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**DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES – PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES
INFORMATIONAL REPORT 2016 - 32**

TO: Committee of the Whole

SUBJECT: Outdoor Skating Rinks Update

ORIGIN: Development and Infrastructure Services – Public Works Services

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

PURPOSE

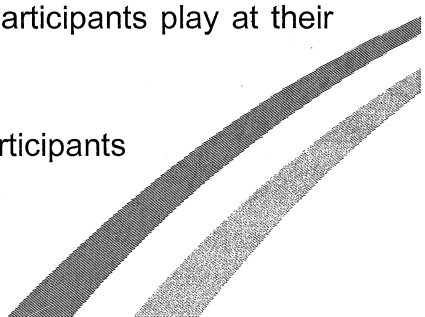
The purpose of this Report is to update Council on the pilot project of Community Run Outdoor Rinks and Riverwalk Commons outdoor skating surface. This is an update to Report 2015-60 with respect to costs incurred, logistics, recommended improvements and accomplishments of the pilot projects.

COMMENTS

Riverwalk Commons

The Town of Newmarket currently operates one outdoor skating surface at Riverwalk Commons during the winter months. This skating feature was 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 indicated that residents of Newmarket value and appreciate the opportunity to enjoy this space over a wide range of times, at no cost.

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 that outlined 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, so participants play at their own risk
 - Appropriate equipment is encouraged
 - This will be offered on a trial basis pending appropriate usage by participants
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Although there were still minor confrontations, staff experienced general compliance with the rules. There were a number of complaints early in the season with respect to shinny players starting before the 10:00 p.m. timeframe; however, a Cruiser was hired to monitor the area and enforce the timeframe and that resolved the issue immediately.

There were incidents of hard pucks hitting the glass doors of the Community Centre and the alarm going off; however, this was an infrequent occurrence.

Unfortunately, Parks staff were continuously cleaning up left over bottles/cans from the late night users. Additional enforcement from the By-law division during their nightly patrols helped reduce the frequency of these incidents and York Regional Police were also notified of this issue, but the incidents still occurred. The cost at this site for additional clean-up was \$1290.

Community Run Outdoor Rinks

Three (3) rinks (Ken Sturgeon, Lions Park, Whipper Watson) ran for the 2015/2016 season. The weather did not co-operate very well this season 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 volunteer groups again supplied most of the materials, built the rinks, maintained the ice surface, ordered portable washrooms, cleaned up the garbage around the area and took the rinks down.

Staff provided regular garbage pickup/spring clean-up, installed signage, provided space for summer storage of material at the temporary fire training centre, provided operating material storage at adjacent washroom buildings, set the outdoor lighting and plowed snow in the parking lots where applicable.

Whipper Billy Watson Park

Overall, this site worked very well this past season. Users who jumped the fence and skated on the ice, which caused damage to the tarp when the rink was closed. The rink was deconstructed in time for baseball season and there were no issues with the grass; however, this will need to be assessed every year in late winter. There were minimal costs this year of \$410 which included staff to install and remove signs, collect garbage and the electrician to set up the timer for the outdoor lights and to turn the lights on and off for the season.

Ken Sturgeon Park

This project location worked out well and the rink was well used. Sod damage is a slight concern in this area as the rink is constructed over the grass; however, it is mainly utilized as a dry pond and general non-programmed use. With the upcoming proposal of a basketball/tennis court possibly to be installed in this park, it will reduce the grass condition issue. This site cost \$1,720 for the season which included pick up, delivery, removal and re-delivery of wood and equipment to the site and storage area, and garbage pick-up.

Lions Park

This site continues to be a popular site due to its location, lighting and size. This past season the weather did not co-operate and additional floodings of the surface were required. This site did have some challenges with water pipes freezing, thawing and overflowing which caused additional maintenance costs for staff to attend to. The cost for this site was \$4,060.

Future Rink Development

The Parks & Property Services Division took the initiative at the start of the season on meeting with the community leaders and filling out the required paperwork to help get the rinks set up smoothly. The budget for the Community Run Rinks was \$6,500, and the staff costs and maintenance costs of the combined program came in at \$6,190. This does not include the tarps purchased (which each rink was given \$500 to assist with the purchase of the tarps, for an additional \$1,500).

In Ward 7, a meeting was held with interested parties to start an outdoor community rink; however, there were insufficient funds to support an additional rink in Ward 7.

BUDGET IMPACT

The 2016 budget of \$6,500 will be overspent by approximately \$1,200 in staff time, equipment and materials. Please note the costs do not include the water and electricity costs to maintain the service level associated with these rinks. An additional \$1,200 should be added to the existing budget to maintain the service provided to these outdoor community rinks. If additional rinks became considered, then an additional \$2,500 per rink would be required for the appropriate budget.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

Well-balanced

- Striving for cultural harmony and ethnic diversity
- Events that help shape identity and contribute to community spirit

Well-equipped & managed

- Small town feel with city amenities
- Clear vision of the future and aligned corporate/business plans

Well-respected

- Being well thought of and valued for our judgment and insight
- Discovering innovative and creative solutions for future well-being
- Being a champion for co-operation and collaboration
- Being tradition-based and forward-looking

CONTACT

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