

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA

REPORT NO. CSD-2024-0009

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
COUNCIL**

June 12, 2024

SUBJECT: YORK SIMCOE AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS CLUB – AGREEMENT

1. RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Council receive Report No. CSD2024-0009 prepared by the Community Services Department dated June 12, 2024, respecting York Simcoe Amateur Astronomers Club Agreement.**
- 2. That Council authorizes the Mayor and Clerk to enter into an agreement between the York Simcoe Amateur Astronomers Club and the Town of Georgina for a five-year term, expiring on June 30, 2028.**
- 3. That a Bylaw be passed to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to enter into an agreement with the York Simcoe Amateur Astronomers Club.**

2. PURPOSE:

To obtain Council authorization to enter into a license agreement with York Simcoe Amateur Astronomers Club for five years, expiring on June 30, 2028.

3. BACKGROUND:

In 1999 the York Simcoe Amateur Astronomers club (YSAA) formed a not-for-profit organization which operates solely on volunteer members. The club meets once per month from April until October near a New Moon (when there is little or no moon glow in the sky).

YSAA uses various equipment to observe or photograph changing night sky features including planets, star clusters, beautiful nebula gases, and distant galaxies. There are 40+ members of all ages and abilities who pay a nominal fee to enjoy this hobby and utilize YSAA equipment. The YSAA has shared the land at the Keswick Cemetery site with the Keswick Model Aircraft Club since 2016.

YSAA members are committed to sharing their passion for astronomy, with a wide range of public and private groups and are committed to exploring partnership opportunities with the Town of Georgina, Recreation Services Division to bring programming and educational opportunities to Georgina.

Georgina is considered a prime location due to the least light pollution of any York Region municipality; it has the darkest and most desired evening skies.

4. ANALYSIS:

The YSAA only requires access to the eastern lands of the Keswick Cemetery, specifically the lands within the parking area where they will park their vehicles. The telescopes are then either set up on a tripod near their vehicles or are set up to function directly out of their vehicles.

The YSAA has no buildings or structures on site and there is no intention to add any currently. YSAA will continue to have minimal responsibilities for the property's maintenance other than garbage removal after their activities. YSAA would be required to carry general liability for injury or damage. As a result, the Town does not incur any costs requiring recovery. Therefore, the proposed agreement would continue to be for \$1/year.

Although the proposed agreement is for a full calendar year, the club typically operates from April to October after dusk. They commonly operate on the weekends, although some members might come out on the weeknights.

At any time, the Town may temporarily stop the group from operating to host a Town activity, perform facility maintenance or for the consideration of an interment at the Cemetery. The YSAA does not have exclusive use of space.

The York Simcoe Amateur Astronomers Club (YSAA) approached the Keswick Model Aircraft Club (KMAC) for the possibility of sharing the lands at the cemetery for the operation of the Astronomers Club in 2016 and has been operating amicably since then. KMAC and the YSAA have a mutual understanding that they operate during opposing hours of the day, and that neither group would have exclusive use of the property.

5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Creating a vibrant, healthy, and safe community for all – continue to optimize local parks, facilities, and recreational amenities.

6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Not Applicable, except for the nominal \$1/year license fee.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:

Staff circulated a letter to surrounding households to the Keswick Cemetery site for their feedback prior to entering into our initial agreement in 2016. No comments were received.

8. CONCLUSION:

Staff have met with the York Simcoe Amateur Astronomers Club along with the Keswick Model Aircraft Club and have confirmed the site is a mutually beneficial location for both Clubs.

Staff recommend Council enter into an agreement for a five-year term with the York Simcoe Amateur Astronomers Club.

APPROVALS

Prepared By: Jessica Anthony
Administrative Coordinator, Community Services

Reviewed By: Bob Ferguson
Manager of Parks Development & Operations
Community Services

Recommended By: Steve Lee-Young
Director, Community Services

Recommended By: Rob Wheeler
Deputy CAO/ Treasurer

Approved By: Ryan Cronsberry
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Licence Agreement – York Simcoe Amateur Astronomers Club 2024-2028