sports such as tobogganing, snowboarding, skating, in-line skating, and skateboarding, will help ensure community safety, health and wellness.

Attachments

1. Terms of Reference of Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee
2. Committee Member List, Recreation Sports Safety Task Force Committee

Report prepared by:

Respectfully submitted,

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri
Co-Chair, Recreational Sports Safety Task Force

Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco
Co-Chair, Recreational Sports Safety
Task Force

RECREATIONAL SPORTS INJURY PREVENTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

GENERAL

The City of Vaughan is committed to making the health and safety of its residents a primary objective. The City will ensure that citizens enjoying outdoor recreational activities/sports at City parks, recreational spaces and facilities will do so in safe conditions.

PURPOSE

1. To develop an educational program for safe outdoor recreational sports, targeting parents, children, schools, daycares and community agencies.
2. To provide residents with safe outdoor recreational spaces for activities such as tobogganing, skating, in-line skating, snowboarding, and skateboarding, by developing and maintaining designated safe tobogganing/snowboarding hills, skating and skateboarding sites.
3. To develop procedures and by-law for safe use of outdoor recreational spaces including the identification of responsibilities, requirements of signage, inspections and maintenance
4. To monitor and evaluate the program on a yearly basis and ensure program is updated if required and communicated in an effective manner.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop and communicate an educational program to teach children to play in a safe manner when participating in active recreational sports such as tobogganing, snowboarding, skating, in-line skating, and skateboarding, in particular with respect to the use of sport appropriate helmets to protect themselves from head injuries.
2. Identify safe tobogganing hills that are located at a safe distance from dangerous areas such as roads, rocks, rivers, lakes and parking lots; are free of obstacles such as trees, rocks, fences, benches, metal poles; have a sufficiently long, clean run-out at the bottom of the hill, are free of obstacles; have dedicated areas for climbing up the hill, distinct from the designated area for tobogganing.
3. Amend the Parks Bylaw to enforce injury prevention measures and safe practices while participating in tobogganing, in particular through the mandatory use of sport appropriate helmets while partaking in this sport within the City of Vaughan.
4. Examine the feasibility of enforcing injury prevention measures and safe practices for other recreational sports, including snowboarding, skating, in-line skating and skateboarding.
5. Develop standards for signage, inspection and maintenance of outdoor recreational spaces including tobogganing/snowboarding hills, skating, in-line skating and skateboarding spaces and develop procedures to ensure closures if conditions are dangerous.
6. Develop an identifiable signage program to inform the public, in particular parents, of the proper use of the hill, identify safe outdoor recreational spaces and the designated hours of

operation. A minimum of one site per Ward per year will be targeted for the installation of "safe use" public signage.

7. Develop an implementation strategy in consultation with By-law, Public Works and Parks Department to make the Hills safe and monitor the hills for safe use and practice.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee will be composed of members of the Recreational Sports Injury Task Force and appropriate City staff (as requested by the Task Force) from departments such as, but not limited to Parks Operations, Park Development, Building & Facilities, Public Works, By-law and Legal.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The committee will meet on a regular basis and a schedule will be determined at the first meeting of the Committee. Meetings may also be called at the request of the Chair.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Administrative support will be provided by the Clerk's Department.

RECREATIONAL SPORT SAFETY TASK FORCE COMMITTEE:

NAME	TITLE/ORGANIZATION
Andre Clifton	Fire & Recue Services, City of Vaughan
Anna DeBartolo	Trustee, York Region District School Board
Aurelia Bertocchi	Citizen Member
Charles McCarthy	Superintendent, York Catholic District School Board
Dr. Charles Tator	Neurosurgeon, Toronto Western Hospital and Founder, ThinkFirst Canada
Cindy O'Keefe	York Region Community & Health Services
Mario Ferri	Regional Councillor, City of Vaughan
Reid Savein	The Cimaron Group/Citizen Member
Rifat Ahmed	Safe Kids Canada
Sandra Yeung Racco	Ward 4 Councillor, City of Vaughan
Sandy Wells	ThinkFirst Canada
Simon Lloyd	Vaughan Safe City Committee, Citizen Member
Cindy Furfaro-Benning	Council EA, City of Vaughan
Angela Bortoluzzi	Council EA, City of Vaughan

As of: April 27, 2009