

**Series 5 - Fort William Board of Parks Management Fort William Fonds**  
**Minutes**

1904-1969

62 cm. of textual records (11 v.)

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A Cemetery and Parks Committee appears to have been established in the fall of 1901 as a 5-member sub-committee of Council. For the period 1904-1905, the committee was chaired by J.E. Dean. There is no indication of how park and cemetery functions were directed after 1905 as there are no references to the committee within the Fort William council minutes, and no remaining minutes for this or any related Committee until the formulation of the Parks Board in 1910.

After public consultation in the form of a plebiscite, and the adoption of By-law 735, the Board of Parks Management was created in 1910 under the authority of the Ontario Public Parks Act. The original public petition for the Board of Parks Management is available in the Fort William City Clerks files. (TBA 4 – File 131 entitled Parks Board 1910-1920) Appointments to the Parks Board were formally established by Council on January 11 1910, with the first regular meeting of the Board of Parks Management held January 28th, 1910, chaired by W. A. Dowler.

Early ventures for the Board of Parks Management included the acquisition and control of existing park properties, boulevards, and the hiring of a landscape architect. The Parks Board undertook improvements to various park properties, scheduled use of park facilities and maintained a greenhouse. In addition to developing Chippewa Park and leasing cabins on Sandy Beach, the board assumed responsibility for the management of city cemeteries at various points after 1917. The Parks Board undertook responsibility for the formation of outdoor skating rinks in 1942, participated in the initiative to establish a skiing facility near Mount McKay in 1947 and undertook the Fort William Centennial Conservatory Project in the late 1960s.

Recreational committees began to surface as early as 1943 with an appointment of a Special Recreational Committee on March 15. Later, under the authority of By-law 4263 (1949) the Fort William Civic Recreation Committee was established to provide a program of community recreation as prescribed under the Department of Education Act. As the functions of recreation and parks committees were similar, Council passed a motion for the Board of Parks Management to assume the Civic recreation program in 1952. To avoid the requirement for a public plebiscite for the dissolution of the two boards and the creation of a new board to manage both functions, Council resolved the issue through By-law 4492, which passed and received approval from the Ontario Department of Education in 1952. This by-law allowed council to appointment members of Board of Parks to the Civic Recreation Committee. Both committees maintained separate minutes, but were in effect managed under the Board of Parks Management. Minutes (January 1966 to January 1967) for the Fort William Civic Recreation

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Committee are bound with the Board of Parks Management Minutes 1964-1965.

Minutes for the Fort William Board of Parks Management end in 1969 due to the amalgamation of the City of Fort William and Port Arthur.

This Series Consists of meeting minutes relating to the management of Parks and Cemeteries for the City of Fort William. Eleven bound volumes exist, for which there are no indices. The first volume for the Board of Parks Management, dated January 28, 1910 to December 3, 1917, contains the originating By-law 1. Some Newspaper clippings and reports are interspersed. After 1935 the minutes reflect a growing structure for parks management. Reports from the Inside Park Committee, Chippewa Park Outside Committee, McKellar Park Committee, Finance Committee and a Tourist Committee are included for the period 1935-1936. While it appears that the first four are sub-committees to the Parks Board, the Tourist committee appears to be a committee of council with representation from the Parks Board. Frequent progress reports are included from Mr. A. Widnall, the longstanding Board Secretary and Parks Manager and reports from various Chairmen.

Also included with this series, custodial history of which is not known, is the Annual Statement for the Fort William Board of Parks Management for the year 1949. Included in this document are the statement of receipts and payments for the year, as well as the operating statement and highlights of various activities held at and improvements made to the City's parks throughout the year.

Handwritten, Typescript.

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Finding aids summarize bound volumes by dates. No indices are available.

Previously known as Cemetery and Parks Committee Minutes.

Includes Fort William Civic Recreation Committee Minutes for 1966.

May contain some personal information such as salary information.