

Respect seniors at the AFLC, says user

This letter is about asking the Town of Aurora to respect our senior residents, and the accessibility of the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC).

The issue of re-opening the back door of the renovated AFLC for members with mobility issues continues to drag on.

The long walk from the front parking lot to the door and then back to the pool is challenging for many older users, and discourages participation.

While the AFLC is legally compliant with accessibility legislation, in practice it is sorely lacking. After the November 24 order of Council, the north door was modified to accommodate members with mobility challenges ? and improve accessibility.

Now the debate is who to allow access to.

The draft memorandum prepared by Aurora Parks and Recreation that will be considered by Council in March demands detailed proof of a diagnosed disability (a car permit) or medical condition (letter from a registered health care practitioner) for a member to be issued with a FOB that will open this door.

But this issue was never primarily about those with diagnosed disabilities.

There are sufficient handicapped parking spots on the front and side of the AFLC. Yes, for those pool users with serious handicaps ? the back door access will certainly be helpful.

The main concern is with the aging demographic in our population who are NOT disabled, but suffering from mild to moderate mobility issues, much of which is simply a part of getting older. As we move into our more senior years, for many people it just gets harder to walk long distances, especially in winter. And that demographic is set to expand exponentially over the next few years.

This memorandum effectively makes the aging process a medical condition - something that must be proved with a note from your doctor. Instead of honouring and welcoming older people and making it easier for them to participate, it does the opposite; it requires the aging person to jump through even more hoops. It will also cost money for these notes.

In an age when most businesses honour and welcome seniors by offering them special considerations, by this memorandum the Town of Aurora dishonours and penalizes them. These are our aging parents and grandparents, and you and me down the road. Hopefully we will find a more respectful reception than what is being offered here.

To receive a FOB that opens the back door, our older member should simply be able to say, ?I'm finding the long walk to be a challenge.?

Making this privilege available to anyone over a certain age means they only have to produce an ID with their age on it. Let's not disrespect and discourage our older members by forcing them to jump through hoops and disclose the personal details of their aging issues.

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Aurora