

Councillors mull path ahead for Aurora's sports

By Brock Weir

Four years into its development, the Aurora's Sport Plan is now waiting for a plan of its own going forward.

After putting what could be a temporary halt on funding for Sport Aurora to continue its work on delivering the Town's Sport Plan, work that was set in motion in 2015, the Town continues its evaluation on various paths to move it forward.

According to a report before Council last week, the 2019 Operating Budget has allocated \$103,400 for the Sport Plan going forward, but a 'final delivery option' is yet to be agreed on.

Considerations up in the air include a full evaluation on the services provided by Sport Aurora so far, a need to review the 22 recommendations contained within the four-year-old Sport Plan to make sure it is still relevant to the community, alternate delivery models, and the role of the sport community in the Plan's implementation.

'Sport Aurora has made progress with carrying out the Sport Plan in the past three years as the contractor for implementing the Sport Plan,' says Lisa Warth, Manager of Recreation for the Town of Aurora, in the report. 'They have developed several tactics in addressing the recommendations under the categories of Sport Leadership, Sport Sustainability, Sport Participant, and others. The status and further actions on these tactics needs to be evaluated.'

'The Sport Plan was developed and approved over three years ago. There is an opportunity at this time to review the plan and its recommendations to ensure they are still relevant and that outcomes will be effective. There are several ways the Sport Plan could be implemented and delivered. Each delivery model requires research and evaluation to ensure that ultimately the Sport Plan is being delivered in an efficient manner, is impactful, and achieving its purpose in the community.'

'The role of the sport community needs to be examined in the context of both implementing the Sport Plan and sustaining the initiatives in the long term. The role, structure, needs and degree of involvement of the sport community needs to be reviewed. Several existing municipal models will be investigated and researched.'

There are also opportunities, the report notes, to conduct a broader review of the needs of the community and see where sports and community development dovetail with available resources.

'There is a desire by both community groups and staff to create capacity in the community by having the Town providing leadership, advocacy, assistance and strategy to a variety of community groups, while ensuring sport remains the priority, and the goals and recommendations of the Sports Plan are met.'

Received at the Committee level on February 12, Mayor Tom Mrakas said he was looking forward to what comes out of the review. 'I am looking forward to the report where we get final analysis of how we can move forward and the Town can be in a leadership role when it comes to the Sport Plan and implementation of it,' he said. 'I [am looking forward] to that information further down the road.'