

# Soccer Club looks for continued relationship with Town

**By Brock Weir**

The Aurora Soccer Club is now in its 62nd year of providing sporting opportunities to men and women within and beyond the community, now based out of their Highland Park home.

The lease is up on the municipally-owned land, however, and the group (ASC) is looking to continue its growth at the Clubhouse it has come to call home.

This week, Council is set to review a recommendation from staff to renew their lease for a further ten years, with options to renew for two five year periods following that.

The recommendation came forward nearly a year after their current lease agreement expired and the Club has had to work with the Town on a month to month basis. The lease renewal, however, raised some eyebrows among Council member when the item came forward for review by General Committee last week, with some members arguing it was important to move forward now to give the Club a degree of certainty over its future on the property with others saying more information was needed to ensure the best deal for all parties.

"We need to do some processes to be more responsive to these groups," said Mayor Geoff Dawe, noting he was in favour of a new agreement, but one for five years while the Town's lease agreements process gets overhauled to be more "responsive" to groups like the Aurora Soccer Club. "The lease for the Aurora Soccer Club was held up in legal for a while. I think we just need a better process to handle all our leases and that is why I am thinking...a five year lease will help us bring this into greater conformity and a better process."

Councillors seemed to agree a better process was needed, but had different ideas on how to reach that objective. Councillor Michael Thompson, for instance, said a five year lease might impact any long term decisions the Club might have to make in the future, such as renovations, and longer-range bookings for weddings and other events.

"There is a potential for impact," said Councillor Thompson, but Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Parks and Recreation, said he knew of no plans for the clubhouse over the next five year period.

Councillor Wendy Gaertner, on the other hand, said she was in favour of delaying a decision for a week or two for further information to come back to Council on the terms of previous lease agreements.

"I want them to stay on the property, but my understanding was the last time around they were renting out the clubhouse and using the money for their own benefit," she said. "In the last lease, that wasn't to happen and they were only to use it for their own use."

Martin Ambrose of the Aurora Soccer Club appeared at the podium before last week's discussion, noting the partnership between the Club and the Town is "what community is all about."

"It is about doing the right thing for our constituents, respecting one another, and our institutions and the relationships we have with each," he said. "We certainly feel privileged to be both a contributing and evolving organization within this community."