

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - JANUARY 17, 2005**

### **OUTDOOR ICE RINKS IN NORTHWEST WOODBRIDGE**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Senior Manager of Parks Development and the Legal Department, recommends:

That this report be received for information.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding development of an outdoor ice rink in northwest Woodbridge.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

A community meeting was held Thursday, March 27, 2003 with respect to the conceptual design of Sunset Ridge Neighbourhood Park. The purpose of the meeting was to receive input from the residents regarding proposed facilities, and location of these facilities within the future park.

During the meeting, residents requested an ice rink. It was agreed by all in attendance and confirmed by City of Vaughan staff that, if the budget could accommodate this request, concrete curbing and a water service would be provided around the proposed basketball court. In addition, it was also noted by City of Vaughan staff that the municipality did not operate these facilities and that the community would be responsible to operate and maintain the rink. General consensus was reached with respect to the park facilities and to the design of the park.

The park construction was substantially completed on October 10, 2003 and the concrete curbing and water service discussed at the public meeting were implemented around the basketball court. This facility is functional and was constructed to high quality and standards. No other commitments were made to the community regarding the ice rink / basketball court facility.

Prior to the start up of the outdoor ice rink, a community meeting was held November 11, 2004, at which residents requested additional information regarding the costs to remove the asphalt surface and replace with concrete. As this request would prove costly and, notwithstanding that the physical plant and materials of construction of the basketball court / ice rink are similar to other outdoor ice rinks in the City, Parks Department staff prepared options and costs that may have facilitated the establishment of an ice surface. The options were presented as additional information to the Mayor and Members of Council prior to the Committee of the Whole meeting held Monday, November 15, 2004.

Another community meeting was held Monday, November 22, 2004. At this meeting Councillor Carella provided residents with a draft item that would be finalized and added to the agenda (item#30) for the City of Vaughan's Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for November 29, 2004. At the Committee of the Whole meeting of November 29, 2004, Council requested staff respond to specific matters identified in item #30. In addition, staff were requested to address any other matters identified in writing by local residents and communicated in writing to the Commissioner of Community Services no later than December 1, 2004, assuming any questions are of a reasonable and relevant nature.

At the Committee of the Whole meeting of Monday, November 29, 2004, Report #87, Item #30, staff were directed to provide a report addressing issues related to the development of an outdoor natural (i.e: unrefrigerated) ice rink on the basketball court at Sunset Ridge Park.

The following address the issues requested in Item #30 of the November 29, 2004 Committee of the Whole:

### **Basketball Courts / Ice Rink Construction Methods**

The design and construction of the ice rink facility at Sunset Ridge Park meets City of Vaughan standards applicable in 2003 respecting that ice rink facility is a secondary use to the basketball court. Construction methods and materials implemented in 2003 were as follows:

- asphalt court surface is sloped at typically 1 - 1.5% for basketball – this slope is required to drain court following rainfalls;
- concrete curbing around the perimeter of the asphalt court to assist with the retention of packed snow and subsequently, the water used to flood the rink;
- asphalt was utilized as the surfacing material from a functional and financial perspective for City of Vaughan basketball courts – the ice rink is a secondary use;
- the methods and materials used to construct this facility meet all safety standards;
- all materials utilized to construct the basketball / ice rink court have been tested by geotechnical engineers for compliance with tender specifications.

### **Existing City of Vaughan Basketball Courts / Ice Rinks**

Based on community requests, the City of Vaughan has constructed eight (8) outdoor rink facilities throughout the City including the one at Sunset Ridge Park. Seven (7) of these, including Sunset Ridge Park, are constructed utilizing an asphalt surface, concrete curbs and water service. The additional outdoor natural ice rink is located at Mast Park and was designed and implemented in 2004 on a flat grassed area.

The eight (8) natural outdoor rink facilities located within the City of Vaughan are as noted below:

- Alexander Park
- Agostino Park
- Langstaff Park
- Sunset Ridge Park
- Komura Road Park
- Tinsmith Parkette
- Princeton Gate Parkette
- Mast Road Park (on grass)

Of these eight (8) natural outdoor rink facilities, to our knowledge, only two continue to be utilized regularly by the community including Tinsmith Parkette and Princeton Gate Parkette. Mast Road Park was just recently completed in 2004 and will be available for ice rink establishment in the 2006 winter season. Staff noted that the other rinks are not used regularly due to decreasing community interest.

### **Existing City of Vaughan Refrigerated Outdoor Ice Rinks**

The need and associated average costs for refrigerated outdoor ice rink facilities within the City of Vaughan is determined through the Development Charge Background Study. The level of service for refrigerated outdoor ice rinks has been established over a ten year period and new facilities are planned for as the population of the City grows. The level of service should remain consistent. Of the six (6) existing outdoor refrigerated ice rinks listed below, five (5) are adjacent to a City of Vaughan Community Centre facilitating operating inputs and minimizing monitoring and security concerns:

- Father Ermanno Bulfon Community Centre
- Glen Shields Activity Centre
- Chancellor Community Centre
- Garnet A. Williams Community Centre
- Sports Village
- Vellore Village Community Centre (will open December 2005)

The cost allocated for outdoor refrigerated ice rinks is based on the Development Charge Background Study 10 year historical average which is \$1,023,200.00 for each facility (not including an ice resurfacer). Annual operating costs including but not be limited to, staff, hydro, equipment, water, hydro and snow removal will also be required. Annual operating costs are estimated to be \$65,000.00.

### **An Evolution of Design Guidelines for Ice Rinks**

Early in 2004, the Parks Department initiated a review of the outdoor ice rink construction guidelines, operational protocols and potential liability issues. This review was initiated to identify potential ways of providing a similar level of community service but at significantly lower costs. The basketball court / ice rink at Sunset Ridge Park was designed and constructed (completed in October 10, 2003) prior to initiation of the guideline review.

Parks Department staff have been in contact with, and continue to review other GTA municipalities to assess their guidelines for construction and operational protocols. Based on information gathered to date, most other municipalities allow for outdoor, natural ice surfaces on flat grassed areas with a non-freeze water service. Mast Park, as noted above, will be a pilot project for ice rinks on grassed areas.

### **Identification and Training of Volunteers**

As requests for ice rink facilities are generated at community meetings when public input is sought relating to the conceptual design of the park, staff from Parks Development will record the name and contact information of the individual(s) volunteering to be the Rink Leader that will be responsible for establishing, maintaining and monitoring the ice rink facility. Parks Development staff will forward this information to Parks Maintenance and Operations staff. Once the facility is constructed (in some cases 2 years after the community meeting – dependent upon capital funding), it will be the responsibility of the Rink Leader to contact the Parks Operations and Maintenance Division no later than October 15 of that given year to request a training session with all volunteers. The hose and non-freeze hydrant key will be provided at this time.

The Rink Leader and all volunteers will be provided with the following information and training:

- Rink Leader will be required to sign a Letter of Understanding;
- Proper operation of the non-freeze yard hydrant;
- Correct connection of the hose to the non-freeze yard hydrant;
- Proper maintenance of the goal post padding supplied by the City of Vaughan;
- Suggested practices for the establishment and maintenance of ice surface;
- Safety guidelines – with respect to how the rink is to be utilized and reporting of unsafe ice conditions;
- Proper use of Natural Ice Rink Inspection Report sheets

### **Insurance and Liability Issues**

Winters in our temperate climate are unpredictable and establishment and maintenance of an outdoor natural ice surface will be a challenge. This is largely a community initiative and the expectation is that the rink will be established and maintained by members of the community. City

of Vaughan staff have been, and continue to be, concerned about user safety due to the fact that all outdoor ice rinks are established and maintained by residents and that it is incumbent on the community to ensure a consistent, quality ice surface.

In consultation with the City of Vaughan Insurance and Risk Management Department, it has been determined that the Rink Leader shall sign a Letter of Understanding that clearly identifies City of Vaughan responsibilities and the Rink Leader responsibilities. All volunteers that attend the training session would be fully covered under the City of Vaughan's third party liability insurance.

Appropriate signage has been developed and will be implemented at all existing and new community operated outdoor ice rink facilities. The signage will note that the facility is for recreational skating only and that parents/guardians are responsible for the adequate care, protection and supervision of children that are using the ice rink.

Where ice rinks are intended to be utilized by school groups as part of an organized curriculum, the appropriate Board of Education must provide a certificate of insurance indemnifying the City of Vaughan and naming it as additionally insured.

### **Financial Issues**

The requests of the public regarding project financials is currently being reviewed by the Legal Department to determine whether a formal Freedom of Information request maybe required.

### **Next Steps**

The physical plant (asphalt, concrete curbing and non-freeze water service) for the ice rink is functional. The hose and non-freeze hydrant key were provided to the Rink Leader in early December 2004. The Parks Department have installed appropriate signage and the protective padding on the basketball posts. In addition, picnic tables and a garbage receptacle have been supplied at the request of the community. Once all forms contained in the Outdoor Natural Rink Guidelines are properly signed and authorized (refer to Insurance and Liability Issues section), and training has occurred, the community can commence to build their ice rink facility.

There is currently no funding allocation identified in the Development Charge Background Study, City of Vaughan staff have identified a location for an outdoor refrigerated ice rink in northwest Woodbridge (i.e: north of Langstaff Road, east of Highway 50, south of Teston Road, and west of Pine Valley Drive). This request will be addressed at the next Development Charge Background Study which is expected to be within three (3) years.

Should funding be made available sooner, an outdoor refrigerated ice rink complete with a fieldhouse to accommodate the required mechanical systems and ice resurfacers could be implemented at the Woodbridge Expansion Area District Park (located at the south west corner of Islington Avenue and Major Mackenzie Drive). Implementing this facility would however, necessitate the removal of an existing mini soccer field from this District Park. Also, as this location is not adjacent to a community centre additional and operating funds (staffing) will be required. Annual operating costs are estimated to be \$65,000.00. Staff would be required to operate any outdoor refrigerated ice rink facility to ensure consistent ice quality and to monitor ice conditions to minimize liability exposure.

Staff reviewed the Al Palladini Community Centre site to determine if an outdoor refrigerated ice rink facility could be accommodated. The review clearly indicated that there is insufficient space to accommodate a facility of this type given the recent completion of the Pierre Berton Library, which is immediately adjacent to the Community Centre.

Staff also reviewed Sunset Ridge Neighbourhood Park to determine if an outdoor refrigerated ice rink facility could be accommodated. The review indicated that there is insufficient space and insufficient parking to accommodate a facility of this type without removing existing park facilities requested at the initial public meeting of March 27, 2003. In addition, the Development Charges Background Study has never provided for this level of service (outdoor refrigerated ice rink facilities) in any neighbourhood park within the City of Vaughan. This would clearly establish a new level of service precedent and would have to be discussed during the Development Charge Study.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007**

This report recommends a change from the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have not been allocated.

#### **Conclusion**

That the Committee of the Whole receive this report addressing specific matters related to an outdoor ice rink in northwest Woodbridge.

#### **Attachments:**

None

#### **Report prepared by:**

Paul Gardner, Senior Manager of Parks Development, Ext. 3209.

Respectfully submitted,

**Marlon Kallideen**  
Commissioner of Community Services