

Town study indicates seniors' centres will need to expand— soon

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The Acton Centre's Looking To The Future (LTF) committee commissioned architectural drawings for the addition— 4,119 sq. ft. on the east side of its centre. Preliminary cost estimates range between \$1.2 and \$1.4 million.

Donna Rowley, co-chair of the LTF committee, supported the consultants' report and the subsequent staff recommendations.

"In the very near future, it will be expected of us to do much more for the health and wellness of the seniors in our community. The seniors population already is increasing steadily, and will continue to do with so with the aging of the 'boomer' population. It is important that we are ready to accept this challenge," said Rowley.

She added the Acton Centre membership, currently about 330 and projected to grow to 600 plus, is committed to help to finance the expansion.

"It will be a pleasure to return to council with a fundraising plan in the near future. We look forward to expanding our facility," she told councillors.

The report also recommends the relocation of the Georgetown Seniors Centre to the Gellert Centre once that facility's second phase is built. The current centre is located in a leased building at 318 Guelph St. and since it opened 15 years ago there has been three expansions from the original 4,000 sq. ft. to the current 7,300 sq. ft. Membership has grown from 450 to 832 and while the centre's space no longer meets the needs of the current members, the Town signed another five-year lease for the premises.

If the Georgetown Seniors Centre shares the space with Gellert, it would require 12,000 sq. ft. of dedicated space to

the seniors. This relocated centre would cost \$2 million to build compared to \$4 million price tag for a stand-alone facility.

John Daley, president of the Georgetown Seniors Centre, also endorsed the report and said his membership preferred a shared space within an existing town facility.

"We currently experience many unique challenges in our present leased facilities and welcome the opportunity to be part of a Town facility which would enhance cross-programming and meet the needs of our membership," said Daley.

Town council accepted the recommendations of the report, including adding the proposals to future capital budgets and directing staff to further develop the idea of moving the Georgetown Centre to Gellert.

But a couple of councillors questioned the wisdom of moving the Georgetown centre to the Gellert.

Wards 1&2 Regional Councillor Clark Somerville questioned whether Mold-Masters SportsPlex (rated second by the consultants) would be a better option because of its centralized location. Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson agreed, adding that the Town plans to intensify the inner core of the Georgetown with medium and high-density housing.

The report also recommends that each centre's space expansion include room for satellite offices of health care providers to cater to seniors' wellness needs.

Transitional plans for the current centres were laid out— with the focus on 65+ seniors, but with increased activities, staffing and suggestions to attract additional members.

To read the seniors centre report go to <http://www.haltonhills.ca/calendars/2010/R-2010-0001.pdf>.



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