

Decrease in registration expected

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But many of the regulations regarding how the user fees will be implemented for some facilities weren't outlined before council voted to have the charges applied August 1.

Until then, the town's director of parks and recreation, Doug Sweet, has asked all recreational facilities and minor sports organizations to submit their estimates about the potential effects the fees

may cause. Once compiled, Sweet will submit the report and his recommendations to council.

Essex Minor Baseball Association president Joe Grondin said the introduction of user fees has the potential to affect all players.

"Everyone will be affected," Grondin said. "Nobody in their right mind will pay \$250, especially when registration is \$80 for minor teams and \$40 for T-Ball."

He said the charges might even come to affect players

living within the municipality.

"You have a trickling effect that with the loss of registration, teams will have to fold and then Essex players won't have a place to play," he said. "That will be a huge problem."

Grondin said about 25 per cent of the people who regularly sign up to play local baseball live outside Essex.

Ward 3 Coun. Paul Innes said local tax dollars shouldn't be supporting players from other municipalities.

Innes brought the motion

forward to council last month. He said more funding needs to be pumped into roads and infrastructure and the introduction of user fees would be one way of generating revenue.

"I don't think we should be responsible for another municipality's kids," he said.

He said he is not worried if registration drops for minor sports teams or recreational facilities.

"If it does, we won't need any more ice," he said, referring to plans for a proposed new arena in Ward 1.

Essex Mayor Ron McDermott said he's been hearing a number of complaints about the user fees.

Although he voted in favour of introducing the fees, McDermott said he doesn't think they will be implemented.

"That motion should never have been passed," he said. "We'll deal with it down the road. It's not going to fly."

McDermott said he expects the fees to be either reduced or dismissed entirely.

Public invited to special arena meeting

A special meeting of Essex council will allow the public to sit in during discussions regarding the possible construction of a new local arena.

The meeting will be held Friday at 4:30 inside the council chambers at Essex Town Hall.

Ward 3 Coun. Paul Innes said the results of an independent review on the condition of Memorial Arena will be presented during the meeting. Innes has repeat-

edly suggested that council reconsider its plans to build a new facility until another opinion is given about the condition of Memorial Arena.

Ward 1 Coun. Randy Voakes has suggested to council that the need for a new facility is two-fold - to make more ice time available for scheduling by the Essex Minor Hockey Association and to address structural and safety concerns at Memorial Arena.

Immigration minister visits Harrow



Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Mike Colle, right, addresses a crowd April 14 at the Camoes Portuguese Club in Harrow, joined by president Delfina Pedro and Essex MPP Bruce Crozier. Colle officially presented a \$275,000 Ontario grant towards a new facility being built at the site.

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