

# Council Vows to Assist Recreation Facilities

By Maurice Rees

Colchester Council has recognized it is important to seek ways to assist recreation facilities which have been negatively impacted by Covid-19 and are taking action to address the concerns. Department of Recreation staff have met with various recreation facilities during the COVID crisis on a few occasions through in-person, zoom and on call meetings. These facilities include all arenas, curling clubs and the Scotia pool.

It is not only ice time and minor hockey which has contributed to the losses but also various non-ice related community events such as Oktoberfest in Tata-magouche, Coming Home to Brookfield, and the Women that Hunt Event in Brookfield to name a few. Craig Burgess said he is collecting financial data from the facilities, and expects to

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have December figures to add to the November results he already has.

As examples of loss of revenue, Burgess reported, one arena budgeted 1213 rental hours for the year of 2019-20 when the emergency shutdown came into place, that arena was short 145 hours for a loss in sales of approximately \$22,000. Another arena lost 130 hours (during same time frame) of ice time rental.

The Brookfield Curling Club ended early and had a loss of \$6,000 in revenue at

the end of their 2019-20 season.

Other problems included: Recreation programs the Municipality has traditionally offered during non prime-time hours, such as Facility Access and Learn to Skate, were not happening during the day, resulting in additional significant revenue loss. Schools have not allowed classes to leave school grounds and on average the Facility Access Program through the Municipality would generate \$4,000 - \$5,000 on facility rentals at various recreation venues.

At the half way point in the 2020/2021 season an approximate tally was in the range of \$44,000, but with some improvements, the full season losses are anticipated to be slightly below \$80,000.

Some facilities have taken advantage of the programs and subsidies being



offered by the Federal government. Some recreation facilities feel financial support may be required as a result of COVID, to assist with keeping these facilities open during these trying times.

Discussions are ongoing and one recommendation is to establish a COVID emergency fund to help offset operational costs to recreation facilities that require assistance. The Emergency COVID fund could be drawn upon as facilities near the end of their respective seasons on March 31st.

There are several possible sources of funding. Councillor Parker asked if some of the approximate \$1-Million in Covid-19 funding from the feds might be a possible source. There are upcoming meetings with the province to outline how funds can be utilized. CAO, Rob Simonds reported there is a virtual meeting later this month on the Safe Restart Program and he should be able to report to council at the end of the month.

Recreation Director, Burgess said he would like to report the county is in support, and will help, but can't offer what, when and how. Councillor Boutilier said rinks are important, but a lot of other places, where Colchester residents use for recreational purposes and hope they could be included.

## The Shoreline Tid-Bits Journal

### No Cookie Tins

The Economy UCW reports the cookie tins normally delivered to residents over 80 will not be available this year due to concern for safety of everyone involved. The group anticipates resuming the service in 2021.

### Five Islands Hoodies

The Five Islands Lighthouse Preservation Society still has a few t-shirts, \$15.00 and Hoodies, \$25.00 available. Sizings are limited. Contact: Gloria Lewis, 902-254-2968.

### More Mental Health and Addictions Support

Community organizations across the province will be able to provide more mental health and addictions support to those in need with new government funding announced December 11. The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia will receive over \$1.6 million, to be distributed as grants to organizations province-wide.

Grants will be up to \$25,000 each. Applications will be reviewed by an independent committee and will be assessed based on whether they address a unique need, empower positive change, or promote recovery and reintegration for Nova Scotians living with mental illness and addiction.

Funding comes from Gambling Awareness Nova Scotia, the Department of Health and Wellness and the federal Safe Restart Agreement.

The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia began accepting online applications on December 14. Government's investment in mental health and addictions has increased to \$314.5 million this year. Gambling Awareness Nova Scotia was established in 1998 to receive and distribute funds (a percentage of VLT revenues) to reduce the harmful effects of gambling; in 2020, its mandate was broadened to address other co-occurring mental health and addictions issues.

Federal Safe Restart Agreement funding is available for community organizations that serve those most vulnerable to the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19. For information: Government of Canada Safe Restart Agreement: <https://www.canada.ca/en/intergovernmental-affairs/services/safe-restart-agreement.html>

### Virtual Medical Care Extended

Access to virtual care options like telephone and videoconferencing that are available for doctors to connect with patients is being 0065tended until March 31. "Access to virtual care has become increasingly important to patients and doctors as the COVID-19 pandemic continues," said Health and Wellness Minister Leo Glavine. "Further extending virtual care maintains access to these important options while allowing us to finalize a longer-term approach."

Virtual care is one of several measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen the health system and support Nova Scotians and health-care providers. Virtual visits are provided via telephone, telehealth network or secure videoconferencing tools. More than 1,207,900 services were provided virtually by physicians in Nova Scotia between March 1 and December 1.

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The **Shoreline** Journal Deadline for the March issue of is February 16

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## Human Organ & Tissue Donation Act

**“There are very few times that when tragedy strikes us, we get a chance to see good. This is one of those times.”**

– Premier Stephen McNeil

**Karen Lynn Casey**

Nova Scotia has officially become the first jurisdiction in North America to adopt transformative deemed consent legislation for organ and tissue donation. This change will affect thousands of Nova Scotians and their families for years to come. The new legislation was passed unanimously – an important achievement for our government and Premier Stephen McNeil. (Submitted)



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