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CITY HALL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2002

By Ed Corrigan, Councillor Ward 7

Here is my September Councillor Report and update on City of London projects in Ward Seven.

SPRINGBANK FOOT BRIDGE

The old bridge has now been dismantled and the structural steel is in place and the concrete deck will be poured before the end of August. Ramps which are wheelchair accessible are also being installed. The parking lot on the north side of the river which serves Thames Valley Golf Course will also be restored. The project was delayed by the OPSEU strike and a labour dispute over “fair wages” which has been resolved. The foot bridge is expected to be completed in late September with the official dedication in October 2002.

SOCCER FIELDS AND PARKS

There is a severe shortage of soccer facilities in the City of London due to greatly increased demand. The City is investing \$2.3 million across the City to address this problem. There are about 30 soccer fields in the City of London. Lights are being installed and major upgrades are being made across the City. The Soccer field at South West Optimist Park has been upgraded with the addition of an irrigation system costing approximately \$25,000. Cresthaven Park in Westmount is also getting about \$20,000 in soccer upgrades. A parking facility is also planned for the future beside Cresthaven Park along Longwoods Road to help keep soccer visitor parking off neighbourhood streets. The City Parks and Recreation staff installed new play ground equipment in Jessie Davidson Park on August 12-13, 2002. The new little tykes play structures replaced worn out equipment with some existing swings retained. The City has invested approximately \$20,000 in upgrades to the Westmount area park. Don Crich Construction has gone ahead and invested over \$20,000 in Sumercrest Park by building a children’s play area and construction of pathways in the park for servicing and for use of area residents. The City does not assume responsibility for parks until after the completion of the new subdivision. The Developer will recover his costs when the City assumes control of the park. In the meantime, thanks to Crich Construction, residents moving into the new development on Southdale Road will benefit from early access to recreation facilities.

SPRINGBANK PARK AND STORYBOOK GARDENS

City staff has now completed work on the Springbank Park gates. The City is investing \$6,000,000 in a major upgrade of Springbank Park and Storybook Gardens. A private and corporate fundraising campaign is also being launched with the hope of raising an additional \$1.3 million. Community Chairs are to be recruited to assist in this drive. Construction will break ground after Labour Day and it is expected that Storybook Gardens will reopen in May 2003 with the "Grand Opening" slated to coincide with the July 1st Canada Day celebration. The Storybook theme will be retained and the Gardens divided into various chapters. To attract older children the existing Playland will be converted into "Pirate Island" and a water play area will be added. With the addition of a 250 meter ice skating path, with piped in music, the park will be a year round recreation facility. The Springbank Park Carousel is also going to be moved closer to the park entrance. It is the City's intention to get Storybook Garden's animal enclosures accredited by the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums. There has not been a major upgrade of Storybook Gardens since the facility opened in the 1950's. The much needed refurbishment should bring many new visitors to the attraction. The City plans to meet with area residents before any work will commence on the proposed bike path connecting Halls Mills Road and Springbank Park to the existing bike path system. If agreements can be reached with the local community, work on this project will commence next spring.

OXFORD STREET ROAD EXTENSION

The Oxford Street extension project is on schedule. Road work commenced in August 2002 on the West side of the River with construction set to start before September on the east side of the Thames. Tenders are now in process with bridge construction expected to start in October 2002. It is anticipated that the bridge will be built in about 12 months with completion in October 2003. There are two native burial sites in the area of road construction. One grave site near Kains Road will not be effected and the area will be properly landscaped. Negotiations are continuing with First Nations over the other burial site.

I would like to hear your views on these topics and any other municipal concerns. I can be reached at my City Hall office at 661-1558 or at home at 652-0973. My email address at City Hall is ecorriga@city.london.on.ca

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