

# Water park 'fun for all'

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consist of closing and replacing the outdoor pool with a multi-feature splash pad; barrier-free washrooms/change rooms; accessible play structures and associated outdoor activity areas and a sensory garden. A portion of the area could be transformed into a skating rink in the winter.

"Children, with or without a disability have the chance to have fun in the park," said Heather Andrews, chairperson of the town's accessibility advisory committee.

"I love the idea you can also turn that into a skating rink," said Councillor Richard Bartley. "I think this is something we have to go for."

However, not all councillors are in favour of the potential project.

"I realize somebody's dangling money in front of us and you want to grab it," said Councillor Ken Ferdinands. "I'd like to see what (Memorial) Park looks like in the summer to see if what's proposed fits in. ... My instinct on this is to let this one go."

Councillors Phil Bannon, Rob Hargrave and Mr. Bartley all disagreed with Mr. Ferdinands and voted in favour of submitting the application. Councillors Clyde Smith and Susanne Hilton were not at Friday afternoon's special council meeting.

"It would be somewhat foolish of us to not take advantage of this money if we are to be fiscally responsible," said Mr. Bannon, who sits on the town's accessible advisory committee.

The water park was originally identified in the 2010 capital budget's five-year forecast as being completed in 2012. If the grant application is approved and the money accepted by council, the project will be completed at the end of summer 2012.

Although council approved submitting an application, if the federal government accepts the project, there is still an opportunity for council to not go ahead with the project.

"Council has to make the decision of what is in the best interest of Whitchurch-

Stouffville," said Andrew McNeely, director of planning and building services for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The Jan. 7 report accepted by council also noted: "This project be identified in the 2011 capital budget, only to proceed if the town is successful in being awarded funding through the (Enabling Accessibility Fund) program."

There were three other projects town staff considered the grant for.

*A second indoor pool was also considered and is within the town's five-year capital forecast, with construction slated for 2014.*

One was the transformation of Cook Canada into the new town hall, which was negated because, according to the grant application guidelines, work must start on or after April 1, 2011. Construction at that facility started late last year.

Also considered was a new seniors/wellness centre with a location to be determined.

In the capital forecast, this \$2.9-million project is set for construction in 2012. However, about 86 per cent of its budget is recoverable through development charge payments, according to Mr. McNeely's Jan. 7 report to council.

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"This project was discounted by staff, however, as shifting the project forward to meet the funding timeline of the (Enabling Accessibility Fund) program was premature.

The premature construction and operation of the second indoor pool would represent a significant impact on the town's yearly operating budget," Mr. McNeely wrote.

The town will find out in April or May if its application was successful.

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