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Tennis Centre – Update After One Full Year of Operations Information Report

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In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the operations of the Keith Davis Tennis Centre, built as part of the Shining Hill Municipal Capital Facilities Agreement. This includes first year operating results and survey feedback from users. This report also serves as the catalyst to establish the tennis centre model as a standard level of service, thereby ending the current pilot program.

Background

In March 2023, report #2023-17 *Tennis Centre at Shining Hill* was considered by Council. Within that report, it was recommended that the Town of Newmarket operate the winter bubble, representing a new level of service for the Town of Newmarket. The previous 3 court bubbled facility was operated by a private, for-profit business. Council agreed to a pilot program where the Town operated the bubble. In part, staff recommended that the tennis facility be operated by the Town during the winter session because of the significant capital investment by the Town in the purchase of the bubble. There were no operational issues with the bubble during the winter session under the full operational control of Town staff. Council also requested that staff report back with results of the Town operated bubble and asked that feedback from participants also be included as part of that report back. Staff have conducted a survey with results included below.

Discussion

The Keith Davis Tennis Centre opened in November 2024. For the first season of operation, the clubhouse remained under construction. A small office trailer and washroom trailers were used for the initial operation. The season concluded in April 2025. The bubbles came down at that time and the summer not-for-profit Newmarket Community Tennis Club then operated their summer season on site, with the new clubhouse opening in June as part of the summer season. Given the operations of the summer club were by a not-for-profit organization, as has been done for over 75 years, results and survey feedback are only reflective of the Town of Newmarket operated winter season. Feedback from the board of the Newmarket Community Tennis Club has indicated that this season was their most successful season on record.

Key Results

The first full year of operation has been a huge success. The following metrics illustrate the success of the Town operated 2024/2025 winter session:

Memberships

The industry standard is 100 members per tennis court at an indoor facility. The Keith Davis Tennis Centre included 8 bubbled indoor courts. Within the first week of sales for memberships, 800 memberships were sold. Over the course of the following month, staff closely monitored usage and gradually added additional members. **The final tally for memberships in the first season was 848 total members.**

For the 2025-2026 season, memberships sold out within 48 hours.

It should be noted that membership was not required to use the facility. Memberships allow for court bookings up to a week in advance and allow for a discount on lessons and clinics. Non-members are still able to book courts 24 hours in advance and are able to participate in lessons and clinics at a non-member rate.

Program Participation

There were a variety of programs offered, including leagues, lessons, clinics and intercounty teams. **The program fill rate was 98%**, meaning that virtually all programs operated at full capacity.

Court Usage

In the tennis industry, the court usage rate is represented as a percentage of the time courts are used factoring the total number of courts multiplied by the total hours of operation in a day. The hours for the tennis centre were daily from 7 am to 11 pm. It is considered high court usage rate when courts are used 75% of the time. **For the first season of operation, court usage in Newmarket was over 90%.**

Net Surplus

In the initial report provided to Council, staff conservatively projected a net operating surplus of approximately \$100,000.

The first year of operation has netted a positive surplus of over \$225,000.

Survey Results

A survey was distributed to all members and program participants of the Town operated 2024/2025 winter session. Over 20% responded, which is a high rate of return on a survey. Participants were asked to rate a number of things on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being an outstanding experience, and 1 being a terrible experience. The following is a break down of the survey responses:

Overall Satisfaction

Rated 8 to 10 – 90% Rated 5 to 7 – 10% Rated below 5 – 0%

Customer Service and Satisfaction with Staff Interactions

Rated 8 to 10 – 91% Rated 5 to 7 – 8 % Rated below 5 – 1%

Satisfaction with Facility

Rated 8 to 10 – 80% Rated 5 to 7 – 17 % Rated below 5 – 3%

Generally, the feedback was very positive. Survey respondents highlighted program quality, fee structure and service as very strong. Most of the concerns related to the challenges in operating while the clubhouse was still under construction. During the construction period an office trailer and bathroom trailers were used to support the facility pending the completion of the clubhouse. This caused challenges with entering the courts and excess dirt and debris making its way on the courts. The clubhouse was completed and opened in June. Feedback has been extremely positive on the clubhouse. Many of the challenges identified from the first season will be rectified with the addition of the clubhouse.

Transitioning from Pilot Program to Ongoing Municipal Service Level

Based on the overwhelming success of the first year of operation, in accordance with the initial report, staff will move forward transitioning operations from a pilot program to a standard municipal service level. There are no additional budget implications from this transition.

Consultation

Consultation included the survey as highlighted above. Additionally, the volunteer board of the Newmarket Community Tennis Club was also consulted. There was overwhelming support from the board for the Town to continue operations of the winter tennis season.

Conclusion

Council can be assured that the tennis facility is being operated in an effective manner with positive financial implications for the Town of Newmarket, while also improving access to the sport of tennis for the broader community.

Council Priority Association

This report aligns with the following Council Priority: Extraordinary Places and Spaces

Human Resource Considerations

The transition from pilot program to ongoing service level represents the conversion of one contract full time role to a permanent full time role funded from revenues, as was set out in the March 2023, report #2023-17 *Tennis Centre at Shining Hill*.

Budget Impact

The operation of the tennis facility has an overall net positive impact to the financial situation of the Town of Newmarket with a surplus of over \$225,000.

Attachments

None

Approval for Distribution

Jeff Payne, Commissioner, Community Services

Report Contact

For more information on this report, contact cservice@newmarket.ca