

NPC seeks qualified bidders for marina project

By Ray Spiteri, Niagara Falls Review

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The Niagara Parks Commission has issued a request for qualifications to move forward its plans to redevelop Miller's Creek Marina.

Following input received from a public information session, and a formal request for information process, the commission is seeking third-party interest on one of three development options.

One option is to rehabilitate current marina amenities through a multi-phased plan operated by a third party.

The second scenario envisions the maximization of boating recreation at the Niagara Parkway site in Fort Erie with a new marina facility that meets market potential in quantity, capacity and revenue. It would also provide publicly accessible activities, such as pier and fishing, and amenities such as food and beverage, through a third-party capital investment and operation.

The third option builds on the marina facility of the second scenario, and is also augmented by additional marina and public shoreline area enhancements. It would integrate the entire NPC lands assembled as part of the project, to create a recreational resort through third-party capital investment and operation.

NPC officials said feedback from the community consultation, combined with that received from the request for information, helped guide the commission to choose the third scenario as its preferred option.

According to the commission, it has the greatest potential to become a destination facility by offering an enhanced marina resort; added community benefit in terms of access to the water and recreation amenities; as well as increased opportunities to generate and sustain economic growth for the future.

"It's a very clear indication that the procurement process is well underway," said NPC chairwoman Janice Thomson. She said the request for qualifications will lead to the request for proposal.

Thomson said the revitalization will meet the needs of the boaters, provide space for larger boats, and enhance the recreational options at the site.

"It will be very good for the economy, obviously," she said, adding construction jobs will be created, as well as future operational jobs.

The marina site has been occupied and utilized in a variety of ways for more than a century. From 1903 to 1930, it hosted shipbuilding and repair facilities, as well as a metal foundry and fabrication factory.

The marina lands were purchased by NPC in 1957, and a small boat launch was established in 1965.

The current marina was developed in 1968, and when first opened allowed for 54 boat slips. An additional 50 boat spaces were added to the site in 1975.

Today, 135 seasonal boat slips exist and are operational.

Interested parties may find the request for qualifications at biddingo.com/niagaraparks. Respondents have until April 29 to submit their interest.