

Elgin Arena Proposal

The people of South Crosby have a decision to make. After years of discussion, township residents will decide in the coming weeks the fate of the proposal to build a covered rink in Elgin. The details of the proposal were discussed at a public meeting chaired by Mr. Clifford Smith, Mr. Harry Seeley and Mr. Ross Hawkins on Jan. 11.

A feasibility study has been conducted by Peirson Buildings Ltd., an outfit experienced in building arenas suitable to low population areas. In the final proposal, a finished community hall and artificial ice were eliminated to keep costs down. Even so, the price tag on the proposed building is \$300,000. See the two accompanying sketches for the details.

It was emphasized throughout the evening that the proposed arena can be built without tax levy and operated on a break-even or profit making basis. In order to accomplish this financing estimates rely heavily on anticipated grants such as Ontario Community Centers Grant, Wintario and Canada Works. The amount to be raised locally is \$100,000, including funds and donated labour and materials.

Having completed the research stage, the Committee will now canvass the public. They will approach township residents with three questions: Are you in favour of the proposal? Will support it? If so, with how much money or labour? It is hoped that people in the neighbouring townships will back the project too.

As Cliff Smith put it, "Half a dozen people can't work miracles." The project is only possible if public support is strong. To quote Mr. Smith once more, "If you're convinced it can't be done, you're right, it can't. If you're convinced it can, we'd like your help".

the issues:

Beyond the question of whether or not it is possible to build and maintain an arena in Elgin, there is the more basic question of whether or not the community wants or needs one. Even if the arena were to be built entirely without tax levy, the substantial donations required constitute a significant focusing of community resources. Thus, this proposal should be weighed carefully. Here are a few of the arguments:

- *Recreation is a big part of life and deserves our support.
- *An arena in Elgin will take support away from the small local rinks.
- *Mr. Ross Hawkins emphasized the need for a covered rink to allow the development of skating skills for pleasure and sport. An arena would make possible an expanded hockey program, possibly with a girl's league.
- *A large central arena will enhance the competitive side of hockey, as opposed to playing for the fun of it.
- *A covered ice surface would be a significant asset to the community. Mr. Seeley suggested that the arena would make Elgin a more attractive place to live for people considering the area.
- *"I moved up here to get away from that kind of thing," says Garry Allen, two year resident in the township.
- *The current rink runs well, but the weather plays havoc with the programs. Mr. Seeley pointed out that money presently spent on clearance would be better invested in an arena.



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Rideau Crafts

The last meeting had to be cancelled due to some nasty winter weather. But, undaunted, Rideau Crafts is planning another meeting. It's slated for Monday, Feb. 13, at 8 p.m. in Forfar Hall.

A brief business meeting will be followed by guest speakers from the Rug Hooker's Guild. A brief talk will be given on their history. The presentation will include demonstrations and a display.

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