Written by Greg Price Wednesday, 15 January 2014 20:14

The clock is ticking for the dream of the Taber Spray Park becoming a reality this summer for kids to frolic in.

Approved for construction at town council's Dec. 16 meeting, barely a month into the fundraising campaign and a flood of support has already come in for the project with cash/in-kind donations at approximately \$100,000 for the \$330,000 project. But, the time is now if recreation enthusiasts want to see the park up and running by June.

"We're excited to try and fund a realistic project that could be accomplished in a short amount of time," said Bruce Warkentin, a representative with the Taber Splash Pad committee. "The town has been very supportive and we are confident we can get it done by this summer. We pretty much have enough in-kind donations to build it, we just need the money to buy the equipment." Needing approximately another \$140,000 by the end of February, Warkentin used an analogy of how easily the goal can be achieved by residents if you put it into the right perspective of affordable recreational opportunities for families like the spray park.

"If you consider the cost of gas to travel to another community's spray park (Coaldale, Raymond) several times during the summer, and donate that amount to our cause, the donations will add up quickly for our very own spray park where we'll easily get to our goal. It won't be a problem," said Warkentin. "Since I've been involved in the Chamber of Commerce, people have always said we need more options for recreation rather than driving to Lethbridge. This is another option we can have for the summer where you are saving gas and saving the time that you could be spending with your family here." and have a lot of fun."

Those who want to participate in making the Taber Spray Park a reality can have cheques written to the 'Taber Kiwanis Club Spray Park Fund' and give them to any Taber Splash Pad Committee member or drop them off at the MNP LLP office in Taber located at 4713 55th Street. You can also donate by clicking on the Taber Spray Park Facebook Page and onto the link of www.atbcares.com on the donate tab and entering TCAPS on the search line. "Taber Actions and Prevention Society (TCAPS) has allowed us to work with them to make this project a reality because they are able to issue donation receipts. Also ATB has developed this on-line system that all charities can use and with community initiatives, they match 15 per cent of whatever is given, so that's 15 per cent less that we have to raise," said Warkentin. "Taber Kiwanis Club will be the entity that is paying for the equipment. All these groups have stepped up to help us in our fundraising goals with the help of their influence to add legitimacy to our cause in administering the project's finances."

Committee members include: Tamara Miyanaga, Sharla Kane, Bruce Warkentin, Henk DeVlieger, Jack Brewin, CAO Greg Birch, Marten DeVlieger, Sam DeVlieger, Mark Garner, Brandon Gibb, Casey Gouw, Kyle Gouw, Ben Koersen, Steve Vangeest, Lloyd Ypma, and Justin Clingman.

"We tried to get enough people who have the ability to do every aspect of the project so we could go to the town and present a proposal that says 'let us do this, we are able to do this and let's move forward.' They were happy to work with us and help us giving the approval to move forward. People that are on this committee have been involved in past projects as well with similar scope and cost," said Warkentin. "We asked the town to do the ongoing maintenance of it, but spray parks do not have a lot of maintenance to them. The pieces are replaceable, there's warranty on them. We do not perceive the ongoing costs to be significant."

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Warkentin added the early push of support for the project is one more sign of how willing the citizenry are in getting behind projects they believe in.

"Taber residents are a make-it-happen' kind of people. They don't wait for other people to do it for them. You see things like the skate park, the motocross track, and Ken McDonald field are examples of that. Residents in Taber are willing to support worthwhile projects like The Hospital Foundation, STARS Auction, Relay for Life and the list goes on," said Warkentin, adding the splash pad committee would like this the project completed this summer as in-kind donations may not be there the more a project is delayed. "If this fundraising isn't completed by February, we could move it to next year, but unfortunately, in-kind donations may or may not be there down the line. Companies come and go and a company's commitment may come and go. We want to try and strike while the iron is hot and move forward with a project everyone is committed to do the work for."

Taber Spray Park will be promoting an agricultural theme in its construction to showcase the humble beginnings from which the town came.

"It will be a destination showcasing irrigation and agriculture," said Warkentin, adding with the spray park located in the Confederation park area, will make for a hub of activity to increase the quality of life for local residents while attracting other people to the community in an easy-to-find area just off the highway. "You can go to the spray park, you can go to the skate park, the parents can go play tennis. You have your baseball tournaments where the kids can cool down at the spray park afterwards. You go downtown for lunch and do a little shopping. A spray park can add a little bit of a different experience than say a pool. It's a good family experience that can add to Cornfest activities too where it's right by the Cornfest grounds. It will showcase Taber where Taber was built on agriculture and let's focus on what made us who we are which is water and irrigation."

There is a lag between when a citizen donates to the spray park initiative online off the Taber Spray Park Facebook Page link and confirmation of funds, so Warkentin is encouraging donors to e-mail him when they have donated so the committee can keep as up-to-date log of their progress as possible. Donors can e-mail confirmation of donations to

Bruce.Warkentin@mnp.ca. There will be public recognition plaques made for anybody who make donations over \$500.