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**TO:** Nanoose Bay Parks and Open Spaces Advisory Committee      **MEETING:** October 3, 2018

**FROM:** Kelsey Cramer      **FILE:** 2018-074  
Parks Planner

**SUBJECT:** Stone Lake Drive Community Park – Natural Play Space Update

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**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the creation of concept plans for the Stone Lake Drive Community Park Natural Play Space project proceed with the assistance of the Focus Group

**BACKGROUND**

On June 14, 2017, the Nanoose Bay Parks and Open Spaces Advisory Committee received a delegation at their regular meeting, requesting consideration of development of a “natural playground” in the Madrona/Timberstone area of Nanoose Bay that would be accessible by walking or biking. The POSAC requested that staff report back at the following meeting:

*That staff be directed to provide a scoped concept report regarding natural playground equipment, budget and location around the Madrone area for the next Electoral Area E POSAC meeting.*

A high-level suitability assessment of two sites in the Madrona/Timberstone area (Amelia Crescent Community Park and Stone Lake Drive Community Park), as well as at Claudet Road Community Park located farther east along Northwest Bay Road, was provided at the September 13, 2017 meeting.

Stone Lake Drive Community Park was summarized as offering natural playground development opportunity for a small natural playground pilot project. Claudet Road Community Park was summarized as offering natural playground development opportunity within the context of a larger multi-amenity park project that could also include other recreational elements such as sport courts, pump track, etc.

On October 24, 2017, the Board directed that:

*That Stone Lake Community Park be pursued as a pilot project for a natural playground and moved forward in the work plan to begin community engagement.*

Further to this, the POSAC requested that a Focus Group be used in assisting with the conceptual planning for the project, and the Board provided the following direction on March 27, 2018:

*That a community focus group be set up to facilitate the design of the playground at Stone Lake Drive Community Park.*

Prior to beginning design work, a site survey was obtained in early April 2018 (Attachment 1). Staff notified neighbours in close proximity to the Park via letter that they may observe a surveyor in the Park in relation to the Stone Lake Drive Community Park Natural Play Space project.

Soon after receiving the survey notification letter, several residents in the Timberstone area voiced concern and disapproval of the project at this location. Staff and Area Director met on site on with park neighbours on April 18, 2018 to hear their concerns and provide more information on the Natural Play Space project, the process, and the timeline, clarifying that the public consultation has not yet occurred and would be planned once a concept design was available to present to the community. (It should be noted that staff did receive input from some nearby residents who indicated support for the project).

Specific concerns included proximity of the proposed play space to detention ponds and the road, loss of blackberries for fruit picking, concern about more youth in the park if the play space is developed, and impacts to water quality given the RDN wells adjacent to the site. Staff followed up on all of these items. An environmental study was conducted and concluded that the blackberries are invasive plants and should be removed. RDN Water Services was consulted regarding the wells and there are no conflicts with the play space project. A vegetation buffer and the addition of wire to the existing pond fencing are design suggestions to separate the ponds from the play area. Road signage to indicate children playing will be considered, along with split rail fencing or other design element to separate the play space from the road.

At the June 13, 2018 POSAC, a delegation spoke against the project at Stone Lake Drive Community Park, reiterating some of the concerns above and presenting a petition signed by 32 individuals, supporting that:

“the "Natural" Community Park at Stone Lake Drive remain in its state without the trees, shrubs and other natural growth removed to construct a playground.”

The delegation concluded that a full-sized playground could be built at Claudet Road Community Park to duplicate the one removed from Nanoose Community Park.

In response, the POSAC determined that they would conduct a site visit to each location prior to their next meeting and give consideration to the intent of the project, as presented by the initial delegation, the input and concerns received by the second delegation and other relevant information about the parks.

*That the Electoral Area E Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee meet onsite at Stone Lake Drive Community Park either before mid-July or during September to review the site and reports to date.*

On July 19, 2018, all POSAC members, along with the Area Director and park staff met on site at both locations.

## **OPTIONS**

Each site was discussed in light of the information available about the parks and in consideration of both delegations related to the project. Below is a summary of the pros and cons recorded at the site visits.

Community Park	Pros	Cons
Stone Lake Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close to more families/residences.</li> <li>• Easily walked or biked to.</li> <li>• All natural material fits the theme of the existing trails and park.</li> <li>• Opportunity to integrate natural elements along existing trails.</li> <li>• Visibility from the road.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No room to expand if ever desired in the future.</li> <li>• May need to integrate drainage or build up the play space area if ground is wet in winter time.</li> </ul>
Claudet Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More space available.</li> <li>• Suitable for a larger playground, could be combined with other amenities.</li> <li>• Could dog-park work here?</li> <li>• Toilet, parking amenities in place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not easily walked to, visitors would drive to this site.</li> <li>• Would want to do park master plan first which would lengthen timeline substantially.</li> <li>• Generally quite wet in the park, would need to investigate site conditions further.</li> <li>• Vegetation clearing would be greater.</li> </ul>

## ALTERNATIVES

1. That the creation of concept plans for the Stone Lake Drive Community Park Natural Play Space project proceed with the assistance of the focus group.
2. That the process for initiating a master plan for Claudet Road Community Park be added to the 5-year Community Parks work plan and the Natural Play Space project be considered at Claudet Road Community Park during the planning process.
3. That a Natural Play Space project at Stone Lake Drive Community Park or Claudet Road Community Park not be further explored at this time.

## NEXT STEPS

Should the project continue to move forward at Stone Lake Drive Community Park, the anticipated next steps are:

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|---|--------------|
| 1. Public Consultation  | Target Date  |
| a. Focus Group to develop concept plan.   | End of 2018. |
| b. Community Open House and Questionnaire to collect input on the concept and gauge level of acceptance for the project in general. | Spring 2019. |

2. POSAC to review input received and consider moving on to detailed design and project development. Summer 2019 POSAC meeting.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs for the concept planning work at Stone Lake Drive Community Park would be minimal and covered through the Area E Community Parks Budget. The construction of the project would be funded through the Community Works Fund. An estimated cost of \$45,000 was identified in the 5-year Community Parks work plan. Additional operational costs for this project beyond what the park currently expends will result from garbage service and occasional maintenance and repairs, estimated to be \$1,300 and \$500 annually, respectively. Play space inspections and maintenance would be completed by staff at an annual commitment of approximately 20 hours.



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Kelsey Cramer  
kcramer@rdn.bc.ca  
August 13, 2018

Reviewed by:

- W. Marshall, Acting General Manager, Recreation and Parks Services
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

1. Approximate Play Space Area