

FRIENDS OF THE PARK AGM REPORT FOR 2023/2024

By Karen Squires and Katherine Lloyd

The partnerships initiated in 2022/23 continue into 2023/24 including the City's tri-waste bins installed throughout the park. This program was launched in the spring 2024, with many positive responses from users. Please be aware most of the tri-waste bins will be removed (by the City) in the fall so users will continue using the bins installed by the National Capital Commission (NCC) in the dog park areas. However, the tri waste bins will remain around the Fieldhouse areas with higher volumes of users.

Earlier this year, the City also installed barriers (near the Fieldhouse) to stop a few park users driving cars into the soccer field to watch the games. Unbelievable as it was, this occurred for several months so swift action was required, by the City, to ensure all park users continue to have a safe area to walk comfortably. However, the issue now trending is around cyclists (including motorized bikes), safety for pedestrians and speed issues covered later in the parks update.

In the Fall of 2023, some work to remove invasive species along the flood plain was completed and some trees were planted. Friends of the Park continued to liaise with both the NCC and Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) to ensure more trees were planted in the spring 2024, with support both times from local volunteers. As well, in the spring 2024, Friends of the Park liaised with Ottawa Riverkeeper to participate in a joint clean up of the park, including river banks. Results included an exceptional turn out of seasoned volunteers who collectively bagged almost 400 pounds of garbage! We hope to continue our combined efforts in future years, supported by the City of Ottawa. We also encourage folks to keep the park clean during the winter months and point users to garbage bin locations!

Last winter, we had some rescue efforts in the park with dogs going into the river and owners going in after their dogs so please be more vigilant as water flows can be very strong and ice tends to be much thinner, due to warmer temperatures now. As such, the ice-breaking equipment work was much reduced in winter 2024, as compared with previous years!

During the summer of 2024, Friends of the Park and Crichton Community Council (CCC) continued to liaise with Ecology Ottawa relating to the regeneration project at Monarch Meadow. It was just confirmed that this project to create a new memorial meadow and commemorate the life of Elisabeth Salm will come to fruition in 2024/2025. Please see more details of this project (and Elisabeth Salm) in the October edition of New Edinburgh News and ***note the correct email below and online at newedinburgh.ca*** should you wish to support. Work is meant to begin this fall with the removal of invasive species at the meadow and more details on this will continue to be highlighted in New Edinburgh News. Should anyone wish to get involved this fall or next spring, please email Sharon Boddy at CarlingtonHampton@gmail.com. Thank you for your interest and ongoing support!

Friends of the Park continues to liaise with the City and will have a meeting this fall around the issue of cyclist's speed limits in the park, including motorized bikes, which could and have had major consequences! We've spoken about signage, as a first step and we would like to educate people through

articles in New Edinburgh News and other mediums to ensure people comply with speed limits etc. As a first step we will be having an initial meeting with the City and the NCC in October!

Friends of the Park also had a park review “walk about” with the City and the NCC late summer to discuss conditions in the park such as tree planting, tree care and excessive mowing. Discussions included more trees along the shoreline, in addition to what RVCA planted in the flood plain area. The NCC confirmed there is a new program called the 2 Billion Tree program, a federal initiative funding tree planting across the country. The NCC hopes to plant 100,000 trees in the Ottawa/Gatineau area to renew and enlarge the urban canopy. We will continue these discussions in 2024/25. Friends of the Park also asked the City and the NCC to reduce the mowed areas which were expanded in and around the dog park areas, causing damage to tree bases. A map was provided, as a guideline to the City and the NCC by Friends of the Park. We were advised that the NCC will be replacing the trees which were cut down on both sides of Stanley Avenue, near the Spanish Embassy and along the River in October this year.

Finally, the City of Ottawa Bylaws program continued in summer of 2024 and we hope to get more details from the City on how the program went in its second year soon! NECA and Friends of the Park continue to liaise with the CCC, RVCA, the City, Ecology Ottawa and Ottawa Riverkeepers to ensure our park is safe and clean for all people and natural habitat to enjoy. We appreciate your ongoing support/stewardship for the beautiful green spaces, at our doorsteps and we look forward to working together to ensure our green canopy is maintained and expanded, despite warming weather trends, storms and invasive species.