

Revitalization of Jack Downing Park delayed

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Developments in the revitalization project of Jack Downing Park are behind says Shelburne chief administrative officer, Denyse Morrissey.

During Shelburne's council meeting on May 9, Councillor Lindsay Wegener inquired about the status of the Jack Downing Park project.

"I will automatically update council and admit that we are behind on that project," said Morrissey. "We've experienced some delays internally on our own with project timelines."

Morrissey informed council that staff had applied for a grant focused on accessibility at the park and was waiting for the conclusion of the community input as well as concept plans for the project.

Earlier this year, the Town began revitalizations efforts at Jack Downing Park with the demolition of the existing gazebo, which was deemed a safety issue. A significant portion of the Jack Downing revitalization project is the accessible surfacing, a concrete foundation that will need to be poured.

Morrissey said staff looked into a "piecemeal" approach, where the gazebo would be put in separately, but chose against it.

"It just makes no structural sense to pour that and then have to modify the foundation or anything else around that," said Morrissey.

Jack Downing Park, located along Main Street in the downtown core, is named after Shelburne resident John Robert "Jack" Downing who passed away in 2014 at the age of 93. In 1998, Downing advocated for the Town to purchase the vacant land where the park now sits and raised over \$86,000 for the park's development. Jack Downing Park officially opened in June of 2000.

The revitalization project of Jack Downing Park was originally scheduled for 2020 to mark the 20-year anniversary, but was delayed due to the pandemic. In 2021, council approved increasing the budget for the project from \$20,000 to \$56,000.

Morrissey noted to council that the town has recently created a "town projects" page on their website, which will allow both council and community access to the status and progress of town projects.

While sections of the park have been cornered off by caution tape where construction has occurred, Jack Downing Park remains open and of use for the community.

Morrissey said they hope to have the revitalization project completed by the end of August.