

Could non-conventional arena solve ice shortage problem?

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

Town staff will begin investigating a new option that could see a twin-pad arena attached to Mold-Masters SportsPlex sooner than expected.

Halton Hills council gave staff the go-ahead at Monday's council meeting to consider the potential for a non-conventional arena offered by Sprung Instant Structure Ltd. of Alberta.

The building would have an aluminum I-beam construction, covered with a five-layer architectural membrane, which includes a maintenance free teflon-like film, white exterior and interior PVC layers, a polyester basic fabric and a black opaque layer. The structure is quickly erected, has a 30-year guarantee, manufactured to meet all climatic conditions, has R28 insulation and is readily LEED-certified, and can be relocated to another site easily.

While these types of buildings can come in all sizes and configurations, the Town has received preliminary figures for a double pad arena, 130x580 ft. with bleachers for 1,066, changerooms, and a six to seven-month completion date once all approvals are given.

If approved, staff say the best location would be on the Mold-Masters SportsPlex

site— turning the two-pad arena complex into a four-plex. Staff selected Mold-Masters because the structure's exterior would blend best with the current facility.

Total (preliminary) cost is \$16.2 million, including construction, site development, and the cost of relocating the senior lit soccer field and tennis courts.

This is \$6 million less than the cost of a more conventionally built twin-pad.

The twin-pad would serve to replace Memorial Arena, and provide a second pad to help alleviate ice user groups' pent-up demand for additional ice pads.

Councillor Bryan Lewis, chair of the Georgetown Arenas Task Force, met last month with ice user groups to get their input on this option. He will chair another meeting March 31 when Sprung will make a presentation to a number of the arena users.

In an interview with *The Independent & Free Press* Tuesday, Lewis said, "then we will measure the interest by arena users. Our idea is there is no point in going ahead with a something that no one liked. It is a little bit different, but yet by the same token under the arena task force, people were just asking for ice to play hockey on, skate on and so on.

"This is an exploratory process just to see if the users would be comfortable using a building of this nature. Part of it



The Town is looking into a non-conventional arena (like the one above), made by an Alberta firm, as a way to provide a twin-pad at Mold-Masters SportsPlex.

was it could be done much cheaper, but it could also be done much faster," he said.

Lewis reported the groups at the February meeting were initially supportive and were prepared to consider financing options such as a surcharge on ice rental hours and fundraising.

Town staff will work on some budget scenarios for these groups, before getting their full commitment.

A staff report also noted with the \$6 million savings from a non-conventional twin-pad, it could provide an opportunity to the Town to address the needs of all ice users by applying the savings to an unconventional single pad twinned to Acton Arena.

Staff will come back to council at a future meeting to outline the financing options for:

- A conventional twin-pad arena on a greenfield site. Preliminary cost: \$22.3 million including land acquisition.

- A non-conventional twin-pad arena at the Mold-Masters SportsPlex site. The cost to triple (add a single pad) the SportsPlex with a conventional building structure would cost \$9.9 million.

- A non-conventional construction costs for twinning of the Acton Arena. This last one will be done at the request of Acton ice users. Sprung's preliminary estimates to the Town for a single pad 130x300 ft. structure with room for 533 spectators was \$6.6 million plus taxes. (The cost for a conventional building has been estimated at \$9.9 million.)

For more information on these non-conventional buildings go to Sprung's website, www.sprung.com

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