



COMMUNITY SERVICES – RECREATION & CULTURE
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April 1, 2015

COMMUNITY SERVICES – Recreation & Culture 2015 – 08

TO: Committee of the Whole
SUBJECT: Artificial Turf Sports Field Follow Up Report
ORIGIN: Community Services – Recreation & Culture

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the Community Services – Recreation & Culture, Report # 2015 - 08 dated April 1, 2015 regarding Artificial Turf Sports Field Follow up be received and the following recommendations be adopted:

- 1. THAT Council direct Staff to carry out the next steps as outlined within this report.**

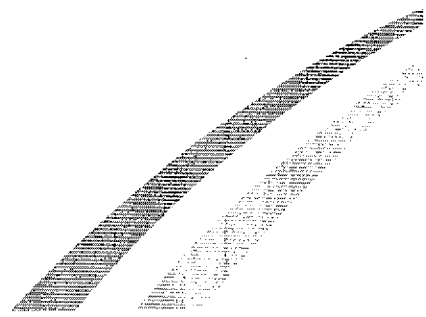
COMMENTS

At the March 23rd Committee of the Whole, Council reviewed Community Services – Recreation and Culture Report # 2015 – 05 that outlined a potential partnership opportunity with York Region District School Board for the development of an artificial turf sports field in the Town of Newmarket.

The purpose of this report is to address a number of questions that emerged from that meeting and to provide a framework and timeline for development of a partnership agreement for further consideration by Council.

Benefits of an Artificial Turf Sport Field

An artificial turf sport field provides many benefits to the community. A variety of sports would be accommodated on an artificial turf field including soccer, football, lacrosse, and ultimate frisbee. Each user group representing those sports has expressed a desire to see such a facility located within Newmarket. Specific benefits sited include:

- Increased playing season – play can begin as soon as snow has melted and can continue until snow is gone. This would increase availability of play for all sports by approximately 3 months annually.
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- Ability to play in inclement weather – an artificial turf field will not be damaged by play during rain and wet conditions. This would alleviate considerable pressure for all the user groups when faced with cancellations as a result of the weather.
- A facility that allows for consistent conditions – elite levels of play in all sports require conditions that are more consistent in nature. An artificial turf remains constant in its playing conditions, regardless of wetness or dryness, heat and humidity, etc.

Maintenance of an Artificial Turf Sport Field

There is a perception that maintenance is less on an artificial turf field. This is partially true. The regular, weekly maintenance is comparable. An artificial turf soccer field does need to be swept as frequently as a natural turf field needs to be cut. However, an artificial turf field requires no irrigation. Additionally, there is no off season rehabilitation that is required, as there would be in a natural turf field.

Grass Field Maintenance Mitigation

The absence of an artificial turf sports field in the inventory results in an over-stressed use of premier grass fields due to the diverse use of sport types such as football where there is considerable wear down the middle of the field and soccer where there is considerable wear in the goal areas. This wear is accelerated when unpredictable weather conditions are factored in. In the past premier fields have needed to be shut down and removed from the booking/use inventory during the prime season due to overuse and damage. This dramatically impacts user groups and effects the Town revenues and parks maintenance budgets. Introducing an artificial turf sports field into the inventory will dramatically alleviate field stress of existing premier grass fields.

Community Need

There are over 6,000 participants currently registered with local sport organizations that would benefit from an artificial turf sport field. Through the Recreation Playbook Consultation process, all sport user groups were invited to an information gathering session. Each of these sport organizations was represented at the meeting. The need for an artificial turf field was expressed overwhelmingly by all of these user groups, on behalf of their membership in this information session.

An artificial turf sports field was included in the Council adopted Development Charges Bylaw (Appendix B.5; Table 2). The targeted year identified in the table for this to be included within budget planning was 2015. This inclusion and timing coincides nicely with the development of the Recreation Playbook.

An online survey was conducted through the Recreation Playbook Consultation process. Almost 1,000 Newmarket residents participated in the survey. Full results of the survey will be shared through the Recreation Playbook. However, of particular relevance to this topic was a question around priorities of respondents. Specifically, respondents were asked where they felt tax dollars should be allocated in areas of Recreation. Over 50% of respondents rated sport field and diamond enhancement rated this as important.

Sport user groups have been expressing a need for an artificial turf field for a number of years. Prior to including an artificial turf sports field in development charges bylaw, The Town of Newmarket commissioned a field study in 2010 to study the need. In that study, the findings concluded that while quantity of grass fields located within Newmarket was sufficient to meet the needs of the user groups, it

was recommended that the Town of Newmarket consider the conversion an existing field to an Artificial Turf Field in order to provide a longer season, meet the growing needs during the traditional shoulder seasons and ensure that quality of fields remains comparable to surrounding municipalities. Conversion of an existing field would not qualify fully for development charges support; however a partnership with the school board would result in a new field being introduced into the Town's inventory. In conducting their review for the Recreation Playbook, Monteith/Brown Planning Consultants reviewed the 2010 study and concurred that an Artificial Turf Field would be a strong addition to the inventory.

Follow Up with York Region District School Board

As a follow up to the March 23rd Committee of the Whole Meeting, staff met with representatives from YRDSB. YRDSB confirmed an interest in partnering with the Town of Newmarket on development of an artificial turf sport field. Additionally, clarification was provided around funding and timing of construction. YRDSB has the flexibility to carry funding over from 2015 through to 2016 in the event that a successful agreement could be reached between the Town of Newmarket and York Region District School Board. Additionally, given timelines for construction, YRDSB has indicated that construction would have to occur during the summer months. As such, should an agreement be reached between both parties, the earliest construction could occur is during the summer of 2016. This would enable operation of the field during the fall of 2016.

Location

The location identified by YRDSB is Dr. John M. Denison Secondary School.

Next Steps

Staff is seeking approval from Council to move forward in the following manner:

1. Continue meeting with YRDSB to develop a draft operating and capital framework that is agreeable to both parties.
2. Bring forward the draft framework to Council for consideration in September, 2015.
3. Should a draft framework be agreed upon, proceed with public consultation (site plan, amenities, lighting, etc).
4. Post agreement framework and public consultation, proceed with development of a formal agreement between both parties and do detailed design and costing.
5. Once a formal agreement is signed proceed with construction as outlined within the formal agreement.

CONSULTATION

Preliminary discussions with YRDSB have included Public Works Services.

User Groups have expressed a need for an artificial turf field on a variety of occasions. This includes all User Groups who utilize a rectangular field: soccer, football, lacrosse and ultimate frisbee.

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

BUDGET IMPACT

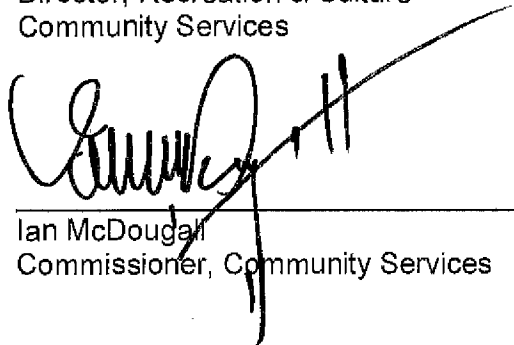
An artificial turf sport field will cost in the range of \$1 Million to \$2 Million depending upon the site and support amenities desired. \$900,000 was included in the updated Development Charges Study. The 2015 Capital Budget has included an additional \$100,000 for a total of \$1 Million towards the capital project. A partnership where the Town extends funding to YRDSB will be subject to development of a mutually beneficial capital and operating agreement to be reviewed and approved by Council.

CONTACT

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