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Outdoor Skating Rinks Update Information Report

Report Number: 2019-09

Department(s): Public Works Services

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In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to update Council on the Community Run Outdoor Rinks and Riverwalk Commons outdoor skating surface for the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 seasons. This is an update to Report 2016-32 and 2018-14 with respect to costs incurred, logistics, recommended improvements and accomplishments of the pilot projects.

Background

The Town of Newmarket operates one (1) outdoor skating feature, Riverwalk Commons. The community currently runs three (3) outdoor rinks as pilot projects: Ken Sturgeon Park, Lions Park, and Whipper Watson Parks when weather permits.

Discussion

Town Run Outdoor Skating Feature

Riverwalk Commons

The Town of Newmarket operates one outdoor skating surface at Riverwalk Commons during the winter months. This skating feature is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for leisure skating only. The ice surface is designed to operate as an unsupervised space, with staff regularly flooding the ice to maintain good ice quality. It is a widely accessed facility and community feedback has indicated a strong appreciation for the space at large.

Council approved staff's recommendation that hockey be allowed from 10:00 p.m. to Midnight daily on this ice surface. Appropriate signage was created and displayed to outline the following key principles:

- Shiny is permitted only during the time periods of 10:00 p.m. to Midnight
- Only sponge pucks or tennis balls are permitted (i.e., no hard pucks)
- Ice is not maintained after 10:00 p.m. and is not supervised. Participants play at their own risk
- Appropriate equipment is encouraged
- Recreation and Culture provides skating cruisers daily between 6pm and 10pm to monitor the users for various infractions as noted on the signage.

Although there were still minor confrontations, staff experienced general compliance with the rules. The Skating Cruisers enforcement of the rules right at the beginning of the ice skating season worked very well. The numbers of complaints were fairly low in the season with respect to shiny players starting before the 10:00 p.m. timeframe.

There were incidents of hard pucks hitting the glass doors of the Community Centre, cars and Winter Wonderland displays; however, this was an infrequent occurrence.

Staff performed limited cleaning up of left over bottles/cans from the late night users. There is no extra cost at this site for additional clean-up.

Community Run Outdoor Rinks

Three (3) rinks (Ken Sturgeon Park, Lions Park, and Whipper Watson Park) ran for the 2017/2018 season and two (2) rinks (Ken Sturgeon and Lions Park) for the 2018/2019 season. Unfortunatley, the weather did not co-operate for the two seasons and the volunteers and staff saw a significant increase in maintenance to try to save the ice at outdoor rinks due to the warmer winter that occurred. The Whipper Watson Park group decided not to have a rink in the 2018/2019 season due to weather conditions.

The volunteer groups again supplied most of the materials, built the rinks, maintained the ice surface, cleaned up the garbage around the area, and took the rinks down.

Staff provided regular garbage pickup/spring clean-up, fall drop-off of materials at Lions Parks and Ken Sturgeon Park, ordered portable toilets, installed signage when required, provided space for summer storage of material at the temporary Central York Fire Training Centre, provided operating material storage at adjacent washroom buildings, set the outdoor lighting, and plowed snow in the parking lots and trails where applicable. Please note that no costs are listed below for any utilities such as electrical for overhead lighting and water for creating ice and flooding maintenance.

Whipper Billy Watson Park

During the 2017/2018 season, this site was operational and was located in the play area of left outfield. This location of the playing field for the rink caused slight damage to the turf on the playing field and extra field maintenance work had to be completed during the spring to bring the rink area turf up to the same quality of the remaining field turf. Overall, this site worked very well for the community rink builders as the field is more level than the left field foul area. The rink was deconstructed in time for opening of baseball season. The 2017/2018 season operational costs totalled \$205.72, which was used for skating rink materials by the community rink builders.

During the 2018/2019 season, the community rink was not operational as the rink volunteers decided not to build the rink due to unfavourable weather conditions.

Ken Sturgeon Park

For the 2017/2018 season, the new basketball court was completed to allow the outdoor rink to be built on the basketball surface. With a new level court surface, this helped the community group build a quicker ice surface even with unpredictable weather conditions. The new basketball court was installed with perimeter chain-link fencing which helped keep the public off the rink until the ice surface was ready and reduced the damage to the tarp from skates before the ice froze. With the new basketball court, the cost for PWS to help support this rink has reduced tremendously, the cost was \$312.57 which includes staff, equipment and portable toilet.

The 2018/2019 season had a shorter season for rink operation and was rebuilt on the basketball court. There were no issues reported to PWS and the site cost for the season totalled \$270.52, which included a portable toilet and all other related costs.

Lions Park

During the 2017/2018 season, this rink was operational on the three (3) tennis courts. This site continues to be a popular site due to its location, lighting, size and length of operating season. This site receives additional support from PWS when compared to the other sites due to the challenges such as the size of the tarps, amount of lumber and providing support drop off/pick up. There continues to be further support from PWS Facilities Division due to the attached building and demands such as infrastructure/utilities issues. Additional facility maintenance costs totalled \$1,049.98.

The 2018/2019 season was similar to previous seasons, being very successful when weather conditions permitted. The requirements and issues for this season were similar to those of the 2017/2018 season. The cost for this season totalled \$1081.15 for items and services such as portable toilets, delivery and pick up of rink supplies and facility related issues, etc.

Conclusion

Parks & Property Services worked closely with the community groups to ensure requests such as delivery of materials, installation of signs, basketball net covers and adjusting of light timers were completed for the rinks. The budget for the Community Run Rinks was \$1,500 per season, and the staff costs and maintenance costs of the combined programs came to \$1,568.27 for the 2017/2018 season. The cost does not include any utilities such as water and hydro. For the 2017/2018, no new additional requests were received for other community rinks in Newmarket.

For the 2018/2019 season, Parks & Property Services communicated with the community groups to ensure requests such as delivery of materials, installation of signs, basketball net covers and adjusting of light timers were completed for the rinks. The budget for the Community Run Rinks was \$1,500 per season, and the staff costs and maintenance costs of the combined programs came in at \$1,351.67. The cost does not include any utilities such as water and hydro. There were only two community rinks in use this season due to the weather.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Extraordinary Places and Spaces

- Creating the environment for an engaged, accessible, inclusive community

Consultation

Community Services - Recreation and Culture

Human Resource Considerations

N/A

Budget Impact

Expenses did not exceed budget for the two seasons regarding the community rinks. Please note the costs do not include the water and electricity utilities costs to maintain the service level associated with these rinks.

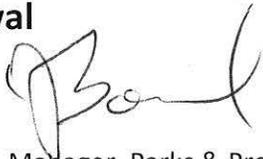
Attachments

None.

Contact

For more information on this report contact Jeff Bond, jbond@newmarket.ca or extension 2582.

Approval



Jeff Bond, Manager, Parks & Property Services
Public Works Services



Christopher Kalimootoo, Director,
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Peter Noehammer, Commissioner,
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