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User fees to be charged in 1994 for local groups

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

Local children's baseball and soccer organizations will have to pay for rental of the town's diamonds and fields starting in the 1994 season.

Starting next year, the town's 65 house league teams for children aged five to 16 will be charged about \$4,000 in user fees to cover maintenance and operating costs the town loses each year.

In a private meeting last week, parks and recreation superintendent, John Crawley presented officials with a 15-page report outlining the scheme, expected to be ratified in council next week.

Crawley said he is also "investigating" ways to recoup costs of lighting and maintaining public-run tennis courts.

He said the plan won't pose hardship on parents whose children sign up for seasonal sports - adding the fees will mount to about \$4 a child for unlit time; \$6 for evening games needing lights.

There is an estimated 1,000 kids that sign up for summer sports each year, organized by about 150 volunteers and parents, reports show.

The user fees won't, however, affect this year's season, and will begin in 1994, Crawley said.

Group organizers had asked officials last month to shelve the user fee plans altogether, but requested one year's reprieve if the town decided to go ahead with the plan.

Group organizers, including minor baseball president Cathy Bennett said the sport has "died" in communities like Oshawa and Aurora after user fees were applied.

Crawley told *The Tribune* last week that user fees are "not something new" in Whitchurch-Stouffville, pointing out that hockey organizations have paid ice rental fees for many years.

Crawley said this plan merely expands the existing program in order for the town to recover costs for maintaining and operating the outdoor facilities. The town's maintenance budget last year amounted to about \$22,000.

"User fees have been applied to groups for a number of years in Whitchurch-Stouffville - this just broadens the plan to reduce the general (tax) burden on the general ratepayer," he said.

Crawley, who began his post with the town Aug. 31, 1992, said he hopes to "work closely" with group organizers to "establish the levels of maintenance they desire" and still remain within the town's budget.

"I hope to find a common ground" and work co-operatively with these groups, Crawley said.



Photo: LORI EMMERSON

Time warp

Ron Yakely and son Cameron, 17, meet with Bobby Hull at the Rec Centre Saturday. The meeting was a reunion of sorts, because as a child, Ron appeared on the front of *The Tribune* on June 2, 1968, when the hockey great was in town. History, it appears, does repeat itself.

Young Offenders Act strongly criticized by York's top cop

York Regional police chief Bryan Cousineau is one of the biggest critics of Canada's Young Offenders Act.

Cousineau said the act, which protects the rights of young criminals between the ages of 12-17, is "certainly a main concern" for the police force.

York Regional Police officers - and most other forces - want the age of a young offender "dropped down" so older youths face stiffer penalties, he said.

Some older youths and repeat offenders should be tried in adult courts, he said, depending on the severity of the crime.

Cousineau said the act treats a 17 year old the same as a 13 year old, which offers no incentive for the former to steer clear of crime. Cousineau, a 26-year police veteran, says 16 and 17 year olds aren't what they used to be. "There's an awful lot

of streetwise youths out there today - and they are at the age when they should be taking more responsibility for their crimes," he said.

"A 16 or 17 year old knows if he gets caught (in a crime situation) he will likely get only get two, maybe three years probation - there's not a lot of perceived deterrence to crime," Cousineau said.

People

Army recognizes Rochacewicz

KATE GILDERDALE
Correspondent

Tim Rochacewicz, who was recently named Salvation Army Chairman for the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, is a strong believer in community service.

The Stouffville Lions Club member chaired the club's Christmas Drive Project and is heading up the local Easter Seals Society's 1992-93 fund-raising campaign.

"I'm chairman of our Health and Services Committee and of the Sight and Hearing Committee," he noted.

Rochacewicz has also taken on the position of chairman for a new initiative - Campaign Sight

"This is a worldwide Lions International project to fight blindness around the world. It started in the fall of 1992."

A Stouffville resident since 1976, Rochacewicz was recommended for the Salvation Army position by outgoing chairman Ged Stonehouse.

"My job is to help in organizing the canvassing and help co-ordinate activities for the Salvation Army and the Red Shield Appeal for the township." The 1993 campaign takes place on the evening of Monday, May 3.

"I certainly enjoy doing this type of thing," he said.

"With Easter Seals, the thing I like is that you really get to help the little kids who are at a disadvantage, because they can't help themselves."

Anyone who is interested in helping out with the Red Shield Appeal can contact Rochacewicz at 640-4588.



ROCHACEWICZ First.



Photo: LORI EMMERSON

Help for Steve

The Legion's Dave McQuaker presents a cheque from the proceeds of a Nevada draw to motorcycle accident victim Steve Oldham to aid with recovery expenses Sunday.