

Aurora Lawn Bowling Club awarded \$12,887 'New Horizons' grant from the Federal government



Representatives from the oldest sports organization in Aurora were presented with a \$12,887 grant by Members of Parliament Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket-Aurora) and Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora-Oak Ridges) on the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club's verdant turf on Friday afternoon.

Raymond Noble, Derek Turnbull, and John Headley—whose sports club has been located in the pastoral setting of McMahon Park since 1930—greeted guests and received the funds from Aurora's two Members of Parliament during a green-side gathering.

Turnbull—who joked that he and Raymond Noble are “original members of the Club which opened in 1914”—was pleased by the timely government support to help with the ALBC's operating costs.

The affable long-time member of the Maple Street club explained that “a set of four bowls costs \$600” and the funds were “very much appreciated” to help with the rising costs of sports equipment.

The grant that the bowling club received is part of a federal government initiative entitled “New Horizons for Seniors Program.”

Noble—an active, engaging, and spry senior recognized by Sport Aurora in 2019 for his “outstanding volunteer contributions to the Town of Aurora?” explained how the grant will also offset the cost of “membership fees the club pays to organizations like the Ontario Lawn Bowling Association which runs 16 districts in Ontario.”

The Aurora Lawn Bowling Club belongs to District 11 and will be hosting District 11 Senior playoffs in mid-August. Noble also noted via the club's website at auroralawnbowlingclub.ca that the ALBC is promoting a June 2023 membership drive entitled “Try 3 for Free.”

“For the entire month of June, you can come out for up to three times to try the sport before committing to a season membership. We will provide the instruction and you can enjoy the game. We also have lawn bowls you can borrow for your first year at no cost.”

Noble provided instruction to both participating Members of Parliament on the finer art of lawn bowling, especially the release point. His timely tips resulted in both MP Van Bynen and MP Taylor Roy rolling out superior shots for the gallery assembled.

After being on target on the bowling green, Taylor Roy explained the importance of grants to athletic clubs with an older demographic.

“Seniors have done so much for our country. The Federal Government wants to help seniors live active and healthy lives.”

She also noted that COVID took its toll on so many segments of society and "the Federal Government is committed to seniors' mental health and combatting loneliness by supporting their membership in stimulating community groups like the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club."

Similarly, Van Bynen stepped off the pristine, steamy bowling green and provided a rationale for grants like the "New Horizons for Seniors Program."

"The purpose of the grant is to make sure we have active and engaged seniors. Lawn bowling is a fun, passive sport that has a terrific communal element and a good skill set."

He was pleased to help secure the grant for the venerable club.

"It's great that we can be a supportive part of the lawn bowling community and to help make this happen. It's very satisfying to engage and encourage all members of the community through sports."

Both Noble and Turnbull engage in and encourage the activity to which Taylor Roy and Van Bynen referred not only by administering to the needs of their club's membership, but by being active members of Sport Aurora.

Both are looking forward to running lawn bowling clinics for the youth of Aurora during the "All-Sport One Day" event at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on June 17.

Representatives from Sport Aurora who attended the bowling green presentation included President Ron Weese and Executive Director Laurie Mueller.

Weese noted that Sport Aurora was pleased to assist the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club with the procurement of the federal grant.

"We assisted with the Bowling Club's grant with a letter of support and we were happy to help. Raymond and Derek are long-time members of Sport Aurora and have participated fully as volunteers in the community. It's great to see the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club's commitment to four clinics for kids at our upcoming All-Sport One Day event at the Leisure Complex."

After 109 years, the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club keeps rolling along largely due to the unbridled enthusiasm of the organization's Dynamic Duo: Raymond Noble and Derek Turnbull.

By Jim Stewart