

Significant Funding Approved for Playground Accessibility

Sept. 15, 2020 — St. Catharines City Council has approved a recommendation to match funding from the Rotary Club of St. Catharines to the tune of \$95,000, towards making Happy Rolph's Animal Farm playground the most accessible in St. Catharines.

Nestled along the shore of Lake Ontario, Happy Rolph's Animal Farm is a well-loved spot for locals with its farm animal viewing area, duck and geese ponds, playground, picnic area and pavilion, nature trails, accessible parking, and accessible washrooms, which were upgraded in 2014.

“The City of St. Catharines is proud to partner with the Rotary Club of St. Catharines on this park renewal project,” said Director of Community, Recreation and Culture Services Phil Cristi. “It will result in a new, accessible and inclusive play area for all to enjoy.”

This project continues to demonstrate the City of St. Catharines as a leader in accessibility and inclusivity with playgrounds, which would not have been possible without the significant contribution by the Rotary Club of St. Catharines. Council also approved changing the name of the Happy Rolph's playground to Rotary Club of St. Catharines Centennial Playground.

“The Rotary Club of St. Catharines celebrates its 100th anniversary in May 2021. To mark this significant occasion, we are pleased to partner with the City of St. Catharines and make a substantial contribution to upgrade the playground at Happy Rolph's,” said Rotary Club President Sam Walters. “The legacy of creating the most accessible park in St. Catharines to benefit this community is one our club is extremely proud to support.”

In 2019 Council approved additional clauses to the Outdoor Play Spaces Design requirements within the Facilities Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) Policy to enhance the City's current policies and practices.

Council previously approved \$330,000 in the 2020 Capital Budget for the Happy Rolph's Animal Farm project. The addition of the Rotary Club's \$95,000, plus the \$95,000 approved on Monday by Council, will support a list of upgrades including: A new accessibility loop throughout the park linking the play area, accessible washrooms, animal pens and accessible parking spots, a new toddler play area, enhanced picnic area, and additional swings.

Upgrades to the park and playground are expected to begin in Spring 2021.

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