

Private, indoor pitch 'monumental' for soccer club

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The details still need to be hammered out, but Whitchurch-Stouffville council has agreed, in principle, to explore a leasing partnership with the owners of the indoor soccer pitch currently under construction.

"I didn't think we would ever get a soccer facility," said Councillor Richard Bartley during last week's meeting.

The decision was met with a round of applause from the 30-plus members of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club, who came to the council meeting to hear the final verdict first-hand. Mr. Bartley noted he might even make a return to the sidelines and coach.

However, he may wish to actually play in the Stouffville Sportsplex. With the potential to turn the pitch into three smaller fields, more older adults are apt to return to the sport, according to Klaas Westera, secretary of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club.

The indoor soccer field is being constructed by the Baldassarra Group on Innovator Drive, which is between Main Street and Hoover Park Drive, off Mostar Street. It is expected to be operational this September.

It's been more than 12 years in the making for the local soccer club, which will be the primary tenant, according to Mr. Westera.

"It's monumental. It will establish soccer as a legitimate full-year sport within Stouffville and will foster the development of better quality teams and participants," he told The Sun-Tribune.

There were about 1,600 members in the club last year ranging in age from under four to over 70, he said.

With the new facility, those numbers are expected to increase, according to Mr. Westera.

The 55,850-square-foot facility will consist of one FIFA regulation-size field with artificial turf that can be divided into three mini fields.

There are ground floor change rooms with field access, a second floor mezzanine with observation areas, washrooms, meeting rooms and on-site parking for 216 vehicles.

"We will have a great facility. They promised state-of-the-art," said Mayor Wayne Emmerson during last week's council meeting.

TENNIS, ANYONE?

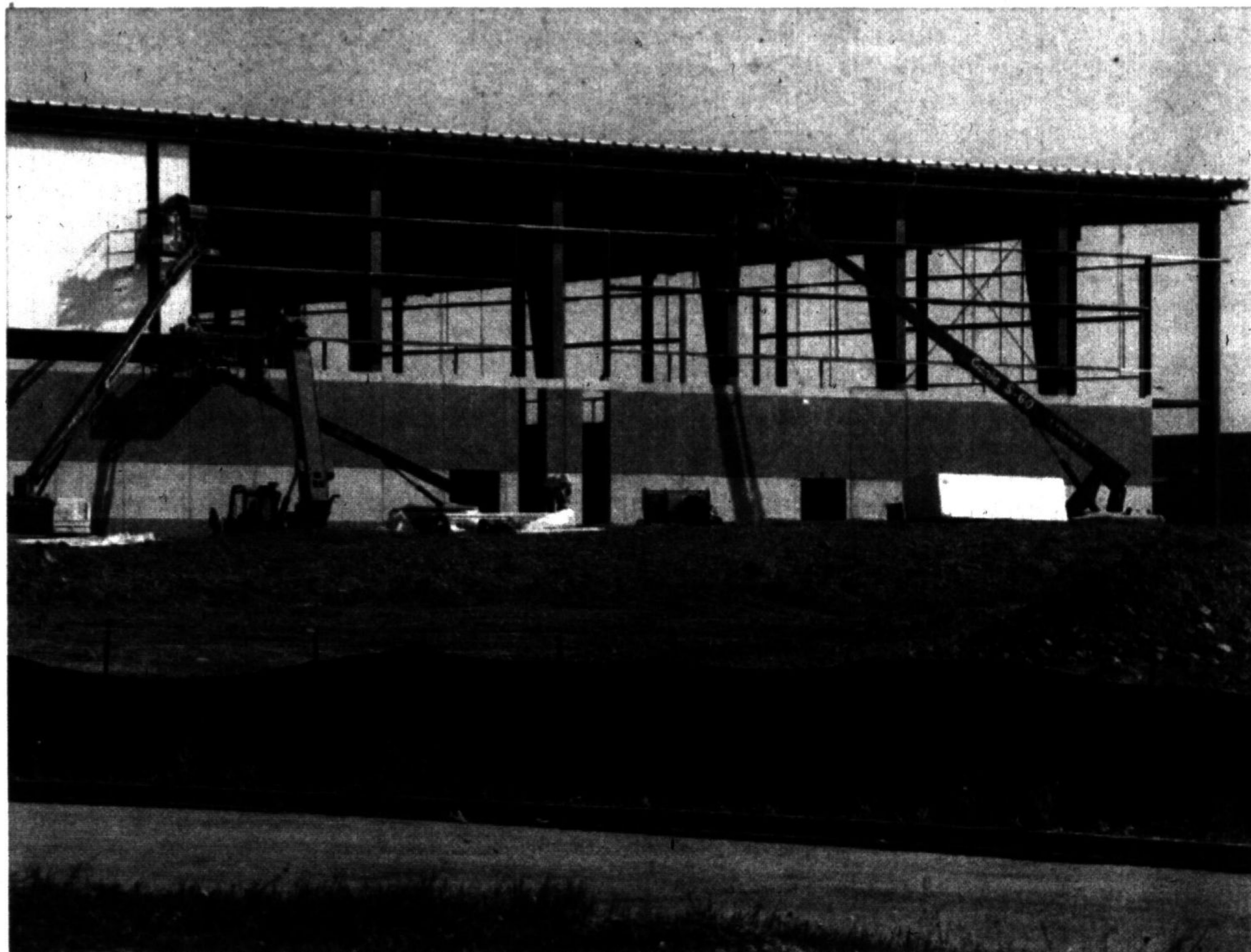
Council also approved partnering up with the Ballantrae Sports Dome Group.

An air suspension bubble will be erected over the four tennis courts in the town's north-end park from September to April.

A new and permanent 1,200-square-foot clubhouse will also be constructed and operated year-round.

From May to September, the courts will be used, as they are now, by the Ballantrae Tennis Club and the general public.

Indoor tennis is anticipated to be available starting this October.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Construction continues this week on the indoor soccer facility north of Hoover Park Drive. It opens this fall.

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