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Retractable roof planned for second park pool

Skate park, basketball in proposed last phase

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Memorial Park is going to cost about \$2 million more than forecasted and take nine years to complete, according to the most recent plan.

When finished in 2021, the park would have a brand new bowl-shaped skateboard park along with a basketball court.

The proposal also includes a sensory garden, pathways, splash pad, play areas, outdoor ice skating capabilities, new toboggan hill and a convertible pool.

"It's quite incredible," said Rob Raycroft, director of leisure services for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville of the convertible pool.

The proposed six-lane, 25-metre long pool will have a retractable glass roof and exterior glass walls that will slide open like patio doors.

Town staff toured a similar facility at the Granite Club in Toronto.

"Moving forward, I think that's a marvelous idea," said Councillor Rob Hargrave.

See **POOL**, page 10.



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

Matthew Passafiume examines damaged apple trees at Applewood Farm Winery, his family's McCowan Road orchard operation, Wednesday.

Frost takes bite out of apple crop

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Come this fall, that annual trip to the orchard to pick apples for your pies and jams will be more like an Easter egg hunt, according to Matthew Passafiume, owner of Applewood Farm Winery.

The early warm spell this past March caused fruit trees throughout Ontario to start blooming, but when the cold weather regained its

hold, those flowering buds died. "A really bad case of frost bite," is how Mr. Passafiume described it.

More than half of the McCowan Road u-pick's 30-acre orchard was lost.

"We're hoping not much more, but we're afraid it could be a lot more," he said.

"In the 40 years we've been here, we've never seen anything close to

this," he said.

The King flowers are the first blooms of the season and have the best chance to grow into the largest and strongest fruit. They are also the ones people like to buy in the grocery stores and at farmers' markets.

The King flowers usually bloom in the early spring, but this year it occurred a month ahead of schedule, which would have been fine,

had the deep cold not come back.

Once the fruit sets, the tree then naturally sheds its crop in order to enable the King blooms to flourish.

"If you grew all the fruit on the tree, it would break the branches," said Leslie Huffman, apple specialist for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Growers, like Mr. Passafiume,

See **VINEYARDS**, page 9.

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