



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: April 16, 2025

Report Number: SRCS.25.06

Department: Community Services

Division: Recreation and Culture Services

Subject: **SRCS.25.06 – David Hamilton Park Community Tennis Club**

Purpose:

To obtain delegated authority to execute a license agreement for a summer Community Tennis Club at David Hamilton Park.

Recommendations:

- a) That Staff Report SRCS.25.06 be received;
- b) That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the license agreement with the David Hamilton Community Tennis Club upon recommendation of the Commissioner of Community Services.

Contact Persons:

- Donald Hearn, Director, Recreation and Culture Division, ext. 2503.
- Tracey Steele, Commissioner, Community Services Department, ext. 2476.

Report Approval:

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 report's approval are attached.

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Key Messages:

- In accordance with the Richmond Hill Tennis Strategy (2016), the City provides facilities and programs that enable residents to access a range of tennis opportunities.
- Community Tennis Clubs are volunteer-run clubs operating on public tennis courts, which are an important element of a multi-faceted tennis program.
- Community Tennis Clubs facilitate the efficient delivery of tennis programs and services (including recreational and house-league play, inter-club leagues and organized instruction) to meet the needs of tennis players in the community.
- David Hamilton Park continues to be recommended as a preferred site for implementation of the City's second Community Tennis Club and a new agreement should be executed to provide an operational framework for the club.

Background:

The Tennis Strategy was completed and approved in 2016 (SRCS.16.32) to provide guidance for new and augmented tennis service delivery approaches, which would enable the City to better meet the needs of Richmond Hill's growing tennis community. The Strategy speaks to the development of a variety of tennis facilities and programs that cater to the diverse needs of all players, and to establishing a coordinated approach to tennis development in the City.

The Tennis Strategy recognized the significant role Community Tennis Clubs ("CTCs") play to "nurture new players, connect players of similar skill levels, and structure programs offered to more advanced players – all of which play a part in advancing the sport and strengthening the tennis service delivery system." CTCs are volunteer-run organizations that operate on public courts, to provide organized instruction, house leagues, inter-club leagues, or simply a place for players to connect.

Richmond Hill has long been home to a single CTC – the Richmond Hill Lawn Tennis Club ("RHLTC") – which was founded in 1962 and is centrally located at Crosby Park. The Tennis Strategy recommended that the City "facilitate the formation of additional community tennis clubs, distributed throughout Richmond Hill."

Further to the Tennis Strategy recommendations, David Hamilton Park was approved as the City's second CTC site in March of 2020 (SRCS.20.05). David Hamilton Park was recommended as the second site for a club because it is located a significant distance from the RHLTC, it contains 6 lit tennis courts as well as a clubhouse with washrooms, and there is a winter club already in operation at the site. 86 percent of respondents who participated in the 2019 public consultation regarding the siting of a CTC at David Hamilton Park were supportive of the location. Offering year-round tennis programming at one site was seen as favourable as it facilitates seamless transition for tennis players from an indoor winter program to an outdoor summer community club. Additionally, the operators of the winter club (Blackmore Tennis Inc.) indicated a

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willingness to assist with establishment of the new CTC by facilitating a summer club which would act as an initial phase of implementation.

Following approval of David Hamilton Park as the site of the City's second CTC, an agreement was executed in 2021 with Blackmore. Despite challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, the agreement guided successful establishment and operation of a summer club at David Hamilton Park over the past 4 years. The summer club has a strong emphasis on recreational play and had 507 members in 2024.

The Summer Tennis Club agreement with Blackmore Tennis Club Inc. has now expired and the City must decide how to proceed with summer tennis operations at David Hamilton Park.

Discussion:

A recent survey of David Hamilton Park summer club members revealed high levels of satisfaction, with 90% of members providing positive feedback about the club and their experience as a member. While the City has received concerns from local residents related to club governance and public access to courts, these issues can be mitigated through a final phase of CTC implementation, which will transition the summer club into a true CTC. To this end, it is recommended that the City enter into a CTC agreement with the newly formed, not-for-profit David Hamilton Park Community Tennis Club, which is comprised of members from the former summer tennis club.

The recommended CTC agreement will be consistent with the City's Community Tennis Club Policy while recognizing existing arrangements at the site with Blackmore Tennis Inc., and include the following:

- An initial term of 2 summer seasons from May 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026,
- An option to renew under the same terms and conditions for a further 3 season period from May 1, 2027 to September 30, 2029 (provided recommendations arising from the 2025/26 Tennis and Pickleball Strategy do not conflict with the agreement arrangements)
- Requirement for the Club to operate as a not-for profit community organization and establish a Board of Directors that will make democratic decisions regarding sustainable club operations
- Reporting requirements for the CTC to provide the City with:
 - Any changes or additions to the Club's constitution or by-laws,
 - Membership lists with members names and municipal residence, demonstrating at least 75% Richmond Hill residents,
 - Proposed fee schedule for memberships, guest fees and program fees,
 - An operating budget and annual financial statements demonstrating operational sustainability

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- Allocation of a minimum of 6 prime-time hours in evenings and 3 prime-time hours on weekends for open play by the community
- Responsibility of the CTC to fund 100% of the operating costs of the tennis club during the summer season including utility costs, security systems, garbage collection, net repair and replacement, monthly inspections and insurance.
- Permission for the Club to sell packaged ice cream to help generate revenue to cover their costs.

Financial Implications:

The new agreement will require that the David Hamilton Park Community Tennis Club take over responsibility for operational costs associated with summer tennis programs at David Hamilton Park from the Blackmore summer club. As a result there will be no capital or operating implications for city budgets.

Relationship to Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

The recommendation to enter into an agreement for a Community Tennis Club at David Hamilton Park aligns with Strategy Plan Pillar 2 priority action of, “Focusing on People” which contributes to Richmond Hill’s unique character and sense of community through programs, services and events. The programs and events offered at the CTC will build connections in the community and bring community members together through their shared involvement and enjoyment in the tennis programming.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.25.06 David Hamilton Park Community Summer Tennis Club Implementation.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 7, 2025

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

Tracey Steele - Apr 3, 2025 - 2:00 PM

Darlene Joslin - Apr 7, 2025 - 12:18 PM