

User groups to review projected fee increases

By Mark Pavilons

King Township staff will taking a modest increase in user fees to the public.

Council okayed the report and recommendations by staff to consult with groups, and limit user fee increases to between 2.5% and 3% for 2017. Initially, staff had recommended substantially higher rate hikes (7%) to soften the skyrocketing costs due to huge hydro rate increases. But council, led by Mayor Steve Pellegrini, told staff to return with a more reasonable increase.

In his report, Chris Fasciano, director of Parks, Recreation and Culture, noted staff analyzed the impacts based on the lower rate. Ice rentals and field lighting fees were the main areas affected by the increases in hydro costs.

Fasciano stressed that with the lower rates, "it is important to understand the impact as well as explore alternative operating measures to reduce costs."

Staff looked at ice rental fees imposed by surrounding municipalities and King's 2016 rate was right in the middle, with a prime time rate of \$238.94.

In 2016, all three of King's facilities are looking at combined deficit of \$616,000, with Trisan losing the most at \$389,000. With a 3% hike imposed in 2017, Fasciano projected a total deficit of \$823,501 for all three of King's facilities. Trisan will once again be hit the hardest, looking at a \$514,500 deficit next year.

"As council has identified a desire to keep fees in line with inflation, staff will explore other options for operational efficiencies which may result in a reduced level of service," Fasciano wrote. "More specifically, staff must explore changing operating hours and the reduction of services, where there is a marginal demand by clients."