

Aurora Family Leisure Complex set for May completion

By Brock Weir

Members might have been able to take in just about every feature of the newly revamped Aurora Family Leisure Complex by February 28, but work on the oft-delayed project is set to wrap up by May 2, according to municipal staff.

According to Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure, as well as Al Downey, Director of Parks and Recreation, Jasper Construction has been told they have to wrap up the project by May 2, the target date for all programs to be up and running.

The initial 'grand opening' of the renovated Aurora Family Leisure Complex took place last October, when significant portions of the building remained incomplete. Following the February 28 rollout, the finishing touches, particularly on the exterior still need to take place.

'The contractors have been put on notice that that is the date they need to be offsite,' said Mr. Simanovskis of the May 2 target at Council last week. 'They have been put on notice and it has been made very clear that that is their objective. However, they have been given many dates to deliver many aspects of this project and they haven't been successful. We are making every effort to make sure they are offsite for that date.'

Last week's discussions were part of a wide-ranging status update on both the AFLC renovations, as well as the Joint Operations Centre (JOC). With a new project manager recently brought on board to oversee the construction of the JOC, this individual is already proving their worth, said Mr. Simanovskis. There is still, however, a laundry list of things to do to the AFLC before it can be deemed complete.

'In late February, the architect did a preliminary inspection of all the components and created a preliminary deficiency list,' said Mr. Simanovskis. 'We have been adding to that deficiency list based on feedback from the community as well as other deficiencies our staff is identifying, so the contractor's list is growing and they are required to satisfy the contract and our requirements without any additional costs as part of the project.'

With Councillor Wendy Gaertner raising the issue of heat around the indoor track area, Mr. Simanovskis elaborated that items on the deficiency list include balancing of the building's HVAC system and other ways to maximise efficiencies. These heat concerns, on the other hand, might take a season or two to rectify.

'We're going to see a shift when we go from heating season to cooling season, so these are things a contractor does have to comply with in regards to how the project was designed,' said Mr. Simanovskis. 'If we find we still have challenges in certain areas, we may have to do modifications in the system. We are not sure what those are right now until we see what happens in one complete heating and cooling cycle. This is not unusual [and is] part of the challenge of the project. I guess the sensitivity in what we're hearing with the community is their expectation of walking into a building that is perfect.'

Addressing these public expectations was a concern shared by several Councillors. In addition to those issues raised by Councillor Gaertner, Councillor Sandra Humfryes called for a communications plan for the public to underscore their concerns were being heard and being addressed.

'I can appreciate the challenges some of the residents may feel, but frankly we still get complaints [about Town Hall] if it is too hot or too cold,' said Mr. Simanovskis, noting large-scale concerns will be addressed in a future report. 'Some of these things don't go away. My hesitation with a list is the building has challenges and we are dealing with them. We have identified some of the bigger areas, but the reality is any operation of this type there is going to be a period of commissioning. To track every complaint is not going to be efficient. I can look at a conversation [with staff] to look at what messages make sense in a way that is going to be effective and helpful to the residents without bogging us down in the minutia.'

Added Councillor Humfryes. ?We hear ?we're working on it'; [this is not a detailed] list, but it would help us a lot so people understand we're getting there.?