



## **Staff Report for Council Meeting**

**Date of Meeting:** February 26, 2020

**Report Number:** SRCS.20.05

**Department:** Community Services

**Division:** Recreation and Culture Services

**Subject:** **SRCS.20.05 – David Hamilton Park Community Tennis Club Implementation**

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### **Purpose:**

To have Council approve the development and implementation of a community tennis club at David Hamilton Park.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- a) That Council approve the development and implementation of a new community tennis club at David Hamilton Park

### **Contact Person:**

Darlene Joslin, Director of Recreation & Culture, extension 2423

Michelle Dobbie, Manager Parks and Natural Heritage Planning, extension 2467.

### **Report Approval:**

**Submitted by:** Ilmar Simanovskis, Commissioner of Community Services

**Approved by:** Neil Garbe, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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### **Background:**

In October 2016, per staff report SRCS.16.32, Council approved the first Tennis Strategy document for the City of Richmond Hill. As noted in the Tennis Strategy, community tennis clubs play a significant role in growing and supporting the sport of tennis. Community tennis clubs are instrumental in delivering programs that encourage a variety of participation including spontaneous recreational play, instruction, house leagues, inter-club leagues and competitive matches. These clubs have the ability to nurture new players and connect players of all skill levels and provide for a greater sense of community through sport and comraderies.

In February 2019, per staff report SRCS.19.02, Council approved two new community tennis clubs. One located in the south end of the City at David Hamilton Park, and one located in the north end of the City in the West Gormley subdivision and authorized staff to proceed with a public meeting on the implementation of a new club at the David Hamilton Park site.

### **Consultation David Hamilton Park**

During Q-2 and Q-3, 2019, staff facilitated a public meeting and on-line survey with residents to determine support and interest in implementing a community tennis club at David Hamilton Park. There were 131 responses to the survey and 22 residents in attendance at the public meeting.

Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents were in favor of David Hamilton Park as the location for a community tennis club. Offering year round tennis at one site is favorable for the residents and transitioning from the winter indoor tennis program to the outdoor community club should be an easy transition. The infrastructure for the courts, lighting and clubhouse are already in place, and that makes sense from an economic and efficiency perspective.

Although the respondents were split on whether the City should offer 4 of the 6 courts for club play or all 6 courts, they recognize that the configuration of the existing courts (3 and 3 layout) lends itself to converting all 6 courts. It would be difficult to section off 4 courts at this site and confusing for the public as to when and which courts are for the community tennis club courts and when and which courts are for the public.. There is an opportunity to promote public access on all 6 courts in compliance with the City Policy which stipulates that newly formed Community Tennis Clubs are required to preserve non-Club member access to the courts at a guaranteed minimum of six (6) hours per week per court during prime time hours of play.

The majority of the participants in this process voiced their opinion that this new club should be designated for Richmond Hill residents only and should not mirror the level and volume of competitive play that is currently offered at the Richmond Hill Lawn Tennis Community Club. They would like to see the program offered for more recreational level play with a variety of lessons and programs being delivered and a system that allows for open court time to play recreationally with other club members.

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League play can be offered to the membership either at the recreational or competitive levels, however Intercounty play should be limited. Implementing a slightly different opportunity at this club will ensure there is no competition for membership with the RHLTC and the differences in program delivery can complement one another.

### **Alternate sites for open public access**

Within the vicinity of David Hamilton Park, to the north there are currently five (5) tennis courts located in Bayview Hill Park, two (2) tennis courts in Willow Grove Park, and four (4) tennis courts in Silver Stream Park. To the west of David Hamilton Park, there are currently four (4) tennis courts located in Russell Farm Park (see Attachment 1).

Council has approved the revitalization of Bayview Hill Park to begin in 2020, which will include upgrading the existing tennis courts to City standard (i.e. colour coated), and adding one additional tennis court for a total of six (6) lit, colour coated tennis courts at Bayview Hill Park. The sixteen (16) tennis courts located north and west of David Hamilton Park, as shown on Attachment 1 will continue to offer opportunities for public play for residents living in this geographic area.

### **Next Steps**

City staff will begin the implementation of the new Club by undertaking a number of steps as outlined in the Community Tennis Club Policy (Attachment 2). The first step will be in the recruitment of a volunteer Board of Directors that will be undertaken in compliance with City Policy. Staff will work with this Board on the steps necessary to move towards the implementation date of spring 2021.

### **Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:**

There are no costs associated with the recommendation in this report.

### **Relationship to the Strategic Plan:**

The recommendation to implement a new community tennis club at David Hamilton Park is in keeping with the recommendations of the approved Tennis Strategy. The recommendation also aligns with Goal 1 of the Corporate Strategic Plan, “Stronger Connections in Richmond Hill”, specifically by “responding to the changing needs of the community by adapting services and programs”. This recommendation also aligns with Goal 2, “Better Choice in Richmond Hill”, specifically by “developing and promoting a range of organized and informal sports, recreation and cultural programs, with an emphasis on alternatives that people will use throughout their lives”.

### **Conclusion:**

The process of developing the Tennis Strategy has yielded a clear vision for the growth and development of tennis within the community of Richmond Hill. The strategy reflects community input from over 1200 residents and community tennis club members. As

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stated in the Strategy, an overarching theme that flowed through the consultation process is that community tennis clubs play a significant role in growing and supporting the sport of tennis. Staff have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of opportunities available in the current parks inventory and have identified David Hamilton Park as the priority location for implementation. This was confirmed by the residents who participated in the public meeting and the on-line survey. Staff, therefore, recommend that Council approve staff proceeding with implementation of a community tennis club in compliance with the approved Community Tennis Club Policy and City processes.

### **Attachments:**

- Attachment 1 - Tennis Court Map – David Hamilton Park geographic area
- Attachment 2 – Community Tennis Club Policy

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.20.05 David Hamilton Park Community Tennis Club Implementation.docx
Attachments:	- SRCS.20.05 Attachment 1 Tennis - Community Tennis Club Policy - approved 2016.docx - SRCS.20.05 Attachment 2 TennisCourts_DavHam_BayHill2020.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Feb 10, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Darlene Joslin - Feb 9, 2020 - 9:56 AM**

**Ilmar Simanovskis - Feb 10, 2020 - 12:40 PM**

**Neil Garbe - Feb 10, 2020 - 2:15 PM**