



Artist rendering of the plans for Riverside Park, created by Mary Moore of Cedar Lane Studio. Supplied by Riverside Park Committee

FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR SPENCERVILLE'S RIVERSIDE PARK IN 2018

By Lisa Crandall

Around this time last year, plans for the redevelopment of Riverside Park, situated next to the Nation River near the Spencerville Mill, were at a very early planning stage. Spencerville Business and Community Connections initially proposed it to the Edwardsburgh/Cardinal Council, envisioning it as a welcoming information area for visitors. Town council indicated their support and an anticipated three year fund raising effort was in the planning stages. When the concept turned into a proposal submitted to the National Trust for Canada, "This Place Matters" crowdfunding competition in the Small Projects Category, the Mill Foundation came on board as an active partner. From that point on it was an enthusiastic all hands on deck push to raise money and votes, and in the end the Spencerville project came out on top.

National Trust for Canada is a national charity that inspires, and leads to action, to save places that matter. Launched in 2015, the This Place Matters campaign supports a wide range of projects in Canadian communities by offering a cash prize to local organizations that "win" by meeting a combination of a fundraising target and garnering online votes. The competition

serves to energize local community groups by raising the profile of efforts to save, restore, beautify or preserve hidden gems across Canada. The entrants are required to submit a video outlining their hopes and plans. Then, during the month-long contest period, their video becomes the backbone of their fundraising efforts and a feverish social media campaign to achieve enough votes to win the popularity contest is launched.

The Riverside Park project beat out twenty-five competitors from various parts of Canada. Now, in the coming months we will see a strong push to get the project underway and finished by the end of the year (a requirement of the competition). The local committee raised \$25,000. That will be combined with the \$30,000 prize to completely re-create a neglected and under-utilized area of green space known as Riverside Park, situated near The Spencerville Mill. In addition, the town council has committed to \$20,000 worth of infrastructure work, covering parking spaces and curbs.

The re-imagined park will include a pergola big enough to shelter several picnic tables from rain and sun, a fishing dock designed to stay in place

year-round, a groomed walkway along the river, featuring a rock garden, as well as native trees and shrubs. There will also be a rustic play area made with natural materials. Park benches will be in place for some relaxation, recycling bins for refuse, and an Information Kiosk highlighting Spencerville businesses and other attractions. Interpretative Panels outlining the significance of the South Nation River will be featured. It is intended to function as a welcoming rest stop for community members and visitors alike.

According to Sheila Fawcett, spokesperson for the project, a considerable amount of work took place behind the scenes over the course of the winter. The original design was revised to include a cantilevered dock that will be fully accessible and remain in place year-round. A test hole was dug on site to determine depth of topsoil. Formal architectural drawings for the pavilion and cantilevered dock were created and are currently awaiting final approval from an engineering firm. When that approval has been secured it will be time to apply to Edwardsburgh/Cardinal township and South Nation Conservation Authority for building permits. The group anticipates shovels in the ground before the end of June. [LH](#)