

‘Dropping the ball’ council disappointed by Hyland Park delays

A recent report from the landscape architect company GSP Group to council regarding Hyland Park Ball Field ‘A’ upgrades was met with disappointment from Council. The report detailed delays in securing a contractor that could mean the field may not be ready for next spring and the pending baseball season.

Early in September, GSP's report on the park was accepted and the group was directed to proceed with securing a contractor. GSP determined that in order to produce legitimate pricing documents, a ‘legal and topographic survey would be required.’ At a site meeting October 2nd only Advanced Landscapes, one of the four pre-qualified contractors invited, was present. Richard Turner Associate Landscape Project Manager for GSP explained that ‘after a review of the company's previous baseball field installation experiences and work performed at Greenwood Park,’ GSP Group recommended Advanced Landscapes for the Hyland Park upgrades. The contractors were approved by Council on October 6th.

Site works drawings were completed, reviewed and revised, and forwarded to Advanced by mid October for a price quotation ‘with the anticipation of receiving a quote close to our budget predictions,’ said Turner, ‘GSP asked Advanced to hold construction time as soon as they could mobilize. Unfortunately, the Advanced Landscaping quotation ‘came in at \$117,000, far above our budget limitations,’ reported Turner. Revisions and adjustments to the scope of the project to insure a compatible quote continued into November when the ‘early arrival of inclement weather’ stalled the project from proceeding. Turner told Council that ‘starting any earthworks would lead to replicating some tasks in the spring and affecting the overall budget.’

Councillor Randy Chambers said he was ‘disappointed with the news and wanted to see plans to get the park ready in time for ball season,’ which generally begins the last week of April. Ken Bennington said he was concerned that bad weather in the spring would not allow the company to start on time and asked, ‘Can any percentage of the work get done before Christmas?’ Turner, for GSP said he ‘would investigate.’

Councillor Tom Egan posed the question as to whether it would be better to wait and start after ball season next year. ‘Are we really gaining anything by starting now?’ he asked. John Telfer, Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Shelburne, agreed, ‘I think we should let another ball season go and do all work in the fall and move forward on other fields.’

Councillor Chambers countered that he did not like the idea of delaying plans, ‘We need to see how we can execute this,’ he said, and added that he would ‘like to see plans in January or February.’ It was suggested that in the light of not meeting time lines for completion, a committee should be brought together to ensure that new plans for the Hyland Park upgrades were communicated.

By Marni Walsh