

C.A. Pippy Park Commission

Annual Report 2023-24

Message from the Chair

As Chair of the C.A. Pippy Park Commission, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the fiscal year 2023-24 as a category two entity in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. This report outlines the accomplishments of the Commission in relation to the objectives established in its 2021-24 Business Plan. As Chairperson of the Board, my signature indicates the Board's accountability for the preparation of the report and results reported throughout this document. I would like to extend thanks to the Board for providing thoughtful insight and direction in making decisions while maintaining the core values on which Pippy Park was established. In addition, I would also like to thank our partners, park users, and the Provincial Government for its continued support.

Thousands of people visit the Park annually to walk, run, snowshoe, cross-country ski, bike, golf, camp, garden, read, and relax. In anticipation of the 2025 Canada Games, the Park received \$900,000 in the Provincial Budget to make key improvements. Work has begun on upgrading the four washroom and shower stations in the campground, paving roads in the park, installing additional wifi in the campgrounds so that free internet access is available throughout, and improving recreational services.

The Commission continues to have excellent relationships with partner organizations such as Memorial University of Newfoundland and the City of St. John's. In consultation with our partners, the Commission is striving to provide a modern and sustainable park environment while meeting the needs of visitors and clients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sean Kelly". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Sean Kelly

Chairperson for the C.A. Pippy Park Commission

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Entity Overview

Organizational Structure

The C.A. Pippy Park Commission (the PPC) is a Crown corporation established under the **Pippy Park Commission Act**. Currently, it reports to the House of Assembly through the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation. Members of its Board of Directors are responsible for the administration of the PPC's business affairs. The Chairperson of the Board assumes responsibility as the official head of the PPC in accordance with Section 8 of the Act.

For additional information on the Park's Mandate, Vision, and Lines of Business visit their 2023-26 Business Plan at the following link: [PPC-2023-26-Business-Plan.pdf](#).

Staff and Budget

The PPC employs six full-time employees for administration and maintenance. During peak operations, the PPC employed up to 35 employees, both seasonal and student staff, for grounds maintenance and operation of the Pippy Park Campground. Its subsidiary, C.A. Pippy Park Golf Course Limited, employs up to an additional 25 employees to operate the golf operations and the Admirals Green Clubhouse. Two of these employees (one male/one female) are employed full-time. The remaining employees are employed seasonally.



Commission Employees

Six full-time
Up to 35 Seasonal Employees



Golf Operations Employees

Two full-time
Up to 23 Seasonal Employees

The fiscal year of the PPC is April 1 - March 31. During fiscal 2023-24, the PPC operated primarily from revenue of \$3,775,100, whereas expenses during the same time period were \$3,050,208. The financial records of the PPC are audited and reported on by the Office of the Auditor General of Newfoundland and Labrador. Audited financial statements are provided at the end of this annual report.

Board of Directors

The PPC Board of Directors is comprised of eight members. Board members are appointed in accordance with Section 4 of the Pippy Park Commission Act. Six of the eight members are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council through a merit-based process in accordance with the Independent Appointments Commission Act. Of those six positions, two must come from the Pippy Park Land Owners Association and the Pippy Family respectively.

The remaining two, which are not appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, include one person appointed from the City of St. John's and one from the Memorial University Board of Regents. Below is a current list of Board members and their affiliation:

1. Mr. Sean Kelly, Chairperson
2. Ms. Pam Pippy, Vice-Chairperson and Pippy Family Representative
3. Mr. Rick Gill
4. Mr. Jason Brown
5. Mr. Jerry English, Pippy Park Association of Landowners and Residents Representative
6. Ms. Rayna Luther, Memorial University Representative
7. Mr. Jamie Korab, City of St. John's Representative
8. Mr. Brent Meade

Physical Location

Located within the City of St. John's, the Park is comprised of the lands between the east side of Thorburn Road and the west side of Portugal Cove Road, and between the north side of Elizabeth Avenue and the south side of Windsor Lake. The area of Pippy Park is approximately 1,375 hectares, making it one of the largest urban parks in Canada. To see detailed maps of the Park, please visit:

<https://www.pippypark.com/maps/>

Highlights and Partnerships

Highlights

Since 2022, Pippy Park has seen a large increase in bookings at the campground and in the use of its rental facilities where numbers have almost doubled since our first year of post pandemic. The Park's open spaces and trails continued to be heavily utilized by the public, as they looked for ways to remain active. In particular, the Three Pond Barrens area saw increased numbers of walkers, skiers, snowshoers, and bikers. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the Park's open spaces and the desire to be active.

An exciting highlight that occurred during 2023-24 was the commitment between the City of St. John's, the 2025 Canada Games Committee and the PPC, to incorporate the Three Pond Barren Trail network into the Canada Games framework of activities, to create a Mountain Bike course that would be used as part of the races but then also left as a legacy from the games for users beyond the life of the Canada Games.

Another highlight for 2023-24 is the commitment by the Pippy Park Golf Course (PPGC) Committee to install a new driving range to enhance the golfer experience for both the 18-hole Admiral's Green and 9-hole Captain's Hill golf course. Since the 2023 season, the Golf Courses at Pippy Park have seen a combined increase of over 34% in rounds played, from 25,583 to 34,284 rounds. A good percentage of these rounds are attributed to the PPGC offering Free Golf to its junior golfers that play the Admiral's Green 9-hole course. A great incentive to the junior program.

Partnerships

A key partnership during 2023-24 was with the City of St. John's. Throughout the winter, the City operates the winter activity program from the North Bank Lodge, which includes cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Although there was poor winter weather during the program this past year, over 1,500 people rented equipment.

Report on Performance

Issue # 1: Enhanced Experience for Park Visitors

PPC aims at enhancing its user experience by providing accessible information on Park activities to the public and undertaking significant work for the overall improvements in the Park infrastructure to service its clients better. With the increased demand for open space for activities such as family camping, hiking, cycling, skiing, the importance of Pippy Park and its multi-use trail networks is increasing in demand.

The Commission provided enhancements to the Wi-Fi service in the campground, improved the multi-use trail systems, and continued to make information about the park and services offered more accessible online.

Goal Statement

By March 31, 2026, PPC will have implemented a number of initiatives aimed at providing an enhanced visitor experience.

2023-24 Objective

By March 31, 2024, the C.A. Pippy Park Commission will have completed improvements for overall visitor experience.

Indicator 1: Enhanced the PPC's social media and online presence in an effort to better communicate with its clients and make available the option for online campsite reservations.

The PPC continued its partnership with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to upgrade computer systems and IT support to provide a more efficient means to access the Park's activities. An example of this was the implementation of

a new online booking system to book golf tee-times at Pippy Park's two golf courses; the 9-hole Captain's Hill and 18-hole Admiral's Green.

Indicator 2: Acquired new software for the campground to allow the ability to make online reservations.

PPC incorporated a new upgrade in 2023 from the previous ROS 2006 software. The new software called Rez Expert, allowed for online reservations with the ability for customers to make payments securely. The software also provided 24 hour tech support, which the former no longer provided, as well it provided the ability to send out marketing and promotion emails.

Indicator 3: Additional use of social media to attract users to the Campground.

Throughout the 2023 season great emphasis was placed on getting the word out to the general public about the park camp grounds and amenities within. PPC placed advertisements with NTV, Explore RV Travel Guide, Travel Tourism Guide (NL) and Rustic Campground, which is a magazine distributed throughout Atlantic Canada.

Indicator 4: Worked towards improving the multi-use trail systems to enhance the user experience.

PPC continued to make improvements and supported groups such as Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador (BNL), Avalon Mountain Bike Association (AMBA), and Avalon Nordic by enhancing the multi-use trail systems in Pippy Park. Improvement examples include the grooming trails for skiers, snowshoers, and snow bikers. The groups listed above have leveraged funding and volunteer efforts to enhance the trail systems for all seasons and make the trails safer and more accessible.

Indicator 5: Upgraded the infrastructure and facilities to provide improved service and amenities.

The PPC upgraded infrastructure and facilities, including:

- The North Bank Lodge underwent a number of upgrades that included the installation of high speed internet and Wi-Fi for guests and customers, structural repairs to the outside traditional charcoal BBQ, and the installation of energy efficient LED lighting and new security cameras.
- The PPC installed a new air exchanger at one of its rental properties at 213 Mt. Scio Road.

Indicator 6: Improved signage to easily navigate the Parks and its amenities, and provide easy to understand directions for visitors.

PPC installed additional signage throughout the Campground and at various locations in the Park. This new signage will inform visitors on how to find services and what activities are not permitted in the Park.

The trail signage, in particular, informed users that Pippy Park trails are multi-use, and therefore no ATV's are permitted, that loitering and hunting are prohibited, and that trail users must be respectful of others and their surroundings.

Opportunities and Challenges

As we have progressed beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, PPC have seen an increase in campground usage and North Bank Lodge rental requests.

The North Bank Lodge offers a unique user experience for customers availing of its location and amenities. It provides an intimate setting for gatherings within the lodge but also provides multiple opportunities for outdoor functions.

Even though the North Bank Lodge provides many amenities to its customers, there is an opportunity to further enhance the visitor experience and expand its rental usage. With the addition of a Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning unit, the lodge would provide a more comfortable user experience for its visitors.

The challenge with this opportunity is maintaining the current customer rental bookings while ensuring the installation of the unit or units is completed with minimal disruption.

With proper planning for the review and installation of the unit or units, this challenge can be conquered, and result in further use of the lodge.