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Council to examine Greenwood progress

When Shelburne council meets early on Monday to lead a tour of Greenwood Park, they'll be viewing ? among other things ? the birth of a regulation size soccer pitch that's part of an almost all-inclusive recreational area in the heart of the town.

The emphasis of the tour is likely to be on the soccer development, but no one is likely to overlook the fact of trails connecting the skateboard park, the BMX park, the ball diamond and the locations of the added parking, the future seating for soccer spectators and the location of lighting.

There's no escaping that the big development for now is the soccer field that is expected to host tournaments not only because of its regulation size but also because it will welcome spectators with its off-street parking and its bleachers. And the lighting will enable tournaments to be held into the evening hours.

Nor can it be forgotten that the field the council wanted for the town's rapidly expanding, and often winning, soccer league has been a long time in coming. Soccer is the fastest growing sport in Canada, although it hasn't displaced hockey, and Shelburne Soccer League has been keeping pace throughout its almost 50 years of existence.

A properly constructed, regulation soccer pitch does not come without a price tag, however, so discussions at the council over the past decade or more have revolved around the need, where to meet the need, and how to pay for it.

All questions were finally answered when, first, the developers of Greenbrook Subdivision offered to build a soccer pitch. But it wasn't to be of regulation size and wouldn't have lighting. But it would serve one purpose, and the council accepted the offer.

And then the federal government became involved when it announced it had $150-million available in a Community Infrastructure Improvement Funding (CIIF) within its FedDev Ontario program. Shelburne, partly because it was ready to sink shovels for the development, qualified for a third of the estimated costs of the soccer field -- $509,825. So the CIIF grant was approved at $169,771.

But this still left a whack of money for the council to find. It found $260,054 eligible for recreation in its Development Charges reserves. Almost overnight, the half-million-dollar problem was solved for about $80,000.

Still, there had to be requests for proposals (RFP) from qualified developers, with an emphasis on costing.

Shockingly, none of the responses came in within budget. The high bidder, Bomar, was just over $1.4-million. The lowest was Advanced Landscapes at $536,453.

The low bid was accepted, but only after the engineers and town planner had examined in detail the item by item results from each of the six bidders and found them to be close on average in each of the components.

And, as to qualifications, planner Steve Wever reported that: ?Advanced Landscapes has related experience in turf projects including golf course and sports field developments and has included subcontractors for sod and lighting who are qualified with previous soccer field experience,.

?Advanced Landscapes has also provided the required forms, bid bond, agreement to bond, insurance information, references, health and safety policy and other information to address the RFP requirements.

?A field irrigation layout and details are also provided within the Advanced Landscapes submission. To provide further evaluation of the price submissions, (the planning firm) calculated the low, mean and high unit price for each of the mandatory and provisional items, based on the six bids received. This calculation assists in identifying any anomalies (unusually low or high prices) for each item. The mean prices are somewhat inflated by some unusually high prices for specific items.

?Based on this analysis, there are no major concerns (unusually high or low prices) with the bid submitted by Advanced Landscapes,? Mr. Wever said in his report to the council.

Advanced Landscapes total quote includes sodding and irrigation of the field, lighting, additional parking, and the trail system through the park.

By Wes Keller