



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville manager of facilities and parks Mike Richardson (left) and Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club president Mark Kozak-Holland look out onto the pitch at SoccerCity Friday. Go to yorkregion.com for additional photographs.

SoccerCity means year-round play: club

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
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When Mark Kozak-Holland took over as president of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club in 2001, one of his primary objectives was to see the creation of an indoor facility.

While it was some 12 years in the making, the club's dream will become a reality when SoccerCity opens its doors in southern Stouffville, just north of Hoover Park Drive, next month.

For the club, SoccerCity will become the mecca of what members were seeking with the presence of a first-class, state-of-the-art, year-round facility. It has the field dimensions of a full-sized FIFA pitch, which can be divided into three mini pitches.

The building features a high ceiling, tempered glass to protect spectators in the elevated viewing areas, change rooms and permanent office and meeting-equipment storage room for the club.

"Twelve years we've waited," said Mr. Kozak-Holland. "But to have such a facility will be a catalyst for our club."

"It's been a long journey for us. This facility is conducive to soccer and we're excited by it."

The wait was expected.

"The town said they had some constraints and told us it would take time,"

he said. "The problem was that the town was growing and a new hockey facility (the nearby Clippers Sports Complex) was going in first."

Full-time play, especially during the winter months when many younger members would revert to other sports, is key.

Mr. Kozak-Holland himself played in an indoor league in Thornhill.

The club will host indoor leagues at competitive and house league levels and introduce after-school programs.

The York Region Soccer Association is making plans with the club to create new programs and skill clinics.

"The indoor facility provides us with an instrument to make soccer a 12-month activity," he said. "There's plenty of opportunities going forward."

The 1,500-member local club will utilize SoccerCity some 30 hours a week during the inaugural campaign.

"After that we could go with 40 to 50 hours a week the next year," said.

While the presence of SoccerCity opens up plenty of new options for the club, one thing that won't change is the club's philosophy in long term player development.

"Our focus isn't on the competitive side, but to keep people in the game. Our motto is 'soccer for life' because they enjoy it so much. It's not about people playing the

game for five years and then playing something else," Mr. Kozak-Holland said.

He thanked Carlo Baldaserra, president of Greenpark Homes, and his son, Michael, for getting the ball rolling in the project.

Without their initiative, the facility would not have been up and running this year.

"They are passionate for soccer and this is one indicator of it," Mr. Kozak-Holland said. "We're grateful for what they've done. If it wasn't for Greenpark we could have been waiting for another couple of years to have something built."

For more information, go to wssc.info

TOWN CAN BUY BUILDING

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has worked out a leasing agreement with Cabrera Ridge Building Corp. that gives the town the option to purchase the facility for \$7.7 million in a decade.

The building is being completed on Innovator Drive, which is north of Hoover Park Drive, between Hwy. 48 and Ninth Line.

The lease rate starts at \$200,000 a year and tops out at \$350,000 at the end of 10 years. Those fees are "fully recoverable", according to the town.

Lease payments do not start until Jan. 1, 2014.

The town has 100-per-cent exclusivity to the facility's use, however, one of the user groups will be the Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club.

Thrift shop buys new location

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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The Care and Share has found a new home it can call its own.

The Mennonite Central Committee-owned thrift shop will move from its downtown location to Ringwood Drive in early November.

The store's board purchased the building and property currently owned by Randy's Refrigeration and Appliances Ltd.

The appliance store will cease operation as of Sept. 30 but service will continue, according to Arlene Dulude, co-owner of Randy's Appliance.

"You can't go from working six days a week to none," Mrs. Dulude told The Sun-Tribune.

Although the Ringwood Drive property was not for sale, Mrs. Dulude said representatives from the Care and Share approached her and her husband Randy with an offer to buy it.

"Maybe this is a godsend. It's time," Mrs. Dulude said, noting they're getting older and their children are not interested in taking over the business, that has been in operation for 35 years.

RINGWOOD DR. APPLIANCE STORE

"I can't think of somebody better that I would like to have the building because they do good work," she said.

During the past few years, Care and Share representatives have looked for a new location, one they could purchase. They outgrew their 5,000 square feet. But it wasn't until last year, when the municipality, which owns the building that also houses The Latcham Gallery, decided to increase its lease rate did the search for a new space go into high gear.

"We feel, long term, it's the best move for us, even though it's very challenging to move," Joanna Reesor-McDowell, a volunteer member of the thrift shop's executive committee, told The Sun-Tribune.

The new location will get a 3,000-square-foot addition put onto it before the Care and Share moves in, making the new space 8,000 square feet in size. Lots of parking remains.

The additional space will enable the thrift shop to take in some larger items such as furniture, which it currently does not accept.

There are 80 volunteers who give their time to the thrift store, but the additional space means more will be needed.

See Saturday's Sun-Tribune for more.

3, Southville Sun-Tribune ■ www.yorkregion.com ■ Thursday, Aug. 29, 2013

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