



County of Brant Council Report

To: The Mayor and Members of County of Brant Council
From: Stacey Ellins, Director of Parks & Recreation
Date: December 17, 2024
Report #: RPT-0341-24
Subject: Community Partnership Policy Update
Purpose: For Approval

Recommendation

That RPT-0341-24 Community Partnership Policy Update be received;
And that the updated Community Partnership Policy be approved.

Executive Summary

The Community Partnership Policy is designed to identify, and support established, new and emerging County of Brant non-sanctioned and sanctioned not-for-profit community volunteer groups in the delivery of their programs and services. The Policy is to enhance leadership, communication, and engagement of community groups. The Policy provides a mechanism to assist staff in determining what resources are available and how the resources should be allocated.

Strategic Plan Priority

Strategic Priority 5 - Healthy, Safe, and Engaged Citizens

Impacts and Mitigation

Social Impacts

Partnering with neighboring municipalities, local schools, and not-for-profit groups can give residents access to a much more diverse array of recreational opportunities. It can also increase the user base for existing programs and facilities.

Environmental Impacts

N/A

Economic Impacts

All costs associated with the Community Partnership Policy are allocated throughout the Community Services Department Operating Budgets.

Report

Background

The Community Services Department uses a community development approach to build the capacity of community groups, engage local volunteers, and sustain programs that the department does not have the resources to implement. Community Services staff support community groups on an ongoing basis and cultivate relationships to respond to the unique needs of new and established organizations.

The Community Services Department has approximately seventy-five (75) community groups which include but are not limited to Lions Clubs, Optimist Clubs, and Minor Sports Groups that utilize County of Brant Facility Space. Currently, the Community Services Department does not have a policy in place to manage community group facility access in a fair, equitable and consistent manner across the County of Brant.

In 2023, the County of Brant subsidized various community groups using 446 hours of facility space (excluding ice, turf, gymnasium, outdoor pool, arena floor, and outdoor sports fields) for a total value of \$17,150. The Community Services Department also subsidized the use of 1,408 hours of facility space (excluding ice, outdoor pool, arena floor, and outdoor sports fields) for Government Sponsored Programs such as EarlyON and Safe Zone for a total value of \$44,650.

In November 2023, the Parks & Recreation Division launched a Community Partnership Policy engagement, seeking targeted feedback from an invited list of community groups to better understand how the County of Brant can assist with sustainability, partnership opportunities, and aid in the development of a Community Partnership Policy. The public engagement obtained targeted feedback through an online survey, general 'questions' and three (3) in-person engagement sessions. For this report, Attachment 4 – Community Partnership Policy Engagement Report provides an overview of the questions asked of existing community groups. Twelve (12) community groups completed the survey, five (5) Minor Sports Groups, four (4) Service Clubs, one (1) Recreation Group, and two (2) others. The results indicate that out of the twelve (12) community groups the majority are currently utilizing banquet halls, community rooms, ice and/or turf, and/or outdoor sports fields. The results also show that the number of hours community groups utilize facility space per year varies between 60-2,500 hours. Finally, the Community Partnership Policy Engagement Report indicates that the following supports would benefit community groups; Advertising Opportunities, Volunteer Recruitment, Provincial/Federal Government Funding, Partnership Opportunities, Discounted Facility Rentals, Training Opportunities, Volunteer/Coach Training, and a County of Brant Staff Liaison. The results of the Community Partnership Policy Engagement assisted with the development of the Community Partnership Policy.

Once this policy is implemented, a few community groups/organizations may be impacted as some long-standing and/or grandfathered understandings regarding free access will become aligned with the policy objectives. Staff will provide a six-month notification to the community groups/organizations affected so there is sufficient time to re-evaluate the needs and prepare for necessary changes.

In addition, community groups who are interested in becoming a Community Partner will be required to complete an Application Form (Attachment 3 - Schedule A – Community Partnership Application Form). Approved community groups will be required to adhere to the Community Partnership responsibilities and policies referenced within the Community Partnership Policy.

Recreation Master Plan Context

The County of Brant Recreation Master Plan Section 3.3, recommendation #8: Voluntary Sector Services Delivery: Volunteers and voluntary organizations represent a key cornerstone in the development and delivery of parks and recreation services in the County of Brant. They are engaged in virtually all levels of service delivery whether through voluntary organizations in minor sports, the arts and culture or special events and festivals. Volunteers are also actively engaged not only in these areas, but also in some County delivered programs or events.

The Recreation Master Plan provided guidance for the delivery of services through further engagement with community volunteers and voluntary organizations. This approach would enhance their presence, capacities and role in the development and delivery of parks and recreation services. This is a significant policy direction that reflects the importance of engaging the community in not just identifying Parks and Recreation services needs but being actively involved in and responsible for leading and providing these services. Several recommendations within this Master Plan contribute to the building of capacity amongst the voluntary sectors. These include the Parks and Recreation Services Delivery Policy, the recommendations regarding Departmental repositioning and organizational development, collaborative and shared services and other policies and strategies.

Analysis

At the May 28, 2024, meeting of Council, staff were directed to complete further consultation with the Burford Optimist Club and Scotland Optimist Club and report back.

The Community Services Department hosted two in-person meetings on June 24, 2024, with both the Burford and Scotland Optimist Clubs. At this meeting staff were provided with a detailed document with feedback provided by 14 members of a Brant West Volunteer Group. Following the meeting, the General Manager of Community Services and the Director of Parks & Recreation reviewed the feedback and sent back a very positive, thorough response on July 25, 2024 (Attachment 5). On August 9, 2024, staff received a response from the Brant West Volunteer Groups indicating they were not satisfied with the response and revisions to the policy received on July 25, 2024.

In response and as directed at the September 24, 2024, meeting of Council, the Community Services Department hosted a Community Partnership Policy Service Club Engagement Session on October 21, 2024, inviting all County of Brant Service Clubs to participate. Participants of the engagement session included members from the Burford Optimist Club, Scotland Optimist Club, Mt. Pleasant Optimist Club, St. George Lions Club and Community Services Department staff. The Community Partnership Policy Service Club Engagement Session was a very positive, collaborative approach that resulted in the following proposed updates to the Community Partnership Policy (Attachment 1).

Definitions

Service Club - a voluntary not-for-profit organization where members meet regularly to perform charitable works either by direct hands-on efforts or by raising money for other organizations. A service club is defined firstly by its service mission, and secondly, its

membership benefits, such as social occasions, networking and personal growth opportunities that encourage involvement within our communities.

Staff Liaison – responsible for the management and administration of the Community Partnership Policy and to act as a facilitator between the County of Brant and the community partner(s) as it relates to the supports outlined within the Community Partnership Policy.

Community Partnership Supports:

- Access to the Community Services Department Volunteer Management Program to assist with recruitment of volunteers in the community.

NEW - Service Club Supports:

Service Clubs are recognized by the County as valuable partners where members meet regularly to perform charitable work, meeting community needs for fundraising, organized programs, community events, and activities. To reflect the responsibility and commitment required to operate a Service Club, the supports listed below, in addition to the Community Partnership Supports, will help Service Clubs achieve their mission, membership benefits, such as social occasions, networking and personal growth opportunities that encourage involvement within each community.

- a. Access to County of Brant Facility Space excluding ice, turf, gymnasium, outdoor pool, arena floor, and outdoor sports fields (when available for public use) with:
 - 25% discount off County of Brant Facility Space rental for community events and fundraising initiatives. Annual events will have priority booking and permitted to book 12 months in advance.
- b. Joint-fundraising initiatives for capital projects may include use of County Facility Space for specific events at no charge, subject to inclusion of a staff liaison(s), Council approval for the project, and inclusion in the County Capital Budget.
- c. Staff Liaison to assist with scheduling and chairing semi-annual meeting with County of Brant Service Clubs for the purpose of aligning priorities, coordinating programming and timing with facility bookings and production of the Community Services Guide.
- d. Staff Liaison to assist in managing existing or newly negotiated agreements between the County of Brant and Service Club(s).
- e. Staff Liaison to assist with governance and grant applications which may be jointly submitted.

Next Steps

Staff are currently developing an implementation plan for the Community Partnership Policy with an implementation target date of Q2 2025. Updates to the Sport Allocation Policy, Facility Booking Policy and Facility Cancellation Policy will be brought forward for Council approval prior to the commencement of the implementation plan as each policy influences one another. Existing community groups will be contacted and provided with a copy of the policy and staff will be able available to meet with the community groups to review the policy

as needed. Staff will also be available to assist community groups to prepare their Community Partnership Application for submission.

Summary and Recommendations

The Community Partnership Policy will help to strengthen community groups, build on their capacity and sustainability as well as connect groups across the County of Brant. Capacity building is the process by which we strengthen a community group's ability to fulfill its mission. This process includes providing community groups with access to space, resources, best practices, and guidance.

It is recommended that RPT-0341-24 Community Partnership Policy be received, and that the updated Community Partnership Policy be approved.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Community Partnership Policy Update
- Attachment 2 - Community Partnership Policy (May 2024)
- Attachment 3 - Schedule A – Community Partnership Application Form
- Attachment 4 - Community Partnership Policy Engagement Report
- Attachment 5 - Brant West Community Partnership Policy Feedback

Reviewed By

Phil Mete, General Manager of Community Services

Copied To

Kathy Ballantyne, Director of Facilities & Special Projects
Sarah Dredge, Manager of Recreation Services

By-law and/or Agreement

By-law Required	No
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk	No