

STAFF REPORT



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG

Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Brian Geerts, Director of Community Services bgeerts@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	July 11, 2022		
Report No.:	Community Services-102-22		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Memorial Arena Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this report for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to solicit detailed business plans from the Canadian Fire Fighter's Museum and Top Prize Events;

AND FURTHER THAT staff bring back a report following the business plan review with a facility use recommendation to the September 26, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting; and

AND FURTHER THAT the Cobourg Police Service continue to be allowed occasional free use of the Memorial Area for training purposes, as long as such use remains within budgeted operations, until a new use for the building is approved; and

AND FURTHER THAT the Memorial Arena Ad Hoc Committee be thanked for their service

FURTHER THAT Bylaw 072-2021, A Bylaw to Amend By-law No. 008-2019 be rescinded recognizing its purpose has been fulfilled.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

Places: The Town protects, preserves, and promotes its natural assets, heritage, arts, culture and tourism.

Partnerships: Facilitate meaningful collaboration with Cobourg citizens.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This report is placed on the agenda ten days in advance of the Committee of the Whole meeting for public review.

Extensive public feedback was obtained through the survey and forum on the Engage Cobourg platform. The survey and forum were launched on April 27, 2022 and ran for a period of three weeks, closing on May 18, 2022. The Public Engagement report is attached as Appendix A.

Two tours of the site were conducted for the public on May 4, 2022 with 12 public attendees. Members of the public were also invited to present their recommendations to the Committee through a delegation on May 11 and 18, 2022.

Public engagement followed the Town public engagement guidelines and Appendix A Community Engagement Toolkit. As the changes considered for the Memorial Arena could have a high impact on the whole community, it was assessed at a Level 1 class. Communication tools included newspaper advertisements, information on website, press releases/public notice, social media; radio, Engage Cobourg survey, and in-person public meetings.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee is to assist the Town of Cobourg in reimagining the Memorial Arena, which was decommissioned as an ice rink in 2019. This report provides Council with a short list of 3-6 options for the Memorial Arena that:

- Meet the needs of the community,
- Are financially and technically viable, and
- Align with the Town of Cobourg's Strategic Plan

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

Cobourg Municipal Council voted to close the Cobourg Memorial Arena, located at 206 Furnace Street, in August 2019. At the Committee of the Whole meeting on March 29, 2021 Council directed staff to begin the process to set up the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to develop options for the facility. The terms of reference in bylaw 072-2021 were amended on September 20, 2021.

5. BACKGROUND

The Ad Hoc Committee held their first meeting on February 8, 2022 and maintained a frequent meeting cycle to accomplish their work quickly.

- February 8, 23, 2022 – First meeting
- March 9 and 23, 2022 – Regular meetings
- April 6 and 20, 2022 – Regular meetings
- May 4 – Two Tours of Facility (12 attendees total)
- May 11 and 18 - Delegations
- May 25, 2022, June 1, 2022, June 8, 2002 - Evaluation & Discussions
- June 22, 2022 - Final wrap up meeting

The Engage Cobourg platform was live on April 27 and open for three weeks.

MAAHC members reviewed the following documents:

- Town Strategic Plan
- Town Official Plan
- Solar Agreement Transfer
- 206 Furnace Street Solar Lease Agreement
- Tannery District Master Plan
- Furnace Street Arenas Operating Budget 2022
- 2019 WNCC Lease with Town of Cobourg Bylaw 066-2019
- 2019-2022 Strategic Plan Midterm Review Update
- Cultural Master Plan
- Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan
- CCC Campus Master Plan Final Report
- Land Inventory Final Report

The following projects were considered as examples of municipal arena repurposing to provide history and context to the process:

- Sudbury: Analysis Informing the City's Arena Renewal Strategy
- Township of North Dumfries: Arena Strategy
- Sarnia Arena Management Study
- Town of Penetanguishene: Arena & Recreation Centre Study

The following site constraints were identified:

- Existing solar array contract – ends September 17, 2035. Early contract termination may be subject to significant financial penalties.
- Building condition assessment including accessibility considerations as referenced in the Pinchin report.
- Jack Heenan Arena Lease with the Northumberland Curling Club– ends August 31, 2029
- Utility connections to Jack Heenan Arena – the installation of a separate hydro service for the Memorial Arena is in the order of \$100,000.
- Shared parking between the Memorial Arena and Jack Heenan arenas.

The following critical dependencies were identified:

- None – the Memorial Arena site is not absolutely linked to the performance or maintenance of any other municipal service.
- It was noted that this site has potential integration or complementary uses related to the Tannery District Plan, although it is strictly outside the boundaries of the plan.

The general communications approach addressed the community's awareness of the need for change, the community desire for change, providing the public knowledge to support the community's acceptance and rationale for change. A potential stakeholder list was evaluated by staff based on the current roster of program groups and leaders maintained by Community Services, through the digital activity management system. Over 300 potential stakeholders were identified; the Committee agreed that individual consultation with hundreds of groups was impractical. The general communications consultation plan was therefore intended for individuals, business, groups of all kinds, and any other local stakeholder. As Engage Cobourg is limited to engagement with Cobourg residents only, the Committee respectfully acknowledged that non-Cobourg residents would not be able to engage through the consultation process.

6. ANALYSIS

The Ad Hoc committee carefully contemplated and completed all items from its mandate:

- Identified and considered the needs of the community;
- Considered the Memorial Arena Property Condition Assessment conducted by Pinchin Ltd in 2018;
- Reviewed and toured the Memorial Arena and site;
- Considered the site in relation to the present and potential use of the adjacent Jack Heenan Arena, other area development plans, and the Town's Zoning Bylaw and Official Plan;
- Considered successful examples of arena repurposing from other municipalities;
- Considered the Town's commitment to sustainability;
- Encouraged and received submissions of ideas and suggestions for the site;
- Considered a range of opportunities including alternative recreational and cultural uses, community partnership opportunities, and the disposal or development of the site
- Financial feasibility of each option using data from the Town's Finance Department will be considered during the business plan evaluation.
- Documented the potential advantages and disadvantages of each shortlisted option and;
- Considered other matters as referred to the Committee by Council (none to date)

The committee maintained a thorough work plan throughout its term. The elements of the work plan have been updated and consolidated into this final report.

General Analysis Constraints:

The committee did not document any contextual or project assumptions. Basis of estimates varied with each proposal, report, and document. Estimates relied on the expertise and experience of the respective author or proponent.

Future Facility Use Assessment: Potential Areas to Investigate

The committee developed the following potential uses for the site, and discussed their potential impacts:

Type	List of Potential Future Uses
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior’s activities • Activities for young children and young adults • Community space for social connection/community development (social enterprise, skills training, etc.) • Mental health services • Affordable & rental housing • Child care services
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market hall (similar to Toronto’s Distillery District, retail experiences, etc.) • Post-secondary education (remote campus)
Recreational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatics facility • Skateboard park • Raquet courts (tennis, badminton, pickleball) • Basketball courts • Multi-use facility: Axe throwing/rock climbing/roller skating • Elite athlete training facility • Arena/additional ice time (more analysis needed) • Community gardens • Indoor soccer
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art gallery • Theatre/concert venue • Studio/rental space for artists and community groups
Third Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lease to third party for their own (business) use
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell property for re-development
Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to maintain facility in closed condition

Strategic Plan Alignment

The committee endeavored to provide a high-level analysis of all the provided options and their alignment with existing policy and plans. The task proved to be too time-consuming for the committee, so this task was not completed. Strategic plan alignment was discussed and reviewed during the proposal analysis phase.

Project Products / Deliverables List

The committee tracked all project deliverables and acceptance criteria in an orderly fashion. The following table summarizes the deliverables:

Stage	Deliverable and description	Acceptance Criteria	In Progress (Dates)	Accepted (Date)
Initiation	Committee struck, meeting schedules, methods, and scope confirmed	Meetings took place; scope and structure in place	February 23, 2022	February 23, 2022
Planning	Workplan development	Workplan approved by committee and updated regularly	February 23, 2022	Ongoing
Requirements Analysis	Review constraints, building options, context, policy	Mandate understood and applied at each meeting	February 23, 2022	April 20, 2022
Business Analysis	Compare opportunities to constraints, and review cost-benefit and community benefits	Analysis of mandate criteria complete	March 2022	June 22, 2022
Develop 3-6 Recommendations		List complete	April-May 2022	June 8, 2022
Report to Council	Staff report to Council with analysis & 3-6 recommendations.	Report review and approval at June 8 meeting	July 2022	June 22, 2022
Project Close	Council acceptance of report and motion received.	Motion approved for action.	July 2022	

The committee managed the schedule, tasks, and work load by developing a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) as follows:

Task	Planned	
	Timeline	Complete
Needs Assessment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the potential needs of the community 	February 2022	Y
Memorial Arena Site Review		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tour the Memorial Arena site 	February 2022	Y

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Pinchin condition assessment • Review existing agreements (solar panels) 		- Y Y
SWOT Analysis		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the Memorial Arena building/property • Discuss the risks associated with the property (risk register not documented) 	February - March 2022	- Y Y -
Neighbourhood Context		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the status of the Jack Heenan Arena • Review the Tannery District Plan 	February - March 2022	Y Y
Community-Wide Context		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Cobourg’s Cultural Master Plan and Recreational Master Plan • Consider the status of affordable housing targets/initiatives • Consider the demand for ice time/other amenities at the Cobourg Community Centre • Consider other major projects within the Town of Cobourg (Brookside, Harbour Repairs, etc) 	February - March 2022	- Y Y Y Y -
Case Studies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review examples of other arena repurposing projects 	February - March 2022	Y -
Partnerships		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the types of partnerships that could be forged for the development of the site • Invite local indigenous leaders to provide input on the status of the land and any recommendations for its use 	March 2022 Also through consultation process	- Y Y
Financial Considerations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current costs associated with the decommissioned arena • Review the costs and benefits of potential options 	March 2022	- Y Y -
Public Engagement		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop communications for Engage Cobourg to help inform public engagement 	April - May 2022	Y

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an opportunity for the general public to learn about the site and provide their ideas for its repurposing (community brainstorming) • Develop a delegation form for interested parties • Invite community groups/interested parties to propose their ideas to the Committee • Review presentations 		- Y Y Y -
Deliberations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze information gathered and public feedback 	June 2022	Y -
Recommendations to Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft a report for Council recommending 3-6 options for the Memorial Arena site 	June 2022	Y -

Proposal and Survey Data

The Engage Cobourg survey generated significant public interest, including 300 total visits, 22 new registrations, 14 individuals participating in the forum, and 136 individuals participating in the survey. Engage Cobourg is locally focused by design; participants must have a Cobourg address to participate. The strategic plans and supporting documents were rarely accessed by the public. The survey reached a broad cross-section of age groups and had good representation from different areas of town. Almost all who participated in the survey were entering information on their own behalf, and not for an organization.

The top three generally desired uses for the site were Recreational, Social, and Economic. Status quo (building maintained vacant) was the least desired option. As a recreational facility, the public preferred racquet sports and multi-use designs. As a social facility, the public preferred activities for young children and young adults, as well as affordable and rental housing. The highest choice for Economic use was a Market Hall, similar to Toronto’s Distillery District, retail experiences, etc. The preferred funding mechanisms were government grants and user fees.

Delegations and presentations were received from:

- Top Prize Events – Derek Sharp and Lionel Poizner
- Canadian Fire Fighters Museum – Will Lambert
- Coverdale Tennis Club – Virginia Mair
- Cobourg Lawn Bowling – Bill Arthur

Written presentations were received from the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum and Cobourg Lawn Bowling (attached).

Analysis

The committee developed and used the following proposal evaluation guide to shape discussion and evaluation of the proposals in light of the committee’s mandate:

Table 1: Proposal Evaluation Rubric based on Committee Mandate

Proposal Evaluation Guide				
Meets needs of community	Meets very large or broad community needs or one very important need	Meets many community needs or one fairly important need	Meets some community needs	Meets few community needs
Financially Viable	Clearly financially viable	Likely financially viable	May be financially viable	Questionable financial viability
Technically Viable	Clearly technically viable	Likely technically viable	May be technically viable	Questionable technical viability
“Fit” with physical structure	Existing structure requires little modification for new use	Existing structure requires some modification for new use	Existing structure requires major modification for new use	Entire structure may be removed, rebuilt, or entirely changed for new use.
Complementary use to Jack Heenan Arena & zoning	Proposed use within existing zoning, very complementary to Jack Heenan	Proposed use may require minor zoning change or small modifications to ensure both facilities are complimentary	Significant changes required to ensure JH and zoning function well	Proposed use unlikely to comply with current or future zoning, or very uncomplimentary to JH
Sustainability	Clear and well-defined sustainability	Unclear or less well-defined sustainability	Little sustainability	Sustainability clearly poor or not considered
Alignment with strategic plans	Well aligned with multiple strategic plans and many goals	Aligned with many strategic plan goals	Aligned with some strategic plan goals	Aligned with few strategic plan goals

The Committee also considered site constraints such as the rooftop solar contract, contract exit impacts, and other timing considerations. Considering the timing of the Jack Heenan lease and the rooftop solar lease, it stood out to the committee that it would be beneficial to find a new facility use to bridge the gap until the end of existing contracts. Council could then reconsider the site at the end of those contract terms (2035).

Following the development of the proposal evaluation guide, the committee discussed and evaluated proposals during their public meetings on May 25, June 1, June 8, and June 2022. The Committee was thankful to receive 4 proposals for a variety of different uses. The committee evaluated information provided by Cobourg Lawn Bowling and Coverdale Tennis Club regarding ideas for indoor lawn bowling and indoor tennis respectively. These presentations were considered but did not align as well as other options when using the evaluation guide.

The following four tables summarize the committee's evaluation of options that are recommended for further exploration: The Canadian Fire Fighter's Museum, Top Prize Events, a broad Request for Proposal, and building demolition and development of housing.

Canadian Fire Fighters Museum (CFFM):

Lease the building to CFFM for use as a museum

Contribution to the Community	Financial & Technical Viability	Alignment with Cobourg's Strategic Plan	Potential Benefits	Potential Constraints	Other Considerations
<p>Economic development and tourism: The proponents believe they will attract 12,000 visitors annually and employ 1-6 staff.</p>	<p>Likely financially viable: The proponents are willing to pay for necessary improvements to the building; planned revenue sources include fundraising, grants, admission & membership fees, gift shop, food concession, facility & program rentals.</p> <p>Likely technically viable: The building is large enough to accommodate CFFM's fire vehicles with some alteration to the Zamboni entrance. There is enough off-street parking available for museum use.</p>	<p>Aligns with 'Prosperity': Promote local economic development and tourism.</p> <p>Aligns with 'Places': Preserve and promote heritage, arts and culture.</p> <p>Aligns with 'Partnerships': Engage in public-private partnerships to improve the quality of life for everyone.</p>	<p>The Town will inherit the improvements to the building.</p> <p>Museum will create volunteer opportunities.</p> <p>CFFM is interested in partnering with other local museums/ attractions and allowing local events/receptions to take place within the building.</p> <p>CFFM is open to the idea of the southwest corner of the property being used for an affordable housing initiative.</p> <p>Compatible with existing agreements (Jack Heenan Arena lease and solar panel contract).</p>	<p>The CFFM is asking for a minimum lease of 10-15 years and the first 1-3 years of rental payments waived.</p>	<p>This proposal could provide a 'stop-gap' solution that allows the arena building to be utilized until the Jack Heenan Arena lease concludes (2029) and the solar panel contract concludes (2035) – at which time, the municipality could re-evaluate the best use for the entire parcel of land.</p> <p>More detailed information would be needed to fully evaluate the proponent's business case.</p>

Top Prize Events:

Use of the facility for a variety of special events

Contribution to the Community	Financial & Technical Viability	Alignment with Cobourg's Strategic Plan	Potential Benefits	Potential Constraints	Other Considerations
<p>Economic development: Could potentially attract visitors and enhance entertainment options for residents.</p>	<p>May be financially viable: The proponents are proposing a 60/40 revenue split from ticket sales and plan to use sponsorship funds to renovate the building.</p> <p>May be technically viable: With renovations, the building could accommodate major events; further investigation needed regarding parking.</p>	<p>Aligns with 'Prosperity': Promote local economic development.</p> <p>Aligns with 'Places': Preserve and promote heritage, arts and culture.</p> <p>Aligns with 'Partnerships': Engage in public-private partnerships to improve the quality of life for everyone.</p>	<p>Could potentially provide a range of cultural/recreational programming and entertainment.</p> <p>The proponents would manage the facility, reducing operational costs for the municipality.</p> <p>Compatible with existing agreements (Jack Heenan Arena lease and solar panel contract).</p>	<p>May not have enough parking to accommodate large crowds.</p> <p>Lack of local amenities to support visitors.</p> <p>May reduce event bookings, rental revenue, and sponsorships at the Cobourg Community Centre and Concert Hall.</p>	<p>More detailed information would be needed to fully evaluate the proponent's business case.</p>

Public Tendering Process:

Issue an RFP to solicit additional proposals for the use of the arena building

Contribution to the Community	Financial & Technical Viability	Alignment with Cobourg's Strategic Plan	Potential Benefits	Potential Constraints	Other Considerations
Potential social, recreational, or economic opportunities.	May be financially & technically viable: This would depend on the nature of the proposals received.	To be evaluated as part of RFP.	With a wider reach than Engage Cobourg consultation, an RFP may generate new/unique proposals for the repurposing of the arena building.	The renovation and operation of the building as a multi-use facility by the Town of Cobourg is deemed too costly in light of other major projects (ex., harbour & shoreline repairs). Similar financial hurdles would need to be overcome by proponents.	Potential for an external group to operate the building as a multi-use or other sports facility, cultural centre, etc.

Demolish the Arena and develop/dispose of the land for affordable housing					
Contribution to the Community	Financial & Technical Viability	Alignment with Cobourg's Strategic Plan	Potential Benefits	Potential Constraints	Other Considerations
<p>Affordable and/or rental housing</p> <p>Notes: 1 Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy, February 2019, p. 130.</p>	<p>Questionable financial viability: The penalty for breaking the solar panel contract and the cost of installing a new electrical service to the Jack Heenan Arena may jeopardize the financial viability of a housing initiative.</p> <p>Likely technically viable: Potential development site subject to further investigation by the Planning Department and possible rezoning.</p>	<p>Aligns with 'People': Housing strategy</p> <p>Also aligns with Cobourg's Affordable Housing CIP</p>	<p>Would help to meet Cobourg's target of 38 new affordable housing units per year.¹</p>	<p>Incompatible with the solar panel contract – significant penalty for breaking the agreement before the term ends in 2035.</p> <p>If the Memorial Arena were demolished, a new electrical service would be needed for the Jack Heenan Arena at an estimated cost of \$100,000.</p>	<p>Land could be offered to the Northumberland County Housing Corporation.</p> <p>Given Cobourg's projected growth, it may be prudent to retain the site to meet future service demands (recreational programming, police/emergency services, etc.).</p>

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

Financial impacts for consultation, on-line and in-person meetings, administrative support, work management, and site visits have been borne in approved 2022 operating

budgets. Consideration for future capital and operating costs must be considered in detailed analysis and future budget cycles.

Until such time as a new use for the building is implemented, the Memorial Arena will be maintained in a vacant and unused state. Over the last year, the Cobourg Police has enjoyed free occasional use of the facility for indoor training scenarios. Staff anticipate that this occasional use can continue with no additional operational impacts until such time as the new building use is determined. The building remains closed to the public.

Each recommended building use will have unique financial considerations that will be evaluated in more detail at the next stage.

8. CONCLUSION

The Memorial Arena Ad Hoc Committee has worked diligently to fulfill its mandate. The committee recommends that the following two options be explored in detail by having the two proponents submit detailed business plans to staff:

- Canadian Fire Fighter’s Museum
- Top Prize Events

Should either of these options not be selected by Council, the committee then recommends the consideration of the other two options:

- Public Tendering Process (with conditions established by Council) or
- Demolish/Develop site for Affordable Housing

The Committee also recommends that any final agreement does not extend longer than the current Solar Panel lease agreement, dated September 17, 2035.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Memorial Arena Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations - Community Services-102-22.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Whats Next For Memorial Arena - Summary_Report_Engage_Cobourg.pdf- Detailed Text Questions MAAHC.xlsx- Canadian Firefighter Museum Memorial Arena Presentation Final.pdf- Canadian Firefighter Museum Correspondance - Will Lambert.pdf- Delegation Request Form - Top Prize Events.pdf- Top Prize Events Email - Derek Sharp.pdf- COBOURG LAWN BOWLING CLUB Indoor Bowling facility.pptx- Coverdale Tennis Club Delegation.pdf- Furnace Street Arenas Operating Budget 2022.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 23, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Brian Geerts - Jun 23, 2022 - 5:59 PM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Jun 23, 2022 - 7:03 PM