

Residents reject disc golf course for Highland Gate park

Aurora will have to look elsewhere for a place to put a disc golf course after area ratepayers gave a thumbs-down to locating it in a new park in the Highland Gate community.

The decision came at the last General Committee meeting when Council, who previously tasked Town Staff to consult with residents before they gave their final approval, formally received a letter on behalf of the Highland Gate Ratepayers Association.

'The plan [for the park approved by Council in 2017] specifies walking trails, a playground, meditation circle and specialized benches that can also be used for fitness exercises,' said the ratepayers in a letter signed by Ad Hoc Park Committee members Jo-Anne Bartholomew, Bob Callow and Gordon Weir. 'The design calls for 'naturalizing the area to promote biodiversity and to create a passive setting where nature would thrive.' A disc golf course is not in keeping with the design, amenities or purpose of Highlands Park, nor is the community in favour of its addition.

'We ask that the park design approved by Council be honoured and without further delay, that the Highlands Park be removed from consideration as a location for any size of disc golf course.'

A potential disc golf course for Aurora was floated by proponents of the sport who made a delegation to Council in January of 2021.

Disc golf involves a frisbee-like disc and players aim for upturned cones to make par. It was pitched as a safe and cost-effective way to expand sports opportunities in the community.

But this isn't necessarily the end for disc golf in Aurora.

Other opportunities are still being explored, according to Erin Hamilton, Sport & Community Development Specialist for the Town of Aurora.

'Community consultation, including education and a review of demand would align well with the Parks & Recreation Master Plan review process,' said Ms. Hamilton in her report to Council. 'A review of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan is scheduled for 2022, which will require community consultation. To properly understand the desire and potential use of a disc golf course in Aurora, community consultation for this can be incorporated into the review of the Master Plan.'

'Information gathered through the consultation will provide staff with the necessary direction on whether a disc golf course should be incorporated into an updated Parks & Recreation Master Plan. If the demand is demonstrated through consultation, potential locations can be identified based on the ideal specifications to meet the needs of the community. This would include the degree of difficulty and course length. Aligning the community consultation with the Parks & Recreation Master Plan review will also ensure staff can consider and review all elements simultaneously.'

Council is expected to ratify their decision to refer the matter back to the Master Plan's review process on February 22.

By Brock Weir
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