

September 9, 2019 council received a draft report from Nustadia, “ Conditional Assessment and Master Plan for Community Recreational Facilities” to review the growing and diverse needs of citizens for recreational programs and facilities. Following a presentation to council, staff and council held a private celebration with Ed and enjoyed the preordered sandwiches.

Nustadia had been chosen by staff as consultant for a recreational Master Plan by an RFP process, of which they scored low on quality. They are a private company with main business of owning and operating arenas and soccer fields. The report remains as “draft” with many components of the “Recreational Master Plan” left incomplete. Recreational Master Plans are based on programs and community input. Bits and pieces of the draft report have been used to move some infrastructure projects forward, and so the saying goes..hire a consultant to give you what you want to hear.

Nov, 20, 2017 report 8.9 regular council meeting. I have requested the report, to be added to this delegation for reference.

The presentation included a 2012 Engineers Report for structural components, and offered assistance with referral for evaluation of mechanical and electrical components, for SHRC . It also included approximate costs for new single arena, at 11 million, A recommended motion CW 14- 2017 unanimously supported the options paper proposal.

Also a motion was in place for renovations of up to one million, for the SHRC. Council committed to a new Recreation Centre, in the next 5 years, which included a community hub. CW17-2017 recommended that the SHRC project be funded using wind turbine revenues, and working fund reserve. Did these resolutions get put before council?

From the report, a debt of 10 million, would have an impact of \$109.81 on a home assessed at \$230,000. As a comparison, the debt repayment for Hensall Pipeline, for some areas of the municipality at the same time was \$ 83.90 quarterly, or \$333.60 annually regardless of the value of a single home..

It was reported that “Council needs to commit to a financial commitment toward the project to assist the project steering committee and future fundraising.”

Has there been any commitment in the budget, for the SHRC or Stephen arena?

“The budget process is an opportunity for council to provide more specific budget guidelines to staff on service priorities, propose tax changes and priorities for the coming budget year. Department managers prepare and present 5 years budget forecasts to gain an understanding of long term funding needs and timing. So that actions can be taken to ensure the desired levels of funding is available when needed.” June 15, 2015

Commitment to Recreation

South Huron Website Nov 2020 to today

“ South Huron Council is committed to providing the best recreational opportunities that are accessible, benefit all age groups and are affordable for the entire community. The municipality is seeking a partnership with senior levels of government to build a Multi-Use recreational centre in the town of Exeter. Rather than invest substantial dollars in renovating the current South Huron Recreation Centre, an outdated structure that scored a failure rating in the municipality's 2016 asset management analysis, South Huron is seeking to build an energy efficient , cost effective and standards compliant SHRC. The entire facility will be AODA 2025 compliant while the building design permits a second ice pad to be added in the future. South Huron is taking a regional approach to recreation facility capacity. This includes monitoring the use and maintenance requirements of other South Huron recreation facilities, collaborating with neighbouring municipalities ,to utilize unused capacity, and evaluating overall operating efficiencies and user trends.”

“The municipality works to ensure the local youth have access to play activities. These include sport, recreation, drama, music, the arts, volunteerism, leadership development, service leadership, and civic engagement. Youth programs focus on “play” activities while getting children active. This encourages young people to express themselves, creating positive interaction with both peers and adults in a way that provides structure.”

The South Huron Community Services Guide Spring 2019-2020 provides “ a guide to active, inclusive community living. As our residents know, every year our community proudly offers a variety of special events, athletic programs, as well as recreational and leisure activities for all ages. South Huron is dedicated to providing outstanding public programming and exceptional customer service to our residents and visitors. We want to sponsor collaborative partnerships that support the development of community champions. If you have an idea for a program we want to hear about it. We invite you to get involved and get active in your community..signed Yours in community building,”

Well here we are!

Budget supports for Future of Assets and Programming

7.2 report to council, June 15,2015 states” Public participation is an important part of the budget process. Input occurs informally when staff and Council talk to members of the public or indirectly by observing what services are being used. Input occurs formally through the development of various planning documents like the Official Plan and other various master plans such as the “ Parks and Recreational master plan.”

The Master Plan for Community Recreational Facilities, (Oct 2019) read
“ decommission both existing arena facilities within the next 2 years and build a new Multi Use Community Recreation Facility with a single ice pad. At the end of the 2019-20 season decommission and demolish the SHRC Arena and construct on the same site, or a new location, after a thorough site selection process. THE CURRENT STEPHEN ARENA will remain OPEN, until the new multi use facility is constructed.” This plan was done without public consultation.

Although there has not been any significant addition to reserves for replacement or repair of the two structures, there has been investment through reserves and debt financing for Exeter outdoor swimming pool, and Port Blake, tearing down Centralia Hall, and converting the Ag Building into storage.

There have been numerous studies and surveys up until the 2020 budget that recognized the importance of recreational facilities, particularly a community hub. It has been noted people are getting tired of providing input, as nothing gets done, anyway.

The municipality submitted a funding proposal to the Investing in Canada infrastructure Program, with a \$ 12. 5 million commitment to be accomplished through debt financing, fundraising, sponsorships and other grants.

Although there has not been any public input into the 2021 budget, there were no significant changes to operations and capital investments for the SHRC or Stephen Arena. Of note there has not been an funds set aside for Engineers report, for the condition of structure, electrical, or mechanical components for either facility.

Included in the budget was the operations unchanged for all of 2021, and forecasts for projected capital expenditures.

Following the passing of the budget, Dec 2020, it was deemed there was not enough “business” to have the regularly scheduled council meetings in January, however a Committee of the Whole meeting was scheduled for Jan 25, 2021 at 4 pm the sole purpose of council “Reviewing the Recreational Master Plan Study Recommendations” and staff report CSD.21.01. Of note, council has dismissed the SHRC community hub committee, and broke the contract with a fundraiser for the SHRC project, removing any community input, advise, or active fundraising.

One would assume that this is not the case with KW or Dashwood Recreation, or “ special Committees “ to allocate funds to SH infrastructure.

Summarizing the Facility study, both SHRC and Stephen Arena facilities have risk for failure and staff have projected costs of 2 to 2.5 Million for upkeep, as the structures in both arenas are well below existing industry standards. During Budget deliberations, council was reassured by report, that a \$ 100,000 fix for ice prep in Stephen Arena could be put on hold, and ice would still be maintained for the 20/21 season.

Both arenas have issues with mold , roofs, air quality, rink size and accessibility by 2025.

The projected capital expenses per 2021 budget:

SHRC:

In 2022 is resurfaced room @ 20,000

In 2024 is Hall Roof @180,000

In 2025 is Arena Roof @110,000 and ice resurfacer @175,000

The projected expenses for Stephen

Compressor Shell and surge drum removed form 2021 budget as deemed not required this year, and would not likely effect ice production in 2021

In 2022, is condenser@ 22,000, Arena Floor @ 1.1 million, and front door @ 12,000

In 2023 is water heater @ 22,500, resurfacing room(deemed in critical condition) @ 310,000

In 2024 is dasher boards @ 300,000, Ice surface glass @50,000, paving parking lot @ 50,000

In 2025 is arena floor replacement@ 110,000, ice resurfacer@ 80,000 and rubber floor@ 175,000



*The projected expenses for KW outdoor pool roof, pool house and pump was @ 270,000

Committee of whole meeting Jan 26

Stephen Arena : “spent 350k past 10 years, with sand floor surface space 179x79 but standard is 200x 85

Wood roof structure with structural issues

Wood seat risers

Ice surface room in critical condition

Building envelope ..water penetration



Expenditure increase of 126 k



Expenditure decrease of 17 k”

* No predictions of capital costs over next 5 years

SHRC : “ spent 1.2 million in upgrades 2009 to 2019

Original under floor ice piping system and dasher board system replacement cost of 1 million plus

Building envelope - water penetration
Needs dressing room upgrades,



Expenses increased 470 k



Revenues decreased 58 k”

* Forecasting 2022 to 2025 of 2.2 million in capital costs



* Woodham pool capital costs expected to be 1.8 to 2.2 over next 5 years.”

Proposed closure of second hall discussed, but not as per Nustadia report page 24 recommendation #2 : Decommission and demolish the SHRC and build a new multi use rec facility”

In viewing the Committee of Whole meeting, there were drawings presented on screen. Discussion took place that it would be a waste of resources to ask staff to prepare a report on costs for amenities , and that council really needs to make a decision on what they want done there, otherwise staff may prepare a report and Council doesn't go ahead with amenities.

It is a well known fact in South Huron, and as the consultant alluded to, that the issue of shared washrooms, and “ gang” showers at SHRC has been an ongoing concern for past 10 years. This is totally unacceptable. It is also a well known fact that the Stephen arena dressing rooms were much more conducive to youth programs, and primarily why Stephen was the best facility for girls and mixed hockey, and for social distancing during Covid. Both facilities lack any off season programs utilizing the arena space.

Council passed the 2021 budget with no commitment to any increases to recreational reserves, nor any commitment for the engineers reports needed to validate the staff projections for capital and funding to maintain a recreational building. The 2021 budget allocations, and projections do not seem to align with the Nustadia report information used at Committee of Whole meeting, for the two arenas, Centralia Park, KW pool, nor SHRC Hall. Although the municipality has stated they committed 12.5 million to a project, there has been no action taken to demonstrate this.

Is it Finances?

From the Nustadia Report, “ the South Huron Arena Operating deficit is 647,509, while Stephen is 189,145. In Ontario, a standard operating subsidy is 150,000 to 250,000. Revenues have not kept up with increasing operating costs, which could be related to older facilities and programming, and higher than average facility staffing costs. The existing subsidy for both arenas is currently \$839,000. A new multi use facility that is properly developed and with proper business case could have a projected annual deficit that does not exceed 400,000. The annual savings could service annual a debt of 9 million.”

During the Committee of the Whole meeting, when asked about the costs of operations, a sheet was put up on the screen, and a request was made by a councillor to have a more readable copy, to determine what was the largest expense. The information will be sent to council?

✂️ “The Municipality will save \$189,000 by closing the ice operations of Stephen Arena.”, but does that include the costs associated with off season expenses? That may be clearer to Council when they see the finance sheet and costs associated with it April to August, 2021. Without being privy to the financial sheets, there is an ongoing cost of vacating space but keeping the utilities etc connected.

Staff expressed the desire to be facilitators, not programmers. 💕 This seems to be the trend as services for youth camps, YMCA, summer activities have been declining or eliminated in ALL of South Huron, including the Stephen Arena. Interesting, at the meeting, the comments made regarding subsidizing, seemed to focus on ice time, and neglecting to compare it to any other programs and age groups that the municipality subsidizes in recreation, for example the SHRC Hall deficit of 200k.

The Exeter/Lakeshore article and Blackburn articles in past two weeks also alluded to ✂️ Stephen being more expensive than SHRC to operate, with the solution noted of slashing ice time, and “Plan B” , yet to be presented.

There was a hint of selling off Stephen Arena, but it never received a motion.

Future For Youth

Oct 9 2019 delegation to Council

“ SHMHA indicated that the lack of a dual pad arena was limiting their growth. The number of ice pads is appropriate, but the fact they are not under one roof is the greatest challenge. If the single pad is proposed, the Minor Hockey program would require any additional 31 hours outside the municipality, with no growth considered. Municipal staff report they have not made any further inquiries into ice time available in Bluewater.

In discussions at the Committee of the Whole and per the consultant, “South Huron is a rural aging community, and we need to support the older age group, not just youth.” Although some say we are a thriving community, the attraction seems to be focused on a retirement community vs young families. There was also discussion regarding building a second ice pad in Exeter, beside the existing ice pad,

We have also heard that it is not the responsibility of the municipality to find ice time for our current users. Almost every survey, Age Friendly, Youth, Community Safety, Economic Development , 2019 Budget survey, Community safety and well being, speak to attracting youth and young families for employment, and the value of recreation for all ages. Tonight “. Council has spent considerable time, effort, and resources examining various scenarios to consider a facility that the municipality can afford” Maybe it is time to review the information the community provides, or as in the case of late, stop asking for input.

Cancelling the operations of Stephen Arena, will result in a void 1117.5 hours or 48 hours weekly for 23 weeks. SHRC is at 85 % occupancy for prime time ice, M-F, 5-11 pm and Sat. and Sunday 7 am to 11 pm.

There is 9 hours of weekly prime ice time available, at SHRC, so ice users must find 39 hours over the 23 weeks to maintain the programs.

In keeping with the information provided at the Committee of Whole meeting,

“2200 hrs required for Minor hockey, skating club and Hawks.” is based on the above core ice time available, over a 23-25 week season.

The analysis to move the 650 hours from Stephen core hours is based on moving the season from 23 weeks to 26 weeks. In doing so, the 650 hours is pre season time, in the extra weeks, but not within the 23 weeks of their season. It is a good analysis for increasing ice time revenue for the municipality, but does not address the need of core ice time during the 23 week program needs.

If you can look at it another way, it's like needing to hire a combine to take your beans off in September, but the combine is not available in the prime time of September, so the operator proposes to take them off in August, or he can refer you to another combine operator, as he may have time in August or September.

Weekend tournaments, a means of fundraising would not be feasible with a one rink. Minor hockey association, skating clubs, and Junior Hockey teams will be in competition with each other, and at the mercy of the municipality as to who gets the ice. Pitting one ice user with another, and eliminating public ice time should not be an “objective for all recreation users in the community.”

This just adds fuel to the fire, similar to the reaction of Exeter vs smaller communities.

It is unfortunate that the youth of South Huron, the organizations that manage the programs, and the volunteers that support the programs, are given such an ultimatum.

In review of the correspondence received by council, there are several comments regarding divide between communities.. Be prepared for this to continue, between the organizations that will be trying to keep their SH ice time allotment. It is a challenge for them to speak to their potential loss, as they know who has the power to allocate the ice time to who. It will be interesting to see how the lost ice time in Huron Park will be evenly distributed at the South Huron Recreation Centre.

Tonight Motions

Recommended motion from Committee of the Whole to cease operating the Stephen Arena, effective tonight will require 4 members of Council to Vote Yes.

I understand your need to “do something” but as the great philosopher Hypocrites once said..First do no harm.

Dec 2021 budget indicated the Stephen arena was safe and operable until Dec 2021 with no critical funding required. The critical component was projected to be required in 2023. Is it safe and operable for anyone in 2021?

Information provided to the public indicate shutting down the Stephen aren will save the municipality \$189,000 but does that include fixed costs? What do you expect to be the “real” costs of shutting down the Arena prior to next budget?

Past project experiences, would indicate the need for “engineers reports,” and budgets, and timelines, as with any major infrastructure repairs or builds to ensure fiscal responsibility for new direction.

As alluded to in the Committee of the Whole meeting, the request was made for council to land on what they want to see in a project, before staff put all of their time and effort into reports.

One would think council as a whole should land on what it wants to do with a facility that just last month was “deemed an outdated structure that scored a failure rating in the municipality’s 2016 asset management analysis.”

Is plan “B” a 10 million dollar rebuild and new build? Is there a financial commitment for a project that has \$649,000 plus \$200,000 annual operating costs,

Why is there such an urgency to bring this notice forward vs having a discussion at the next Committee of Whole meeting?

How confident are you that “Plan B” as we think is in the Notice of Motion, can be completed in the next six months?

We will not accept youth be subjected to “gang showers”. Past experiences and learnings from re reaction projects would suggest washrooms would not be properly built by September, 2021. This project would not qualify for sole sourcing.

The C of W meeting, Jan 25 with recommended motion for committee to close Stephen arena, by press release identified finances as the reason, and the need for plan B. The community asked their MPP for a follow up on status of SHRC proposal Jan 28. Notice of motion received by Council on Feb 1, empowers the CAO to prepare a report (Plan B?).

A press release Feb 4 suggested written confirmation was received stating the municipal proposal was denied?

We understand the disappointment of not receiving the funding, but why take it out on the Stephen arena programs?

Based on the feedback on social media, and in correspondence tonight, consideration should be given to keeping the Stephen Arena, as you agreed to in the Budget 2021.

Be kind..our communities are all reeling from the effects of covid, not just financially, but also mentally, and making these rash decisions, takes away the hope of life as we know at Stephen arena, and ALL of South Huron! It isn’t all about the kids .. adults will miss it too!

These programs have been a way of life, part of the “culture” of South Huron, for almost 60 years.

Please consider staying the course with the budget you just passed 2 months ago.

