

Staff Report

Presented By: Kristan Shrider, Director, Community Services
Meeting Date: April 14, 2025
Subject: Splash City Fun Park Delegation Follow Up
Attachment(s): None

Recommendation

That Council direct staff continue to negotiate with the proponent to execute an Agreement; and
That Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to enter into a one-year Agreement with Splash City Fun Park Inc. for the operation of a water park in 2025.

Report Summary

This report has been prepared to provide Council with a follow up from the December 9, 2024, delegation regarding the operation of an inflatable water park at the Port Elgin main beach. The recommendation is for staff to continue to negotiate with the proponent and that Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to enter into an Agreement with Splash City Fun Park Inc. for the operation of a water park beginning in 2025.

Background/Analysis

At the December 9, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting, Ramin Ganji and Claude Latulippe (“the proponent”) presented a [delegation](#) to Council outlining an interest for the installation and operation of an inflatable water park at the Port Elgin main beach. This report is a follow-up from the delegation and to provide Council with an update on conversations with the proponent.

The proponent contacted Town staff in 2024 to explore the process to obtain approval for the installation and operation of an inflatable water park at the Port Elgin main beach. The water park amenity and proposal were unsolicited and is currently not identified within the approved 2025 Business Plan.

Company Background

Wibit is a German based inflatable water park manufacturing company that has products installed across the world including Canada, Ireland, USA, France and the United Kingdom.

Waterwaze is the exclusive Canadian distributor for Wibit products. Their team provides the design, installation, and training for the operators of the water parks.

Splash City Fun Park Inc. will be the official name of the proponent that enters into an Agreement with the Town of Saugeen Shores and will be the operator of the water park at the Port Elgin main beach.

As outlined in the delegation, Wibit and Waterwaze currently has water parks installed in Barrie, St. Marys, Muskoka, Hamilton, Puslinch, Orillia, Port Colborne, Mount Albert and Milton. Six references were provided, and contact was made with each of the municipalities asking them to complete a ten-question survey. Appendix A provides a summary of the feedback provided.

Location – Water Park

The preferred location for the water park identified in the delegation is east of the break wall at the Port Elgin main beach. A map demonstrating the water park size (52m X 27m) and preferred location is attached in Appendix B.

This area is not owned by the municipality, nor is it included in the Agreement between the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans (“the DFO”) and the Town of Saugeen Shores for the Small Craft Harbours Facilities at Port Elgin and Southampton. The proponent was encouraged to contact the DFO to inquire about the process for approvals and timelines. The proponent has submitted an application to the DFO. The application has been reviewed and comments received. The proponent has indicated that the DFO does not have any concerns with the water park proposal and requests that they are notified ten (10) days prior to any in-water work. Following preliminary consultation with the DFO, the proponent has engaged with an environmental consultant to seek further information relating to water depths, habitat analysis, ecosystem reports and familiarity of the area.

The proponents have started an application with Transport Canada, and this will be finalized once the exact location of the water park is determined. The application will ensure that the water park GPS coordinates are mapped out and available on their mapping systems.

Water Depth

The Town was not able to provide accurate information relating to water depths for the preferred water park location. Contact information for a reliable consultant was provided to the proponent to obtain current water depth readings. At the time of preparing this report, the results of the readings have not been shared with the Town. Depending on the results, it is anticipated that further discussions relating to the location of the water park will be required.

Location – Land Requirements

The delegation outlined the need for obstruction free access to the waterfront, water access, restrooms and parking to ensure adequate use of the water park. The Port Elgin main beach is available for use by the public, including parking, beach space and waterfront access. If an Agreement is advanced, designated parking, beach space or waterfront access would not be included. Access to water and restrooms would be provided as part of regular waterfront operations, with no preferred access or dedication for the operation of the water park.

A 3m X 3m ticket kiosk to facilitate participant payments and safety orientation is required on land in proximity to the water park access. The kiosk would be temporarily installed for the duration of the water park season and the responsibility of the proponent.

A mobile trailer or storage facility is necessary to satisfy the storage requirements of the water park operation. Similar to the ticket kiosk, the proponent would be fully responsible for the temporary storage facility if required. Further discussions will occur to see if the existing space at the Beach House building is suitable.

At the time of preparing this report, the exact location and size of the kiosks and/or trailers have not been determined. This will be dependent on the location of the water park and requires further conversations to ensure minimal impact on the public use, waterfront experience and maintenance operations.

Lifesaving Club Existing Programming

The current programming for training and competitions for the Lifesaving Club takes place south of the preferred water park location. A map included in Appendix C outlines the typical location and layout of the Provincial Championship Course.

If an Agreement is advanced, it is recommended that the area utilized for the Lifesaving Club training and competition is not considered available for the water park location.

Staff Resources

The proponent is estimating that 8-12 staff will be required to properly manage the water park operations. Their plan is to recruit a blend of lifeguards from the area and from outside the area.

Recruitment for temporary/seasonal students is an ongoing challenge for all businesses, including the municipality. The Community Services Department currently employs approximately 22 temporary/seasonal positions relating to aquatic operations. Aquatics and lifeguard skillsets are considered a specialty in the area and the Town of Saugeen Shores invests greatly in the staff and training required to maintain certification to carry out the municipal programming.

There is a concern that the recruitment for the new business may put a strain on the resources that are available with the required skillset to operate both the municipal aquatic operations and the water park operations during the summer season.

Public Input

The possibility of a water park amenity is new to Saugeen Shores. The popularity of water parks in other municipalities is evident, and while the proponent is confident that this would be a well-used activity at the Port Elgin waterfront, public engagement is recommended.

It is suggested that public feedback be collected following the first year of operation to assess the impact of the venture. This public feedback can be combined with staff's assessment on the park for Council consideration of operation in 2026 and beyond.

Insurance and Liability

If an Agreement to operate an inflatable water park occurs in Saugeen Shores, the municipality's insurance provider has recommended the Agreement to include but not be limited to the following items:

- Certificate of Insurance with a minimum General Liability limit of \$5M.
- The Town of Saugeen Shores to be added as Additional insured to the Operator's Liability policy.
- The Operator must be present at all times while the inflatables are running.
- The Operator must control the crowds, setting up specific times with limitations of participants.
- Daily/weekly/monthly inspections must be implemented, similar to an outdoor playground looking for inflation areas, wear and tear, unstable equipment.
- Ensure that the use of the equipment is meant for the purpose it is intended for.
- Supervision is essential (lifeguards certified through Red Cross or equivalent) and lifejackets must be mandatory regardless of age or swimming ability.
- Protocols for shutdown for weather-related hazard, water contamination (algae blooms for example).
- Age restrictions must be in place.
- Life jackets provided for all participants.
- Bathrooms must be readily available.
- Absolutely no alcohol or drugs permitted.
- Proper use of signage outlining rules and regulations.
- Use of waivers.

The above requirements have been discussed with the proponent, and they did not foresee any concerns with these items being included in the Agreement.

Timeline

In order to achieve the target of operation in June 2025, potentially two Agreements must be signed - an Agreement between the proponent and the DFO for the installation and operation of the inflatable park in the water, and an Agreement between the proponent and the Town of Saugeen Shores for the land logistical requirements.

The proponent indicated that if an Agreement with the Town could not be advanced before the end of April, installation and operation of the water park in 2025 could not proceed. The proponent did indicate that if the 2025 season is not attainable, they are interested in exploring an Agreement for a future year.

Recommendation and Next Steps

Meetings with the proponent and action items to advance this follow-up report have been fast-tracked in an attempt to meet the timelines outlined in the delegation.

It is recommended that staff continue to collaborate with the proponent and Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to enter into a one-year Agreement with Splash City Fun Park Inc. for the operation of a water park in 2025.

Linkages

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 4: Fostering a Vibrant Place to Live and Visit
- Business Plan Alignment: Community Services Business as Usual

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

Revenue is unknown at this time and will be detailed within the Agreement.

Prepared By: Kristan Shrider, Director, Community Services

Approved By: Kara Van Myall, Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDIX 'A' – Existing Locations Feedback

Survey Question	Orillia	Port Colborne
Was your municipality able to provide approval for the installation and operation of the water park on the lake or bay or was approval required by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (“DFO”)?	DFO approval not required	DFO approval not required
If approval from the DFO was required, how long was that process?	N/A	N/A
Are you willing to share the Agreement between the water park operator and the municipality? Please note this document would not be made public but will be used as a reference if an Agreement between an operator and Saugeen Shores was required.	Yes	Yes
Prior to an Agreement, was public consultation complete to gauge the community’s interest in a water park operation?	Public feedback on the pilot program	Survey on waterfront activities in general
Did a public RFP/Tender process take place to select an operator?	Yes	Yes, for any type of waterfront opportunities
What is the size of the water park?	Unknown. Capacity is 120 people	Unknown
What are the land requirements to support the operation of the water park (kiosk, storage, washrooms, electricity, etc.)?	Onsite trailer	Sea can and tent
How does the operator or the municipality ensure that members of the public do not access the water park when closed (security firm, fencing, etc.)?	Overnight security	Beach area access is locked nightly
What is the minimum insurance of general liability required from the water park operator (\$2M, \$5M or \$10M)?	\$5M	\$5M
Was there a strain on staffing resources when the water park opened (did lifeguards from municipal pool operations leave to work at the water park)?	Shared staffing resources	No

APPENDIX 'B' – Water Park Preferred Location Map



APPENDIX 'C' - Provincial Championship Course Map

