

COUNCIL – JUNE 25, 2007

DEPUTATION – MR. JOE SICOLI WITH RESPECT TO THE CITY OF VAUGHAN BOCCE POLICY

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture, recommends:

- 1) That this report be received for information purposes.

Economic Impact

Restoring free afternoon bocce will result in a reduction in revenue of up to \$10,000 annually from the Recreation and Culture operating budget.

Communications Plan

Staff met with recreational bocce members and bocce club representatives during the week of June 11, 2007. Signs advertising meetings were posted at Father Ermanno Bulfon C.C., Chancellor C.C., and Maple C.C.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council on the consultation with the bocce clubs and older adults regarding free use of bocce courts during Monday to Friday from 12 noon to 5:00 p.m.

Background - Analysis and Options

In April 19, 2004, Council approved a new City of Vaughan Recreational Bocce Membership Program. Recreational Bocce is currently provided to Vaughan older adults at a fee of \$56.67 annually. Presently we have 223 Recreational Bocce members of which 197 have older adult memberships. The Recreational Bocce Membership program is offered seven days a week from 12-5 pm and evenings from 7-11 pm. Peak usage of the courts for recreational play occurs during the afternoons (12-5 pm), as this is the preferred time for most members (seniors) to attend. Some evenings are permitted for Bocce Club use with dedicated access to lanes for Recreational Bocce member use. This program has been operating successfully over the last three years.

On March 26, 2007 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council approved a report that recommended changes to the existing program by providing free recreational bocce for older adults, Monday to Friday from 12noon to 5p.m.

At the Committee of the Whole meeting of May 28, 2007 by Joe Sicoli, resident and member of the Rainbow Creek Bocciofila Club made a deputation. A request was made to reconsider the free use of bocce courts during the afternoons for seniors. A written submission and deputation brought forth by Mr. Sicoli included the following key concerns:

- that providing free play on weekdays is a step backwards as the current system (Recreational Bocce Program) works;
- there will be an increase demand and overcrowding during the weekday afternoons as this is the prime time use for bocce playing;
- long wait times to play for players will cause delays, frustration and inappropriate behaviour by bocce players;

- by creating a new free bocce for seniors, staff will have to monitor more closely non paying seniors and paying adults on evenings and weekends;
- by introducing the seniors free week day use there will be a reduction in revenues to the City of Vaughan; and
- the Recreational Bocce Membership Program works relatively well so why change it.

Council directed staff to consult with the bocce clubs and senior's clubs for comments and provide a report to Council, outlining the effects to restore the free bocce play time for seniors during off-peak hours from Monday to Friday.

Three meetings took place during the week of June 11 with the senior Recreational Bocce members at Father Ermanno Bulfon C.C. (32 in attendance), Chancellor C.C. (25 in attendance) and Maple C.C. (12 in attendance). An additional meeting was held for the bocce clubs, attended by Rainbow Creek, Ansley Grove, Woodbridge and Maple bocce clubs (6 executive in attendance). The above noted concerns expressed in Mr. Sicoli's letter relating to free weekday bocce play were reviewed with those in attendance of the meeting.

Feedback from Recreational Bocce Members (Seniors)

Consultation with Recreational Bocce Members resulted in no consensus on the concerns that were expressed by restoring free bocce play time for seniors from Monday to Friday 12noon to 5:00 p.m. The concerns coincided with the level of usage of the bocce courts in question.

Father Ermanno players have very high usage and did not support free weekday bocce play. At the busiest location, Father Ermanno Bulfon C.C., attendance can exceed 100 in the afternoons during the fall, winter and spring seasons. At Chancellor Community Centre, courts receive moderate utilization and feedback from players was split as to the effect that free weekday bocce play would have. Maple Community Centre usage is low and support was very high for free bocce play. As well Dufferin Clark Community Centre usage is also very low and it was anticipated that free bocce play would have very little impact at this location.

Bocce Clubs (Executive Members)

Consultation with bocce club representatives also resulted in no consensus. Rainbow Creek Bocce Club (Father Ermanno CC.) did not support free afternoon bocce; Woodbridge Bocciofila (Chancellor CC.) did support it; Ansley Grove Bocce Club (Chancellor CC.) expressed a split opinion within their membership over this issue and Maple Bocce Club recommended consistency (free at all times, or membership fees at all times);.

Concerns expressed include (a) potential overcrowding resulting from providing free afternoon use, (b) an increase in behavioral incidents resulting from the overcrowding, and (c) a perception of unfairness in providing bocce free at some times and not at other times.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved; and is consistent with A.1 - To pursue excellence in the delivery of core services.

Conclusion

The concerns raised by Mr. Joe Sicoli with respect to free bocce use for seniors was discussed with recreational and bocce club members. The expressed opinion of the consultation process resulted in mixed concerns with bocce players in total opposition, moderate support to full support of restoring free bocce play time for seniors.

Attachment

1. Letter from Joe Sicoli to City Clerk re Bocce Concerns – Additional Information Item, Deputation 7b) presented at CW – May 28, 2007

Report Prepared By

Diane LaPointe-Kay, Director Recreation and Culture, ext. 8117
Paul Compton, Area Recreation Manager (West), ext. 8358

Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen
Commissioner of Community Services

To: John Leach – City Clerk

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ITEM *Deputation 7A*
CW May 28, 2007

From: Joe Sicoli,
271 Triton Ave.
Wdbg. Ont.
L4L 6P9
Tel. 905 851-2019
Member of Rainbow Creek Bocce Club &
City of Vaughan Bocce Program

Subject: Bocce Concerns

Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Joe Sicoli, I am a very active participant in the sport of Bocce. I have held various positions in the past on the Rainbow Creek Bocce Club and the Canadian Bocce Federation; last year I along with three others from Rainbow Creek Bocce Club represented Canada at the World Championships in Brazil, South America.

I'm writing to you in regards to the recent item that was approved by Council to allow free daytime, Monday to Friday use of the Bocce facilities in the City of Vaughan.

Approximately 3 years ago the City of Vaughan approved the current Bocce Membership Program; this was done in consultation with all Bocce Clubs, recreational players and City of Vaughan staff. I was part of the group that helped develop the current membership program.

I'm not sure why the present program is now being changed?

Making any changes to the present system without consulting the entire Bocce community in Vaughan and especially those individuals who played a role in developing the current system is very disrespectful and unjust.

Many of us Bocce players feel that Council's recent decision to go back to free play is a step backwards. After all, years ago we had free play and we changed it to the present system because it did not work. Going back to an old system that was changed because the players were not pleased makes no sense.

Eliminating the fee for Bocce during the day Monday to Friday will impact on the present players. It will increase the demand on the present Bocce facilities. At the moment during the winter months one can easily come to the center and play a game with minimal or no waiting for available courts. Creating a false demand by eliminating the fee will mean longer wait time for the courts. Not to mention the challenge that staff will have to monitor those who can or cannot play.

One of the issues that we struggled with while developing the current Bocce Membership Program was not to have various types of memberships with different fees associated with them. If we proceed with the changes that have been suggest staff will have to deal with the following membership categories:

- 1) Seniors- Free Daytime
- 2) Seniors – evening's & weekends paid
- 3) Adult - paid

In addition staff will still have to deal with non residents. The issue of non residents may become a larger problem once the word spreads that seniors can now play for free during the day.

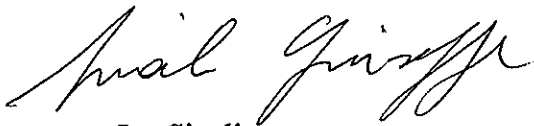
By adding all of these variables to this program it will add to the cost of supervising Bocce. Over the past few years at Father Ermanno Community Centre I have noticed the presence of staff reduced. I recall in the development of the present Bocce Membership Program one of the goals was to establish a single membership and slowing reduceing the need for staff to constantly supervise the area. I believe this has been done at Father Ermanno Community Center. Staff are scheduled sparingly during the year to perform the spot checks on the players.

Adding membership categories to Bocce it will result in more supervision. Eliminating the fee will result in less revenue. It makes very little sense especially when one looks at the fee that is charged to the seniors for the year, (\$56.67). This fee represents one of the lowest fees that Vaughan charges for any of the recreational services offered to the community.

In closing I'm asking that this change to the Bocce Program be reconsidered. We now have something that works reasonably well so why change it. If there are some issues they should be discussed with all the Bocce enthusiast in Vaughan in structured manner with staff's involvement. Accepting petitions from seniors who want something for free is not very scientific.

Would Council consider eliminating the fee for any of the other services like swimming or fitness if a petition was received from those who participate in those activities?

Respectfully Submitted



Joe Sicoli

c.c Mayor Linda Jackson
 Members of Council
 Diane LaPointe – Kay