

COLBORNE ROTARY CLUB

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COLBORNE CHRONICLE

The club suggested the township could donate the current stock of liquor as a sign of support or the club could purchase it when it took over the licence.

Mrs. Brisco emphasized that, without council's support, the future fundraising activities of the club would be jeopardized: it would have to find an alternate location for its meetings and annual auction.

The Rotary speaker noted that the Rotary Hall had been the home for the club for obvious reasons.

"It is our natural home," Mrs. Brisco said, adding the function of the Keeler Centre should not erode so that it becomes just an arena.

Mrs. Brisco suggested her report was not a huge surprise for council.

"We haven't resolved a lot of issues and have no home as of July 1," she told council.

With those comments in mind, Mrs. Brisco asked council for a commitment in principle to move forward.

She identified areas needing clarification:

- The township would waive the hall charge for weekly Rotary meetings. Rotary would hire a caterer. (Editor's note: Rotary has had discussions with Donna Rusaw to provide the service.)

- Rotary would have the hall every Monday night. Mrs. Brisco stressed the importance of the last request as it recently was forced to move its meeting without sufficient notification. The club would have full use of the utensils in the hall.

- The Rotary Harvest Auction was a major concern for the club as it is the club's primary fundraiser and a community event.

The club asked for the kitchen rental charge to be waived for the auction, and assurance that they would have the liquor licence. Rotary has already drawn up the paperwork for the transfer of the licence. The bar would be manned by the township for the fundraiser with profits going to Rotary.

The club also asked for assurances there would be no obstacle put in the way of having Donna Rusaw cater the event. Ms. Rusaw has committed to giving Rotary their meals for the same price as last year. In the event this does not happen, township staff agreed to subsidize any increase of up to a dollar a meal.

Rotary asked as well for a commitment to give Rotary the floor of the Keeler Centre on the third Saturday of September in 2009, 2010 and 2011 with access to the Keeler Centre for the week before the auction and assistance of township staff in preparatory work.

- The final area needing clarification was the liquor licence. Rotary wants the transfer made now, with Rotary using it solely for Rotary events.

As she approached the end of her presentation, Mrs. Brisco asked for full use of the equipment for the Rotary Hall. She saw the need for the township to clarify how maintenance, garbage and custodial duties would be handled by the township.

Thanking council for its anticipated support, Mrs. Brisco reminded council members, "We have to drive forward. There is too much unrest. Rotary members need to know, they have to know."

Mayor Marc Coombs was first to reply to the presentation.

Mayor Coombs admitted, "Most of what you have written down, we were thinking. There will be no fees."

The mayor had no "personal problem" promising Rotary the date requested for the auction through 2011.

The mayor acknowledged the liquor licence would be transferred and the bar manned by the township, as agreed.

Mrs. Brisco confirmed the transfer agreement was made in the April 28 meeting with CAO Christie Alexander and Community Services Director Terry Scott.

The mayor then committed the township to all equipment repairs and garbage removal.

He was less certain about how the agreement might affect the Castleton Colborne Optimists who use the hall once a month for their dinner meetings. He wondered out loud about having the township maintaining the liquor licence or transferring and how it would affect the Optimists.

The suggestion by Mrs. Brisco that the township was going to allow the licence to lapse was met with a general "no" by council members.

The concern about occasional users was answered by Councillor Ed Van Egmond.

Colborne and Cramahe Minor Hockey and others in similar positions would purchase special occasion licences.

Councillor Tim Gilligan, whose family operates the Queen's Hotel in Colborne, confirmed Councillor Van Egmond's comment.

Mr. Van Egmond asked Mrs. Brisco if Rotary would "pull out" if the licence wasn't transferred.

She admitted it was never an option as too much has already been invested in the 2008 auction.

The Rotary proposal was made under duress, acknowledged the Rotary official: "We had to have action and a commitment to run the bar."

After continued discussion and no resolution, Mayor Coombs suggested Cramahe staff would contact the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario.

"Maybe it's better if the township keeps the licence," were the final words of the mayor on the topic of licences.

Rotary President Glenn Spence asked when it would "all be pulled together".

Mayor Coombs promised most of it would be done later in the meeting: "We will be able to work out the details."

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At the end of the council meeting, the mayor asked for a motion from council to advertise for members to form a committee to look at future uses of the Keeler Centre. He also suggested user groups be contacted too.

"We need to get the ball rolling," Mayor Coombs said.

The mayor admitted he has been approached about the concept of tendering out the services of the canteen.