



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Chris Chiste of the Stouffville Spirit is denied by Hamilton Red Wings goalie Jeff Sinclair during the Spirit's 4-3 win at the Newmarket Jr. A Showcase Tournament Tuesday. The Spirit and other Stouffville sports organizations will pay more for ice time this year, thanks to the HST and a municipal hike in rental fees.

## Out-of-town players pay more under new town user fees

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\$161 to \$170 an hour for minor prime time, while adult prime time ice will go from \$175 an hour to \$200.

Like the SAHL, ice rental for the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association accounts for about 60 per cent of the organization's annual budget.

"When you're looking at an increase on 60-per-cent of your cost base, you have to increase fees," said Don Easter, president of minor hockey, adding fees for the 2010-2011 season will go up by \$35 to \$50.

Minor hockey players, however, will get a reprieve from a newly imposed non-residential fee.

Adult prime time ice, for a non-resident, will cost \$225 an hour.

The town is also imposing a non-residential fee on minor ball diamond and soccer pitch rentals.

"I ... am a firm believer if you are not from our community, you should pay," said Coun-

cillor Richard Bartley at the Dec. 15 council meeting.

Minor, non-resident softballers and soccer players will each have to fork over an additional \$35 in order to play in Whitchurch-Stouffville in 2010.

"To me, children are children," said June Doner of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Softball Association at the Dec. 15 council meeting. "That's a lot of money for a family."

### NEW FACILITIES

Minor softball and soccer's per person rates have also risen to \$19.

Their previous rates were \$6 and \$4 respectively per player.

"I'm really sad and disappointed by the increases," Ms Doner said.

"Our association has always tried to keep our registration fees down. ... Some (people) can't afford the more expensive sports."

The hike in softball, soccer and ice rental rates is because the town will be spending almost \$2 million in order to operate the new

Bethesda Park Sports Fields and the Clippers Sports Complex.

"What is being provided is brand spanking new state-of-the-art and the cost to provide this service has gone up," said Councillor Ken Ferdinands at the meeting.

Six years ago, according to Councillor Clyde Smith, the town broke even when it came to operating the twin-pad Stouffville Arena.

However, the town now subsidizes about a portion of the facility's operating costs.

"I think it's important for the public to understand our facilities run at a deficit and the more complex the facility, the greater the deficit," Mr. Ferdinands said.

It will cost \$912,494 to operate the Stouffville Arena in 2010, but it is expected to only generate \$817,460 in revenue, which means the town will lose \$95,034.

"Whatever the user fee doesn't pay, the taxpayer does," Mr. Raycroft said.

The new twin pads, which are expected to be operational in February, are anticipated to cost \$1,513,044 to run.

Their expected revenue for 2010 is \$1,344,681, which translates into a loss of \$168,363 in 2010.

The Bethesda Sport Fields, which will have one senior soccer pitch, four mini sports fields and two ball diamonds when they open this spring, will cost \$90,000 to operate but only bring in \$40,000 in revenue, according to the town.

"How much of our cost do we recover from the people who actually use the facility, or do we charge our other taxpayers?" Mr. Smith said.

### TO BUDGET MEETING

Councillor Bartley lobbied to reduce the ice rental fees, but his motion was shot down, while Councillor Susanne Hilton requested a phased-in approach to the new rates.

Her request was also denied.

Local athletic groups have one more chance to weigh in on the user fee increases at the Jan. 26 budget meeting, which starts at 9 a.m. in council chambers, 37 Sandiford Dr., 4th Floor.

*"It definitely makes me feel more informed about the community in which I reside."*

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