



Subject: Public Boat Ramp – Operation Plans 2021

To: Council

From: Corporate Services Department

Report Number: 2021-111

Meeting Date: April 12, 2021

Recommendation:

That Corporate Services Department Report 2021-111 be received; and

That the day pass fee at the Public Boat Ramp be set at \$14.00 when purchased through the HonkMobile App.

Purpose:

At the March 8, 2021 Council meeting, there were questions with respect to parking at the Public Boat Ramp (Appendix B). Staff identified some changes were being considered at that time. This report outlines planned parking operations at the Public Boat Ramp for 2021 (effective May 1 when the boat ramp opens) as follows:

- Seasonal and day passes can be purchased at Sugarloaf Marina. Seasonal passes are \$100 while day passes are \$15.00. These rates were approved on February 22, 2021 by Council through Sugarloaf Marina 2021 Rates Report, 2021-56.
- Activate the only functioning parking meter. The parking meter to be activated was purchased in 2019. Deactivate and remove the other older non-functioning parking meter. The functioning parking meter is planned for servicing on April 15. The fee for paying by way of the parking meter will be \$15.00.
- Introduce HonkMobile (Appendix A) to allow users of the Public Boat Ramp to pay via website or mobile application. The fee for paying by way of HonkMobile is recommended at \$14.00. Staff propose the price differential to incentivize the Public Boat Ramp users to try the new system. This cloud-based parking application is used for parking in other cities including some in the Niagara Region such as St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland. Benefits of this application include:
 - Users do not need to touch public surfaces.

- No waiting at a parking machine as its easily accessed through their website, QR code (from signage that will be posted) or the HonkMobile App.
- Maintaining the system including data management can be done by staff anywhere.
- There is no physical technology to maintain that is subject to weather like the current parking meters.
- Signage will be updated to educate Public Boat Ramp users of where to park and how to pay along with related fees.
- By-law Enforcement Officers will continue to patrol the Public Boat Ramp parking lot and ticket vehicles without a parking pass. As a reminder, the fine for such an offense is \$40.00.

Staff welcome further ideas and/or direction from Council.

Background:

Port Colborne acquired Sugarloaf Marina and the Public Boat Ramp in 1989.

Various models have been used to operate the Public Boat Ramp from staffing with employees to the current pay and display model.

Activity at the Public Boat Ramp for the past several years is as follows:

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Seasonal Passes	231	280	296	300
Daily Ramp Passes	1,201	568	1,918	1,089*

*Staff acknowledge the pay and display model with the current parking meter technology struggled to meet customer and Sugarloaf Marina expectations in 2020. Sugarloaf Marina has two pay and display machines. One is three years old and the other is past its useful life. For anyone that tried to use them at the beginning of last season they will note neither was operational until June and for this reason the daily ramp usage statistics for 2020 are likely understated. A similar situation occurred in 2018 which lead to the purchase of a new machine in 2019. Sugarloaf Marina has the Precise Parklink parking meters serviced by Precise Parklink on an as needed basis. Precise Parklink identified they were short staffed in 2020 which lead to the delayed servicing.

Discussion:

This season, Sugarloaf Marina and By-Law staff are pro-actively working together to improve the customer experience at the Public Boat Ramp.

In planning the 2021 season staff considered:

- Replacing the non-functioning parking meter either by new purchase or lease.
- Decommissioning the non-functioning parking meter and maintaining the other working parking meter.
- Removing parking meters altogether and introducing only HonkMobile for users to pay via website/Mobile App.
- Outsourcing parking operations to Precise Parklink. Note Precise Parklink also does the Urgent Care and Northland Pointe facilities.

In assessing each of these scenarios, staff considered the user experience, cost and organizational control/impact.

In all scenarios, staff identified purchasing and/or leasing physical parking meters at the Public Boat Ramp as costly. Leasing scenarios range from \$4,700 to \$5,200 for a parking meter. Purchase new scenarios averaged in a similar range due to the identified need for a maintenance and warranty agreement on any parking meter.

This compares to the HonkMobile option with an annual cost of \$300 plus \$0.25 per transaction. In the event the City sold 2,000 day passes and all passes were sold on the HonkMobile platform that would represent \$500 for a total of \$800 (\$300 + \$500). In the first year it is estimated there will be some cost for new and related signage.

From a cost perspective, the HonkMobile platform is the most cost effective. From a user experience perspective, staff anticipate users that engage with the HonkMobile option will appreciate its relative simplicity and accessibility. However, staff do acknowledge the HonkMobile option will be new and some users may be slow to adopt this option. For this reason, and since there is a working parking meter at the Public Boat Ramp, staff will leave that machine and have it serviced (scheduled for service on April 15th). The cost of maintenance and the cellular access fee to communicate with the debit and credit card network from April 15th into November is approximately \$1,600.

In total, and assuming every daily pass went through the Honk Mobile app (noting there is no per transaction fee on the current parking machine), the total parking technology cost is estimated at approximately \$2,400.

In the above scenario, which is also the scenario being implemented, By-law will continue to do enforcement and collect any coin in the parking machine (coin in the parking machine has been identified as minimal).

Staff did review the possibility of outsourcing to Precise Parklink and noted the following:

- First and foremost, in 2020 the company failed to prioritize Sugarloaf Marina's servicing request.
- Outsourcing would mean the HonkMobile platform could not be introduced.
- Currently Precise Parklink has noted the cost would equal \$2,910 plus all enforcement revenue. This would include coin collection, cost of maintenance and the cellular access fee. Staff identify parking enforcement revenue related to the Public Boat Ramp is nominal at best.
- By-law would still be required in H.H. Knoll Park, at the main Sugarloaf Marina parking lot and at the Public Boat Ramp for anything other than parking enforcement, ie. Public Health Measures.
- Staff believe parking ticket concerns and complaints will still come back to the City even though they would be issued by a third party. The City would not be able to accommodate the complaint through its appeals process.

For the above reasons, and the fact staff question the level of service and attention being offered for the additional \$1,310 (\$2,910 - \$1,600), the outsourcing to Parklink is not something staff have actioned at this time.

Internal Consultations:

Sugarloaf Marina and By-Law staff have developed this Public Boat Ramp parking plan together.

Financial Implications:

As identified in the report the financial implications of the technology are approximately \$2,400 plus the cost of new and related signage.

Staff will track hours spent at the Public Boat Ramp in 2021 to support a more fulsome overall financial picture to support future planning.

Conclusion:

The implementation of this operating plan will focus on the customer experience by having multiple options to pay for their ramp pass. This will create a more efficient Public Boat Ramp with more satisfied customers, mitigating customer complaints.

Appendices:

- a. HonkMobile – HonkTAP promotion
- b. Boat Ramp Aerial Photo

Respectfully submitted,

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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.