

## Town of Aurora and AYSC finalize ten-year partnership

The Town of Aurora and the Aurora Youth Soccer Club finalized a ten-year partnership, with the option to renew, to operate the Sports Dome on Industrial Parkway North.

Instead of AYSC constructing a dome of their own on the side, both parties reached an agreement that the Town of Aurora will take care of mechanical needs while the soccer club will take care of everything else inside.

"We already have contracts in place for things like mechanical maintenance for all our facilities. So, for us to add another location to our contracts for the companies we work with that maintain HVAC systems or other engineering systems we have in our facilities," said Manager of Business Support with the Town of Aurora, John Firman, "it's a lot easier for us to add another location to our contract than it is for the soccer club to go out and enter into a new contract."

These would also include things like snow removal and groundskeeping outside of the Dome.

In the Dome, there is one full artificial turf field with a waiting area as well. As of now, no concessions have been set up. That will be up to the soccer club if they wish to do something like that.

For the past seven-and-a-half years, President of the Aurora Youth Soccer Club Roy Cohen has been discussing this with the Town and has been pleading for the municipality to have this as a not-for-profit area for children and athletes to use.

A third-party, for-profit organization had been running the facility in years past and it made things difficult for clubs in the area to rent this facility out for their teams.

Now, this sports dome will be for the youth and for all clubs in the area.

"Most importantly, it provides access now for all sporting groups in Aurora, which is fantastic," Cohen said.

"I just want the youth to be active and to have a facility. Another thing that is the most community-oriented thing, this will have zero financial impact on any citizen in our community. Because 95 to 99 per cent of citizens may never walk into that Dome. Why should they pay for it?"

With this approach, the entirety of the community will have access to renting out time slots in the Dome for their own uses. Men's leagues with no-fighting rules and other practice uses for other sports would be available.

For the Soccer Club, Cohen says soccer in the community will see any child (including those with disabilities) have the chance to play and practice. He will also be providing senior players the opportunity to complete their high school community hours through the club.

As of now, Firman confirmed the opening of the Dome will arrive when the Province gives the go-ahead. When they do, Cohen said Ontario Soccer will have a three staged reopening approach for children.

When the Dome opens, only ten people will be allowed to be on the field at one time.

There isn't any clarification on what each stage will permit, he added.

The Dome will be scheduled for an all-year-round use. There is a hope that the winter season that formally begins in October, will have the availability to run with games.

**By Robert Belardi**