

Town ending brief electric ice resurfacer experiment

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As part of an ongoing commitment to green energy and combatting climate change, Halton Hills council approved the purchase of a Resurface Millennium E Model at a cost of \$174,359 in 2010.

In a report prepared for council, town staff said problems with the electric machine began as early as 2012, noting numerous maintenance concerns and service interruptions that the arena operations (staff) had experiences with the machine since its purchase.

According to the report, the typical life-cycle for ice resurfacing machines is approximately eight years and the town's current fleet includes five machines servicing six rinks. The electric machine was expected to last at least 15 years — one of the reasons the town went in that direction in 2010.

Two of the four of the town's gas-powered machines were purchased in 2014 and 2015 after the three new rink surfaces were opened in 2013. One of the older gas-powered machines is three years passed its life-cycle and will also be replaced.

The issues with the electric machine reported in 2012 have continued and as a result council has decided to replace many years before it expected to. Staff also said the technology hasn't evolved as quickly as was originally expected due to a lack of overall demand for electric ice resurfacers.

The current Millennium E ice resurfacer was an early market machine with minimal

operational testing and history, wrote staff in the report. The number and costs of some of these issues were unexpected and throughout its seven-year history the machine has had breakdowns that have taken it out of service for periods of time.

The report added the battery operated machine is not able to hold a charge for a full day when required to service two rinks as is required at the Mold-Masters SportsPlex in Georgetown, where the machine is currently deployed.

Staff outlined the possibility of replacing the battery at a cost of \$22,800, which would extend the life of the machine for an expected 7-8 years, but many of the service issues would remain. The fuel-cost savings, according to staff, is also negligible and the added carbon emissions can be made up elsewhere to meet overall targets.

Another option outlined would see the purchase of more electric machines, which was not a popular option among council given the recent experience.

Ultimately council decided to accept staff's recommendation to replace the electric and out-of-date machines with two new natural-gas powered Olympia Millennium ice resurfacers at a cost of \$111,666 after trade-ins of older equipment.

Many councillors commended the very detailed staff report at its regular meeting of council on March 20, emphasizing the town hasn't given up on its green initiatives and the small carbon emissions increase caused by the two new machines would be made up elsewhere.

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