

Subject: Wellspring Way Parkette Installation**Recommendation:**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2024-0105
Wellspring Way Parkette Installation, for information.**

Background:

In early February 2024, members of the Pelham Garden Club reached out to the Public Works Department inquiring if the Town would be amenable to planting Cherry Birch Trees (*Betula lenta*) on Town property as the club received a \$300 grant through the Ontario Horticulture Association for their purchase and planting. The Cherry Birch Tree is designated as a species at risk by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. They are only found to be growing wild in the Niagara Region, near St. Catharines.

This report serves to inform Council on the collaborative effort with the Pelham Garden Club to plant Cherry Birch Trees and beautify a former construction material laydown area along Wellspring Way.

Analysis:

With support from the Public Works Department, members of the Pelham Garden Club visited a number of municipally owned properties to determine a location where the Cherry Birch trees could thrive. It was also important for both the club and staff to find a location that would be accessible and provide an educational component regarding the rare species.

A location was found along Wellspring Way between the Wellspring Niagara Building and a Storm Water Management Pond (SWMP), opposite the Meridian Community Centre (MCC) Driveway entrance. When staff met with club members onsite, it was immediately obvious this location was previously utilized to store building and landscaping materials, was full of litter, and in serious need of beautifying. Its location adjacent to Wellspring Niagara and proximity to the MCC made it the obvious choice for this initiative.

On an unusually chilly February afternoon, staff met onsite with club members who inquired whether it would be possible to install a park bench nearby where people might sit and enjoy the naturalized area with a view of the trees and landscape. As

it so happened, staff had just received an order of benches and the idea of developing a small parkette at this location was born.

To prepare the site, staff removed the top layer of soil containing crushed stone and landscaping material. The removed material was replaced with a combination of compost and topsoil. A sitting area was leveled with new granular material and surfaced with stone dust. Staff then poured two concrete bench pads that will receive one pride bench, and one orange Truth and Reconciliation bench. A refuse can was added near the access to the SWMP so that it may be serviced by the Niagara Region's waste collection program.

Ten Cherry Birch trees were purchased from a local nursery that specializes in native and endangered species. Three trees were donated by the Pelham Garden Club and seven trees were purchased by the Town. All ten trees were planted in the area of the parkette or nearby storm water management pond.

With assistance from the Town of Pelham's Communication Specialist, an interpretive sign was designed to provide educational information regarding Cherry Birch Trees and the donation received by the Pelham Garden Club. This sign will be installed once it has been received by the manufacturer.

Financial Considerations:

The total cost of materials for the project are approximately \$1800, excluding the benches and the interpretive sign which were purchased through an annual capital program.

Consultation:

Pelham Garden Club

Strategic Plan Relationship: Infrastructure Investment and Renewal

The collaborative effort between the Town and the Pelham Garden Club to beautify an underutilized space, while preserving a rare native tree species provides both a social and environmental benefit to the Town of Pelham.

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