

Sports Dome to come under control of the Town

The Aurora Sports Dome, a soccer staple on Industrial Parkway North, is soon set to come under control of the Town.

In a statement released by the Town on March 3, it was confirmed that while the final details have not yet been finalized, a deal is expected by the end of the month.

“While the closing details are still being finalized, the Town expects to take ownership of the facility on March 31, 2021,” said the Town. “At that time, the Town will also assume operations for the facility. Effective April 1, the Town will be responsible for booking the Dome, in accordance with our field allocation policy.”

Further information on how the Dome will operate under the municipal umbrella will be announced once the deal is closed. Since its inception, the Aurora Sports Dome has been a privately owned organization headed by Terry Redvers, whose group also operates the Marilyn Redvers Tennis Centre just behind the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex.

Under private ownership, select hours have been set aside for municipal programs.

“The purchase, when final, will represent great value for the Town and our residents,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. “I believe that under the Town's ownership, we can all work together to make this a community-led facility.”

Mayor Mrakas went on to state that he did not believe the previous agreements with Dome owners served the community well.

“During my campaign, I promised to work towards purchasing the Aurora Sports Dome,” he said. “I felt the lease, which had been in place for 15 years, did not serve our community well and that if the Town owned the Dome outright, we could deliver better value and a higher level of service. I look forward to working with all sports organizations in the community to enhance our programming in this new Town-owned facility.”

Also enthusiastic over the plan was Councillor John Gallo. Although he said he would have more to say on the deal once all the details are finalized, he said this was a move in the right direction.

“I think generally it is a very good deal for the Town. That I can say, and I supported it,” he said. “I think once the details are out, I can explain why. It has to do with the financial aspects of it and that is why I agreed with it.”

“I think it is a better [deal] simply because there is no third party involved, much the same way as if someone else had owned the SARC and we're using ice time through a third party. This is the Town that will, for the most part, be running this and owning it.”

When asked what he would deem his measures of success of this facility acquisition, he said it came down to dollars and cents.

“I think, probably, ultimately better value for the user groups because it is not a third-party for-profit organization that is determining the cost of use. It is the Town of Aurora and I believe there will be better value for the user groups. Generally speaking, it is a very good deal for the Town.”

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter