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**JAN 1, 2016**

**PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

**INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:**

Council approved in the 2015 financial plan resources for the Town to complete a Parks, Recreation and Culture master plan. The last master plan was completed in 2001, and with many changes over 15 years the plan required an update, to provide direction as it relates to services and facilities which the town operates.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture department engaged GDH Solutions to complete the new Parks, Recreation and Culture master plan, the project commenced in November 2015.

By the end of 2015 GDH had completed the initial phase relating to review of relevant plans, data collection and a site visit. GDH has now commenced stakeholder interviews which include speaking with key community members, Town of Ladysmith Council and staff. GDH will be conducting focus group sessions on January 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The focus groups include: community organizations/service providers, seniors, service clubs, sport groups, arts and culture, special event organizations and youth as well as recreation program participants. A Steering Committee has been struck to provide additional information and feedback to the consultant throughout the Master Plan process. The first meeting will be on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

On January 6<sup>th</sup> an online survey was released to collect feedback relating to existing services. The survey is available both online and in paper copies, the survey is available on the town's website and at various facilities around town. It was also distributed in the quarterly town utility notice mail out early this month. Currently the survey is being promoted through local newspapers, social media and internal communications.

At this point the master plan is well underway and on schedule. Future steps will include a community open house along with draft recommendations presented to council, to ensure feedback and comment can be considered.

Department staff will continue to provide Council with regular updates as this project proceeds.

**SCOPE OF WORK:**

Parks, Recreation and Culture staff will be working with the consulting team to assist them in gathering information from the community over the next few months. This process will coincide with staff providing the consultant information that will allow the consultant to conduct a complete review of all aspects of department's services and facilities.

