

To: Community Services Committee

From: Ron Diskey, Commissioner,  
Community Services Department

Report Number: CS-22-56

Date of Report: May 11, 2022

Date of Meeting: May 16, 2022

Subject: Natural Outdoor Ice Skating Area Pilot Project at Delpark  
Homes Centre

Ward: Ward 1

File: 03-05

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## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to respond to referral [CS-21-113](#) dated December 3, 2021, concerning the placement and construction of a seasonal natural outdoor ice skating area (Outdoor Rink) on the sports field located on the east side of Delpark Homes Centre (D.H.C.) and report findings on the operation of the seasonal natural ice rinks.

Attachment 1 – Outdoor Ice Rinks Policy

## **2.0 Recommendation**

That the Community Services Committee is to select one of the following options to recommend to City Council:

Option 1:

That pursuant to report CS-22-56, Natural Outdoor Ice Skating Area Pilot Project at Delpark Homes Centre, dated May 11, 2022 that the Community Services Committee recommend to City Council that the pilot project for the seasonal natural outdoor ice skating area (Outdoor Rink) on the sports field located on the east side of Delpark Homes Centre not continue.

Option 2:

That pursuant to report CS-22-56, Natural Outdoor Ice Skating Area Pilot Project at Delpark Homes Centre, dated May 11, 2022 that the Community Services Committee recommend to City Council that the seasonal natural outdoor ice skating area (Outdoor Rink) on the sports field located on the east side of Delpark Homes

Centre continue and that funding of \$47,800 in surplus funds from the 2022 operating budget and \$31,200 in funds from the Operations Reserve for a total of \$79,000 for capital improvements in 2022 be approved and that the 2023 operating budget be increased by \$59,100.

### **3.0 Executive Summary**

N/A

### **4.0 Input From Other Sources**

- Community Services
  - Recreation and Culture Services
  - Parks Planning and Development
  - Parks and Waste Operations
- Finance Services
- External Sources
  - Town of Whitby

### **5.0 Analysis**

#### **5.1 Background**

D.H.C. is located at 1661 Harmony Road North in Ward 1. Indoor facility amenities include 4 ice pads, a leisure pool, fitness centre with walking track, gymnasium and meeting rooms. Branches of the Oshawa Public Library and the Oshawa Seniors Community Centres 55+ are also located within the facility. Outdoor facility amenities include a splash pad, playground, community garden and sports field.

D.H.C. averages approximately 1.4 million indoor visitors per year who participate in the various services and activities offered at the facility. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed many constraints on activities offered at this facility and other recreational facilities in the City.

Based on information provided in Council reports [CS-21-93](#) and [CS 21-117](#), Council approved motion [CS-21-113](#) to proceed with the construction of the outdoor rink as a pilot program for 2021/2022 on the sports field at D.H.C. The skating area was viewed as an opportunity to provide a safe outdoor activity for residents. As indicated in the motion, the sports field location on the south side of facility had the appropriate space, sufficient parking, access to indoor washrooms and the facility is on a Durham Region Transit bus route.

#### **5.2 D.H.C. Natural Outdoor Rinks**

Natural outdoor ice rinks are completely weather dependent and usability can vary each year depending on conditions. Consistent, below freezing temperatures are required for the development of natural ice. Due to supply chain issues staff were unable to construct the originally planned 180ft x 80ft natural ice rink.

Staff commenced construction on January 4, 2022 of two natural outdoor rinks each measuring 50ft x 100ft on the sports field adjacent to the D.H.C. The natural ice rinks were opened to the public on January 14, 2022.

Staff overcame several challenges during construction and operation of the natural ice rinks. Although initially thought of as an ideal location, it was found that the sports field sloped towards the easterly located retention pond. This caused the water to pool into the eastern portion of the rinks. Staff were forced to pivot ice building methods and apply light floods to build up the low areas slowly. This method was extremely slow and time consuming.

Without a water source close by, staff were required to run approximately 750ft of hose from the back of arenas one and three to the natural ice rinks for flooding. This proved to be very time consuming and often led to freezing of the hose during cold weather and prevented floods from occurring in a timely manner.

Without direct lighting on the sports field the outdoor rinks were initially limited from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Two portable diesel lighting units were rented for the rinks. The rental units were found to be noisy and prone to mechanical failure.

Patrons accessed the natural ice rinks by a grass path at the South end of the field. Snow and ice buildup along the path and surrounding areas of the natural ice rinks presented slippery conditions.

The total annual operating costs for the seasonal natural ice rinks was \$32,462. Existing Recreation Facility Operations staff were utilized to maintain the natural ice rinks due to COVID-19 facility closures and reduced programming.

Table 1 below summarizes the costs associated with constructing and operating the natural ice rinks for the 2021/2022 season.

**Table 1. Costing– D.H.C. Outdoor Natural Ice Rinks 2021/2022 Season**

<b>Operating Costs</b>	
Materials	\$4,160
Ice Flooding Equipment	\$916
Signage	\$1,454
Water	\$518
Lighting Rental	\$6,324
Labour/Staffing	\$19,090
<b>Total Operating Costs</b>	<b>\$32,462</b>

### **5.2.1 D.H.C. Outdoor Rink Programing**

Capacity limits were set at 45 skaters per rink taking into consideration the provincial capacity limits due to COVID-19 and the ability to safely skate in the area. General public skating was offered to residents during the hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm as it catered to the whole community. The outdoor rinks officially opened on Friday January 14, 2022 and officially closed on Feb 23, 2022 due to weather conditions.

Response from the public was very positive. Residents asked for extended hours to be considered as many indicated access was limited Monday to Friday due to work or school. Portable lighting was added and hours were extended to 10:00pm on January 22, 2022.

Residents responded positively to the extended hours. A request for shinny times was also brought forward. The following factors were considered with offering shinny;

- The inability to provide additional flooding of the ice during the day
- Safety of participants
- Age differences amongst participants

It was determined shinny could occur for the last two hours of the day so as to maintain good ice conditions for the other operating hours. Two different hourly time blocks were scheduled for 12 years of age and younger from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and 13 years and older from 9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

The outdoor ice rink season lasted 41 days from January 14, 2022 to February 23, 2022. The rinks were open for a total of 24 days and closed for 17 days due to weather, snow removal and/or unsafe ice conditions.

Rinks were monitored for attendance every thirty minutes. A daily average of 218 people utilized the rinks over the 24 day period. Busiest times for usage were seen on the weekends with a peak usage of 294 people attending on Sunday, January 30, 2022.

Shinny attendance ranged from 8 to 14 players per hour during the first week it was implemented on January 25, 2022. Attendance dropped to an average of 4-8 players per hour as of January 31, 2022 which coincided with the reopening of recreation facilities and resumption of indoor hockey programs and leagues.

The natural outdoor ice rinks were well received by the public and hours and usage were extended shortly after the pilot project began to meet the needs of users. Usage of the rinks averaged 218 people per day. Due to weather related issues the natural outdoor rinks were closed for 41% of the season.

### **5.2.2 Sponsorship**

Outreach for sponsorship commenced once the pilot project was approved in December 2021. Multiple sources for sponsorship were explored. Three sponsors were secured and revenue was \$10,500 (less \$168 for the production charges of a banner). Response from potential sponsors was overall positive however some feedback was concern that the project had a short life span and therefore did not provide enough value. Highlights

included a sponsored skating event and food drive in support of Durham Outlook for the Needy and First Light Foundation of Hope.

### **5.2.3 Outdoor Ice Rinks Policy**

Consideration should be given to promoting the existing Outdoor Ice Rinks Policy and Procedure (Attachment 1). This policy outlines criteria and guidelines that community volunteers can undertake to oversee an outdoor rink in a location chosen by them. City staff would assist with construction of ice rinks. It is recommended that the City call for applications and approve based on strength of viability. This can be undertaken in early fall so preparations for the ice rinks can begin in a timely matter for when the weather is appropriate. By following this policy, there is opportunity to have natural ice rinks available in more local areas and as such more accessible to residents.

### **5.2.4 Considerations for continuation of a City run natural outdoor ice rink at Delpark Homes Centre.**

Council should take into consideration the following main points in determining continuation of a City run natural outdoor ice rink at Delpark Homes Centre.

- Cost – capital and annual operating
- Length of season
- Public use
- Accessibility
- Existing Outdoor Ice Rink policy

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

Staff have provided costing in order to address the construction and operating concerns outlined in section 5.2 that consider materials, water access, field preparation, lighting, accessibility improvements and operating costs.

In the 2022 budget Council approved \$80,300 for the construction and operations of the natural ice rink at D.H.C. The costs associated with constructing and operating the natural ice rinks for the 2021/2022 season was \$32,462 leaving a surplus of \$47,838. Capital costs to create a feasible and safe natural ice rink at D.H.C. for the 2022/2023 season is estimated at \$79,000. Utilizing the \$47,838 surplus funds, staff would require an additional \$31,200 from the Operations Reserve to improve operational efficiencies including leveling of the sports field, better access to water and accessibility improvements.

Additional operating cost for the 2022/2023 season would be approximately \$59,000.

Table 2 below summarizes the costs associated with creating the D.H.C. as a viable location for constructing and operating a natural ice rink for the 2022/2023 season.

**Table 2. Estimated Costing– D.H.C. Outdoor Natural Ice Rink- 2022/2023 Season**

<b>Capital Item</b>	
Materials	\$6,000
Water access	\$38,000
Field preparation/leveling	\$25,000
Accessibility improvements	\$10,000
<b>Total Capital Costs</b>	<b>\$79,000</b>
<b>Operating Item</b>	
Water	\$500
Lighting Rental	\$13,600
Labour/Staffing	\$45,000
<b>Total Operating Costs</b>	<b>\$59,100</b>

The costing associated with constructing and operating a natural ice rink for the 2022/2023 season are estimates, and could vary based on weather conditions and length of season. Costing is for reference only.

## **7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan**

This report addresses many of the goals set in the Oshawa Strategic Plan including the goal of “Economic Prosperity and Financial Stewardship” through the theme of “Safe and Reliable Infrastructure”, the goal of “Social Equity” through the theme of “An Active, Healthy and Safe Community”, and the goal of “Environmental Responsibility” through the theme of “Proactive Environmental Management and Combat Climate Change”.



Jim Naumovski, Director,  
Recreation and Culture Services



Ron Diskey, Commissioner,  
Community Services Department

<b>Policy No.</b>	<b>1.6.3-003</b>	<b>File No.</b>	<b>Page 1</b>	<b>of 3</b>
<b>Department:</b>	<b>Operational Services</b>		<b>Date:</b>	<b>1983 06 20</b>
<b>Branch:</b>	<b>Parks &amp; Facilities Maintenance</b>		<b>Revision:</b>	<b>2006 01 06</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Licensing, Permitting, etc.</b>		<b>Approved by:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Outdoor Ice Rinks</b>		<b>Approved by Council:</b>	<b>2006 01 16</b>

## Purpose

To facilitate the installation of outdoor ice rinks and provide installation, maintenance and operational safety guidelines to community volunteers groups for such rinks.

## Source

Department of Community Services Policy & Procedures, 1981 11 20.

## Policy

The Department, through its Parks and Facilities Branch, will provide the opportunity for a community volunteer or a community group to install outdoor ice rinks on parkland or open space owned by the City of Oshawa. On a loan basis, to provide wooden boards and hose for outdoor ice rinks. These shall be made available to and at the request of community volunteers who fulfill the requirements of an Outdoor Ice Rink Permit application.

## Procedure

1. An Outdoor Ice Rink Permit application must be completed by the community volunteer or community group (applicant) and submitted to the Parks Maintenance Services Division on or before September 30, of the year for initial installation.
2. The application must be accompanied by a plan outlining the exact location, size, details of construction, ground conditions, location of water source and lighting, including foot candles of light over the ice surface.
3. Application requests for the loan of boards (numbers) and hose (100 feet only) can also be made. The provision of boards and hose are subject to availability and that year's current budget funding for the purchase of such.

The **applicant** will adhere to the following installation, maintenance and operational safety guidelines as noted below.

- a) Inspect all areas to be flooded before season begins.
- b) Areas must be flat and smooth, free from mounds or irregularities in grade, and not in an area that will cause flooding to adjacent residents' yards.
- c) Areas must be free of stones, sticks and debris. Grass and weeds must be cut as short as possible.
- d) Areas should be flooded or sprayed as temperature and weather conditions permit.



- e) Rink must be inspected daily by a community volunteer or a member of the community group and any hazards or problems with the outdoor ice rink must be attended to immediately.
  - f) Hazards such as cracks frost boils, or exposed ground must be repaired immediately as soon as weather conditions permit.
  - g) Inspect all rink lighting for need of lamp or lens replacement and for proper aiming, if applicable.
  - h) Check for adequate water supply and adequate equipment.
  - i) Rink boards should be properly installed without protruding stakes and not left in the park when fallen down.
  - j) Maintain in good condition all signage supplied and installed by the City of Oshawa.
  - k) Ensure appropriate parking is available.
  - l) Any knowledge of an injury that takes place in relation to the outdoor ice rink must be reported to the City immediately.
  - m) At the end of the season remove the boards and clean the site of all debris.
  - n) Responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the snowfence barrier.
5. The **City** will
- a) Snowfence the perimeter of the rink areas, including a three (3) metre buffer from rink boards.
  - b) Provide adequate waste receptacles.
  - c) The City will provide appropriate signage outlining hours of use, supervision and codes of conduct.
  - d) The city will conduct weekly inspections of the outdoor ice rinks.
  - e) At the end of the season remove all snowfencing and signage.
6. Hours of use shall adhere to the Parks by-law.
7. Upon inspection, if the safety guidelines have not been adhered to the City upon notification to the applicant will close the outdoor ice rink.
8. New applications in any one year from the previous year for the loan of boards and hose will be subject to funding available in that current year's budget.