

New recreational facilities coming to King

By Mark Pavilons

Residents will enjoy a new, modern recreational facility in King, thanks to an agreement between Seneca College and King Township.

Just what form this new facility will take is still up in the air, but the groundwork has been laid for yet another innovative, co-operative made-in-King initiative. It's a massive win-win scenario for everyone involved.

King council Monday night approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the Township and Seneca to negotiate a ground lease and agreement for indoor and outdoor recreational facilities built by the Township.

Some of the features that could be part of the new community centre include an arena, indoor pool, gymnasium, multi-use space and a number of outdoor fields.

“Yes, there will be a pool,” Mayor Pellegrini told the audience at Monday night's council meeting, followed by a round of applause.

“This is tremendously good news for King Township. Thanks to the partnership between King and Seneca, we'll be able to deliver a first-class recreation centre for all King Township residents.”

King's desire for a new community centre is no secret, and the Recreation Master Plan even recommends such a facility. Ideally, this new centre will include an arena, indoor pool, gymnasium, multi-use space and a number of outdoor fields. Finding an ideal location for this is a challenge and Seneca King Campus, boasting more than 500 acres, was regarded as a perfect locale.

Township staff and politicians have been working on the deal behind closed doors over the past year.

The MOU sets out the guidelines for this co-operative effort in developing the facilities.

Seneca will provide a 25-acre site on its lands at the northwest corner of Dufferin and the 15th Sideroad, on a 60-year ground lease.

King will be responsible for the costs of building the facility, as well as the ongoing operating and maintenance costs. King will also cover sanitary sewer connections to this new site. The two partners will also sign an agreement that will address third-party programming, events, design elements, as well as the timing and phasing of the facilities.

Hopes are the agreement will be completed by this October.

Staff pointed out this is only the first step “identifying the site and relationship.

“Considerable work, including the development of a servicing plan, detailed design as well as a financial plan, will have to be developed before there is any activity on the site,” stated the report by CAO Susan Plamondon.

“... the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding is the provision to the Township of a 25-acre site on financial terms very favourable to the Township.”

She pointed out that if the Township were to purchase the lands necessary for this complex, it would cost upwards of \$1 million per acre.

“The financial terms are very favourable to King,” Pellegrini added. “Not only are we getting a large parcel of land in a prime, central location, we're getting it at a rate providing excellent value for money.”

No formal estimates on the cost or timelines of the new recreational facilities have been made.