

Support needed to make Nobleton the next Kraft Hockeyville

By Angela Gismondi

Nobleton could be the next Kraft Hockeyville.

The Township submitted an application to the Kraft Hockeyville program on Feb. 6 to make improvements to the Dr. William Laceby Nobleton Community Centre and Arena, reported Ward 2 Councillor David Boyd at the council meeting Monday. He asked staff to contact the NobleKing Hockey Association and get them on board as well.

"I can't tell you how thrilled I was to see that," said Boyd, who is also a coach for the NobleKing Junior Knights initiation program for children under six. "It's great for Nobleton and the Township as a whole. We've always been a hockey-type community and we're certainly rich in hockey culture here."

The application was made through the Town's parks, recreation and culture department. Kraft Hockeyville aims to help communities make repairs and upgrades to local arenas, many of which helped to define hockey in Canada and, ultimately, brings communities together. The grand prize is \$100,000 in arena upgrades and the opportunity to host an NHL pre-season game.

Should the Nobleton Arena be successful, the funding would be used for a new girls' change room in the arena to make sure that everyone feels welcome, is provided adequate space and is comfortable in the facility. The second upgrade would be the resurfacing of the outdoor rink, which allows residents of all ages to enjoy a recreational activity free of charge.

"It's a great way to make local improvements to our community centre but it's also a great way to build a sense of community and bring the community together," said Boyd, adding he first brought the program up at the all candidates meeting in Nobleton during the election.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini also supports the Township's participation in the program.

"It is an innovative and fun approach to funding infrastructure improvements without going to taxpayers," said Pellegrini.

As part of the nomination process, the Township had to describe Nobleton's passion for hockey; how the improvement project would benefit the community, and why the Nobleton Arena should be the next Kraft Hockeyville.

"As soon as you walk in the doors you see the history in the Nobleton Arena," reads the application submitted by the Township.

"There are cases filled with trophies, pictures and medals that our local teams received. There are pictures of players who began playing in this arena, who are now playing or retired from the NHL. The banners that hang above the ice date back to the '50s.

There is not only a long history of hockey in this arena, but also in the community."

The nomination goes on to explain that although the community has a small population of about 12,000, hockey spirit is alive and well with the NobleKing Hockey Association. The league has nearly 400 participants in youth hockey including 100 players in the Junior Knights program (under six years old), and participation has been steadily increasing over the last few years. The hockey association is run by volunteers, many of whom have coached, refereed or played in the league since they were very young. Many NHLers have started their careers playing at the local arena in Nobleton including Nick Boynton and Alex Pietrangolo.

So far, 1,037 communities have been nominated. It's up to the public to vote for their favourite community arena. The top 10 communities will be announced on March 14 and the public can vote on those communities from March 21 to 23. Five communities will be chosen from the east (P.E.I., Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec or Ontario) and five from the west (Nunavut, N.W.T., B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba). As of March 21, legal residents of Canada, 13 years of age and older, can begin voting for their favourite Top 10 Entry. The two communities (one per region) that receive the most votes during the first voting period will be determined as the top two finalists for a chance to win the grand prize. Once the top two finalists have been announced, those eligible can begin voting for their favourite community arena from March 28 to 30.

"We need the community support in order for this to work," explained Boyd, urging residents to post their favourite arena pictures online and to use social media such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to spread the word. "We need people to get online and post pictures on the website and social media. If we can get people excited, we've got a good chance. It takes everybody - not only Nobleton but the whole Township - to get online and vote for the Nobleton Community Centre as their choice for Kraft Hockeyville."

Another benefit of the program is that it highlights the chosen communities. The top 10 are featured on television.

"If we were to make it into the top 10, it would do wonders for Nobleton," said Boyd. "We have to do something outstanding to get noticed and make ourselves one of the top 10. This is an opportunity to not only make improvements to the local rink, but to highlight aspects of our community which make it such a great place to live."

The winner of Kraft Hockeyville will be announced during Hockey Night in Canada Apr. 4. Not only will they win \$100,000 in arena upgrades, they will also have the opportunity to host an NHL pre-season game. The second prize winner will also get

\$100,000 in arena upgrades and \$25,000 in arena upgrades will go to each of the eight remaining finalist communities. For more information and to vote, visit the Kraft Hockeyville website at www.khv2015.ca. Use the custom hashtag #khv_nobletonarena when posting on Twitter or Instagram. To view the Nobleton Arena's nomination profile, visit <http://www.khv2015.ca/en/nominations/profile/dr-william-lacey-nobleton-community-centre-arena/>.