

Care & Share Moves To West End

Stouffville's Care & Share Thrift Shop, which is moving to a permanent home at 33 Ringwood Drive at the west end of town, will re-open for business in mid November.

Care & Share has been part of the community for more than three decades and has been leasing space in the Town-owned Latham Gallery building on Main St. since 2002. The new location, formerly owned by Randy's Appliances, comprises an acre of land, with room to expand the current building from 5,000 to 8,000 square feet.

"Care & Share has been at the centre of community life over the past 32 years," said volunteer Joanna Reesor-McDowell.

During that time, with the support of an army of dedicated volunteers, millions of dollars have been raised to support the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), "a charity providing relief, development and peace in the name of Christ in Ontario and around the world," said Ms Reesor-McDowell.

"In addition, countless local families have benefitted from the purchase of affordable clothing and household goods, and we have helped our community reuse and recycle mountains of 'stuff' that would have gone to landfill sites - a precious gift to our environment and future generations."

For more information about MCC visit mcco.ca.



Talk of the Town

SoccerCity Math Adds Up

By Ben Embiricos

Later this month an important new chapter in Stouffville's sports history will begin with the opening of SoccerCity.

The new indoor soccer facility boasts a full sized regulation soccer field which can be divided into three mini-fields. A town staff report states that close to twenty such facilities have opened in Ontario since 2001, but even so the Stouffville facility will stand out as part of a small elite based on its size and the fact that it will be available for use year round.

The opening is a major milestone for Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club which has had an indoor facility on its wish list for many years. Delving into the paperwork it would appear, to me at least, to represent a good deal for residents and taxpayers too.

The facility was constructed by and will continue to be owned by a large corporation, Cabrera Ridge Building Corp., but will be leased exclusively by the Town. In the past I admit I was sceptical that the involvement of a large corporation would result in affordable usage fees for Stouffville soccer families. Looking at the terms of the proposed lease and business plan presented to council though, I think that the facility has the potential to offer affordable soccer whilst at the same time not being a significant burden on the taxpayer.

Prior to the involvement of Cabrera there was interest from within the Stouffville business community in building a more modest facility that could have kept costs to end-users low. If this model were to be sufficiently profitable for an investor whilst still offering low rates for users, it was thought that the Town would need to contribute the land rent- and tax-free, with the private company building and then renting out the facility. Two years ago I spoke to the owner of one such facility in Ontario (who wished to

remain anonymous). He explained that profitability for him depended upon the municipality assisting in this way.

In our case it seems that the Town has found another way, and they should be commended. Over ten years the Town will pay \$2.85 million to rent the facility. At the end of this period they will be able to lease it for a further ten years or buy it at a pre-determined price. As the exclusive operator of the facility, the Town will be able to recover costs through all manner of rentals.

A business plan prepared by Town staff states that "the direct operation of adult leagues" by the Town "will allow the facility to operate at breakeven, which will maximize revenues, keep revenues in-town (no external league operators), meet demand and underwrite the subsidization of the minor programs, leagues and camps".

In other words, the Town will directly benefit from the lucrative adult soccer league market which will help both pay the rent and subsidize the rental rates offered to Whitchurch-Stouffville Soccer Club for their kids' soccer programs.

Rob Raycroft, director of Leisure Services, said that the usage fees would be "just the same as for the Town arenas", in that rental fees would also be more for groups from outside town. The facility will include a number of multi-use rooms and the soccer field itself will be able to accommodate additional sports such as flag football, rugby and lacrosse. It is anticipated that the facility will also be put to other uses in the summer when soccer moves outside, and that the Town-run summer camps, which are currently staged at SDSS, will move to SoccerCity.

All in all, SoccerCity seems to be a win-win. Praises to Town staff and council for making it happen. The club should feel satisfied that the major item on its wish list has been ticked off. Soccer kids (of all ages) will have fun year round.

Everyone Welcome



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