



Planning and Development Services

Prepared for: Council-in-Committee

Report: PDS-25-2024

Meeting Date: May 13, 2024

1. Title

Park Naming Proposal for Park on Lakeshore Road between Albert Street and Adelaide Street

2. Recommendations

That: Council approves the proposed name “Snake Hill Parkette” for the neighborhood park located at Lakeshore Road between Albert Street and Adelaide Street; and further

That: Council direct staff to submit the necessary by-law.

3. Relation to Council’s Corporate Strategic Plan

Priority: Quality of life and community well-being

4. List of Stakeholders

- Residents and Property Owners in the Town of Fort Erie
- Bertie Historical Society
- Town of Fort Erie Museum and Cultural Services

5. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the background information and recommendation regarding the name of the park located on Lakeshore Road between Albert Street and Adelaide Street.

6. Analysis

Background

The existing park is located on Lakeshore Road between Albert Street and Adelaide Street as shown in Appendix 1. The Town recently acquired this parcel of land in 2017 from INI CORP. On July 20, 2023 Town staff received a Park Naming Application Form to name the park located on Lakeshore Road between Albert Street and Adelaide Street as “Snake Hill Parkette” as shown in Appendix 2.

Fort Erie Museum and Cultural Services reviewed the historical significance of the name and connection to the surrounding area and provided the following research:

“Snake Hill is an unofficial name that has sometimes been used to refer to the area at the end of Albert Street. A large sand dune used to exist here. This place has connections to Indigenous history, natural history, military history, Black history, social history, transportation history, and archaeology as described below.

“Archaeological discoveries linked to the Snake Hill site date back to at least 1800 BC. These items point to Indigenous people using this area as a source of stone for their tools and weapons. Another archaeological find here points to a 600-year-old Iroquoian fishing camp. In the early 1900s an archaeologist observed what he described as “... a village site and possibly a mound at the point known as Snake Hill.”

“The earliest known reference to snakes in this area can be traced to 1767. Captain Jonathan Carver sailed the Great Lakes and his journal includes five pages describing the abundance of snakes. The commonly used name of Snake Hill can be linked to the snakes noted in this 1767 journal.

“This area was part of the British military post, Fort Erie, at the turn of the 19th century. During the War of 1812 a significant battle took place at Snake Hill. In August 1814 hundreds of British soldiers were wounded or killed as they attempted to recapture the fort and this hill which had been occupied by the American army. The Americans were successful defending their hold during this battle, although they ultimately withdrew from the fort in November.

“In the mid 1800s, a considerable number of Black settlers established a colony here known as the Snake Hill Settlement. Oral history recollections include the large camp meetings near this settlement that attracted visitors from both sides of the border.

“In the late 1800s, the area to the west of Snake Hill was known as Snake Hill Grove and was a popular picnic spot. This evolved into Erie Beach Amusement Park which was serviced by a train that brought people to the park from the ferry landing near Bertie Street. That train was locally known as the Snake Hill and Pacific Railroad.

“In 1987, archaeologists discovered 28 American soldiers who were buried near the field hospital at Snake Hill during the War of 1812. Their remains were exhumed and repatriated to the New York State Military Burial Ground in Bath, New York.”

From time to time, the Town of Fort Erie receives requests to name or rename a Town park. In such cases, the Town of Fort Erie Park Naming Policy provides a clear process and criteria for assessing the appropriateness of proposed names which can be seen in Appendix 3.

Naming Principles

When a Town park is named or renamed, the following principles shall be applied:

- a) Names shall be unique; name duplication and similar sounding names shall be avoided;
- b) Names shall have a unique origin. Names shall not recognize an individual, organization, or historic or geographic feature that has already been recognized through the naming of another Town park;
- c) Names shall portray a strong positive image of the Town, give a sense of place, continuity and belonging, and celebrate the distinguishing characteristics and uniqueness of the Town;

- d) The rationale associated with the selection of a particular name shall be understandable and justifiable to Town residents;
- e) Names shall not:
 - a. be political in nature;
 - b. be or be perceived as discriminatory or derogatory of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, creed, disability, or other social factors;
 - c. result in inappropriate abbreviations or acronyms;
 - d. unduly detract from the character or integrity of the community or the aesthetic quality of the property; and
 - e. impair the ability of First Responders to respond to emergencies.
- f) Names shall be consistent with any other applicable Town policies and standards;
- g) In instances where multiple names have been submitted for a single park, multiple applications shall be processed and submitted for Council consideration;
- h) Notwithstanding any provisions contained in this policy, Council may change a park name;
- i) Town parks that have been named or renamed in the previous twenty (20) years shall not be renamed;
- j) Unless identified as desirable or directed by Council, the renaming of an existing park shall bear a higher threshold of significance, relevance and necessity. To this end, the renaming of an existing park shall require the applicant to identify and ensure the support of those involved in the original park naming and development; and
- k) Park signage shall be consistent with the Town's wayfinding standards. Any additional signage requested by an applicant will be considered through a separate process, pursuant to the Town of Fort Erie Guidelines for the Installation of Interpretive Pieces on Municipal Property (2014).

Naming Criteria

The Town has three (3) accepted categories for the naming and renaming of Town parks, being: 1) Geographic, 2) Historic or Cultural, and 3) Prominent Individuals or Organizations. These categories are listed below and are explained for further clarification:

Geographic- A name having direct geographical significance or affiliation with the park, which may include, but is not limited to the following:

- a) a neighbourhood, community or subdivision
- b) an adjacent street
- c) a noteworthy physical, environmental, ecological or scenic feature, quality or characteristic
- d) proximity to a recognizable facility or area

Historic or Cultural – A name having direct historical or cultural significance or affiliation to the park, which may include, but is not limited to the following:

- a) a local, provincial or national historical or heritage event
- b) a reference that is of cultural importance or significance

Prominent Individuals or Organizations – The name of a Fort Erie resident (living or posthumous) or organization that has direct significance or affiliation to the park, which may include, but is not limited to the following:

- a) individuals or families having a historical connection to the site (such as a previous landowner or land donor)
- b) individuals or organizations having made a significant contribution to the local community or Town
- c) individuals or organizations who have made an outstanding contribution provincially, nationally, or internationally
- d) In cases where names are affiliated with individuals or organizations, the following criteria must be met:
 - a. The contributions of the individual or organization must be well-documented and broadly acknowledged within the community;
 - b. A direct relationship or association must exist between the individual or organization and the park being considered;
 - c. The reputation of the individual or organization must be honorable and beyond reproach to be considered for naming or renaming;
 - d. In the case of an individual being an elected official or civil servant, he/she must be retired from public service or deceased;
 - e. Written permission shall be obtained from the individual or organization for such naming or renaming;
 - f. If the individual is deceased, written permission shall be obtained from the next of kin or legal representative for such naming or renaming; and
 - g. If permission from the individual or organization cannot be obtained, the Town may approve the name if the applicant is able to demonstrate reasonable documented efforts to obtain consent to the satisfaction of the Town.

The park has not received a designated name. The proposed name "Snake Hill Parkette" is in accordance with Section 4 subsection "Historic or Cultural" connection to the historic and cultural events that have occurred in the surrounding area.

7. Financial, Staffing and Accessibility (AODA) Implications

Should Council approve the name "Snake Hill Parkette" for the park located on Lakeshore Road between Albert Street and Adelaide Street, staff will then proceed with ordering a park sign. The associated expenses for the park sign, includes the procurement, shipping, installation and supply of materials are estimated to be approximately \$4,500. The funding for the park signage would come from the 2024 Neighbourhood Park Enhancements Budget.

8. Policies Affecting Proposal

Town of Fort Erie Park Naming Policy. The proposed park name was evaluated based on Section 4 of the Park Naming Policy as outlined above. Staff have also followed the Community Consultation policies outlined below in Section 6.3 of the Park Naming Policy.

Community Consultation

Community members shall be consulted regarding all naming requests by way of notification in the newspaper, on the Town website, and through the Town's social media accounts. Following notification, members of the public will have thirty (30) calendar days to provide comments relative to the proposed name.

9. Comments from Departments, Community and Corporate Partners

Department Comments:

Planning and Museum staff have reviewed the proposed name and do not have any comments other than supporting the recommendations.

Public Comments:

Consistent with the policies outlined in Section 6.3 of the Park Naming Policy community consultation started February 26th, 2024, and was completed on March 29th, 2024 The public was notified through the following:

- Let's Talk Fort Erie page on the Town's website on February 26th, 2024
- The Fort Erie Observer newspaper dated February 29th, 2024
- Town's social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter on February 18th, 2024

The large majority of comments were received from the Town's Facebook users and email responses sent in by residents were in support of the name "Snake Hill". There were public comments stating that they would prefer the term Park over Parkette.

However, in this case the definition of a Parkette is more fitting as the plot of land is small in size and is intended for passive activities.

10. Alternatives

Council may choose to reject the proposed name and staff will provide an alternative that also meets the criteria in section 4.1 Naming Principles and section 4.2 Naming Criteria. However, this is not advisable as there are many historic references to the name "Snake Hill" and public support has been explicit.

11. Communicating Results

N/A

12. Conclusion

Planning and Museum staff recommend that Council approve the proposed name "Snake Hill Parkette" for the neighbourhood park located on Lakeshore Road between Albert Street and Adelaide Street and direct staff to proceed with preparing the necessary by-laws and appropriate steps for ordering the park sign and installation.

13. Report Approval

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14. Attachments

Appendix 1 – Location Map
Appendix 2 – Park Naming Application
Appendix 3 – Town of Fort Erie Park Naming Policy