

# Grading under way at new Bethesda Park

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"It's huge. We're excited about it and we're looking forward to it," he said of the two new rinks.

"Right now, we need another 40 hours a week to accommodate what we feel we need for practices and game times. Right now, we're playing at some awkward hours. But it's part of the game. A couple of little adjustments here and there would help."

With the arena slated to open in late 2009 or early 2010, Mr. Humphreys said his organization has yet to do any scheduling.

"We anticipate there will be some initial challenges like every year, but we will have to prepare ourselves," he acknowledged.

"At the same time, though, other user groups will be affected too. It'll be a bit of give and take."

Dianne White, Stouffville Markham Girls Hockey Association president, also can't wait for the new facility to open its doors.

"It's wonderful. We've been trying to get one for years," she said.

When the new facility begins operations, Ms White anticipated it will enable teams to practise closer to home. At the present time, she noted their association is renting practice time at the National Training Rinks in Richmond Hill.

In addition, a new facility would enable their association to increase registration if the demand warrants it, she said. At the present time though, the group does not have a waiting list.

But considering the new rink would open in late 2009 or early 2010, the same year as the Winter Olympics, Ms White said events including women's hockey tend to spur interest in registration for the following season.

"We will definitely pick up a lot of ice time," she said of the new rink.

The Bethesda Park recreational site, a two-phase, two-year plan, was created in conjunction with a master plan involving Memorial Park, Mr. Graham said.

**'It's wonderful. We've been trying to get one for years.'**

**Dianne White**  
Stouffville Markham Girls  
Hockey Association president  
on new twin-pad facility

Approved by council last year, part of the project involves relocating of existing Memorial Park softball diamonds two and three to the new Bethesda Park. Also to be created are one full-sized soccer pitch along with several mini soccer fields. The fields will also have lighting for evening use.

Just recently, Mr. Graham said site grading has begun.

While the playing fields are scheduled to be completed by this fall, Mr. Graham was quick to point out they cannot be used for one full year. This, he said, is to allow for the sod to take hold.

As a result, the playing facilities will not officially open until the

## ON THE WEB

► Go to [memorialandbethesda.parks.ca](http://memorialandbethesda.parks.ca) for more on the park redevelopment project.

► For details on the curling club, visit [whitchurchstouffvillecurling.webs.com](http://whitchurchstouffvillecurling.webs.com).

spring of 2010.

Long-time Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Softball Association president June Doner is anxiously awaiting the opening of the ball diamonds.

With the two new diamonds along with the existing main field at Memorial Park, Ms Doner said it will come in handy in the event they have the opportunity to host any provincial tournaments.

As well, if the association were to add more rep or house league teams down the road, the fields will come in handy. Even if it means being removed from where they currently exist near the main diamond at Memorial Park.

As for the soccer fields, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club said it will be a welcomed and timely addition.

Klaas Westera, club head referee, said with registration continuing to increase each year combined with the shortage of town-owned soccer playing fields and the possible loss of their Bruce's Mill Conservation Area fields in 2010 to other usage, the new facility couldn't come at a more opportune time.

"We've been behind the eight ball for years. Now we will see some relief in 2010."

"The Bethesda Park facility is a good start. It will be wonderful for us as an organization," Mr. Westera said.

"It's a positive sign that the town sees our needs and they're providing the fields to go along with the two they recently purchased behind the Stouffville Arena. (Bethesda Park) will definitely take the pressure off if we do lose the Bruce's Mill fields."

**'We've been behind the eight ball for years. Now we will see some relief in 2010.'**

**Klaas Westera**  
Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club

Mr. Westera also noted the plans could include two additional full-size pitches created after 2010 if there is enough funds available in the town budget.

The project's second phase, to be tendered in early 2009, would see the completion of the initial work at Bethesda Park that includes installation of a washroom facility and additional parking areas.

In addition to the work being done at Bethesda Park, the master plan calls for alterations to be made at Memorial Park.

That includes the relocation of the Stouffville Lawn Bowling Club to an area south of the Lebovic Leisure Centre.

Mr. Graham noted the club had expressed a desire to move because their current courts are not of a standard size for competitions.

Along with the relocation of the lawn bowling club to their new site, two to four tennis courts will be created.

The number of courts, Mr. Graham said, would depend on the demand and financing available.

With the two facilities neighbouring each other, Mr. Graham said they hope to create a clubhouse that could be shared by the lawn bowling club and tennis court users.

"That's a long-term plan," he said.

Plans also include refurbishing of the main softball diamond, complete with a new grandstand.

While council has given the green light to construct several new recreational facilities and make improvements on others, a movement has also been under way to create a curling rink.

With no such facility in Whitchurch-Stouffville, a committee formed by community members has been active in developing membership drives, building and facilities design, business planning, site planning, marketing and fund raising.

Response is overwhelmingly positive, spokesperson Stewart Bond said.

"We had well over 200 people sign their names in support of building a curling facility in our town," he said in reference to a booth at the Strawberry Festival this summer.

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