

Arena users vow to fundraise

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While the Town numbers only included \$1 million in fundraising by HHAUG, the group is confident they can fundraise \$2 million to go towards the build program, said Fritz.

About 350 to 400 residents of all ages turned out to the special council meeting at Christ the King School, with about several hundred supporters for the arenas marching from the Mold-Masters SportsPlex to the school.

That number dwindled down to about 50 diehard supporters by the end of the evening. About half a dozen Halton Regional Police officers were on hand for crowd control and safety—especially for the exuberant young marchers on Guelph St.

The Acton Youth Centre's inclusion in the Capital Forecast was removed until the 2012 budget discussions or the completion of the Youth Needs Study, which is beginning this year.

The demolition of Memorial Arena will occur once a replacement rink is substantially complete. The Town intends to sell the Memorial Arena site and other Town assets to raise money for the capital program, said Bonnette. Council was told that the sale proceeds could substantially reduce the proposed arena levy.

Although the majority of the 16 delegations speaking at Monday's meeting were HHAUG representatives, other community residents also spoke.

Acton resident Linda Hess acknowledged she represented a minority at the meeting but believed she represented a majority of the public.

"Where is it written that your neighbours shall pay for the games that your children play?" she asked, adding that the Acton tax base is too small to shoulder the cost with only a benefit to the few.

HHAUG's Fritz disputed references over the course of the month-long debate to only a few benefiting, noting that with the number of children, parents and other adults using the arenas year-round, about 26.5 per cent of the public would benefit, and that percentage she said would grow to 45 per cent with the addition of new pads, and the expected growth in the community.

HHAUG represents close to 15,000 people, she said, with the expectation of 10,000 new users over the next 10 years. HHAUG membership includes Acton and Georgetown Minor Hockey, Acton and Georgetown Skating Clubs, North Halton Girls Hockey, men and women adult leagues, Bulldogs lacrosse and the Ontario Speed Skating Association.

Some councillors also seemed impressed with HHAUG's contention that their orga-

nizations buy more than 1,000 hours of ice time outside of the Town—draining the community of more than \$250,000. This money could be redirected back to the community, plus local businesses would benefit from the residents staying in town to shop and eat. The additional pads, the group argued, would allow more tournaments, also adding to the coffers of local businesses.

Councillors Bryan Lewis, Mike O'Leary and Jon Hurst added that the rinks should

not be thought as arenas but as community centres since more than skating is done on the pads. Hurst added that if group enrolment does decline in the future, one of the pads could easily be converted—to an in-

door soccer field for instance.

Realtor Finn Poulstrup said this is the time to be investing in the future of this community when interest rates are low. He said the expected growth over the next 10 years will bring young families to the community. As well, amenities are a drawing card to corporations considering whether to set up shop here, he said.

"I think a delay is not prudent at this time. In my own view, at least select an option that gets as much done in the least possible time... and even accelerate the Gellert Centre development," Poulstrup advised council.

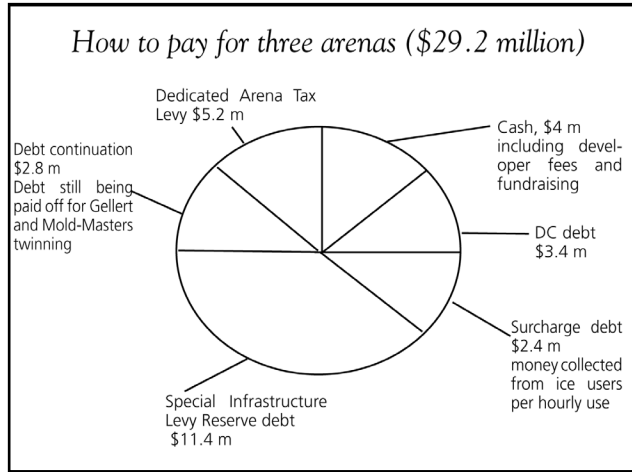
Delegations urging the priority of the second phase of the Gellert Centre over a third arena were the Georgetown Seniors' Centre, which wants its new centre to be part of that phase, and resident Steve Pettit, a basketball coach who noted it is difficult to find adequately-sized gymnasiums in the community.

Acton Seniors' Centre president Bev Jones urged that the future expansion of the centre not be tied to the twinning of the Acton arena.

Alyman said that was done due to the economies of scale of doing the work at the same time. However, in response to a question, he acknowledged the twinning and the expansion did not have to coincide.

"This debate in the last month has really captured the imagination of the community," said Mayor Rick Bonnette, expressing thanks for the hundreds of people who called, emailed or gave their opinions at the meetings.

Minnich noted that Acton and Georgetown groups were marching side by side together Monday night—a first after many years of competitiveness. To applause and laughter, Minnich told council, "This whole operation, believe it or not, has pulled the town together. So I think that maybe we should thank council for delaying this to allow us to do that."



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ATHLETES of the week



Acton District High School Athletes of the Week are Abbie Jolly and Dani Schaubreitner. Both are members of the Bearcats senior volleyball team, with Jolly setting and playing right side, and Schaubreitner playing power. Jolly was chosen for her good hitting and team spirit during the Aldershot tournament, and Schaubreitner received kudos for her great serving and team dedication.

Georgetown District High School Athletes of the Week are Aly Young and Jamie Waters. Young, a setter on the Rebels junior volleyball team, was selected for being a team leader all year, and her consistent serving against Nelson in the semis.

Christ the King High School Athletes of the Week are Amanda Sipos and Ethan Spence. Sipos, a setter on the Jaguars' junior volleyball team, was chosen for her great setting and serving against Notre Dame in the semifinals. Spence, a right winger on the Jags senior boys hockey team, was selected for being an offensive threat to Pearson in the semis.

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