



**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**January 22, 2014**  
**11:00 a.m.**  
**City Council Chambers**

**Action**

- Present:** Deputy Mayor L. Roussin  
Councillor C. Gallivan  
Councillor R. McKay  
Councillor S. Smith  
K. Brown, CAO  
C. Neil, Recreation Manager  
L. D'Argis, Corporate Services Manager  
W. Brinkman, Emergency Services Manager  
J. McMillin, City Clerk  
H. Kasprick, Deputy Clerk  
H. Lajeunesse, Deputy Clerk
- Guests:** Warren Thompson, Stantec Sports Studio  
David Nelson, Nelson Architecture
- Regrets:** Mayor D. Canfield  
Councillor R. Lunny  
Councillor R. McMillan

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**1. Stantec/Nelson Presentation – Event Centre Expansion  
Project – Draft Concept Design**

Warren Thompson of Stantec Sports Studio and David Nelson of Nelson Architecture were present to share with Council their draft concept design for the Event Centre Expansion Project. Stantec and Nelson have collaborated on design plans for the event centre in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) by the Event Centre Committee. The team came up with four concept designs for the facility and each was presented to Council in detail to show its effectiveness. All concepts are specific to the current Kenora Recreation Centre site as per the Committee's mandate to investigate and expansion at

that location. Warren indicated that the existing site is well used and provides an ideal opportunity for expansion, adding that it is very well maintained in a good infrastructure manner. Warren outlined the process they went through to come up with the design showing four different designs with various similarities.

Three options show a full build which includes a twinned ice surface and multi-purpose centre and one option is for a twin rink site only. All four designs outline the possibility of a third ice surface at the location keeping in mind future growth and change. Administrative space in all schemes has been changed to accommodate an ideal layout of the facility. All options show a potential hotel development, in which one design the hotel is attached to the facility while the other options show the hotel positioned on Laursen Creek. The hotel is designed to be an economical "tournament type" hotel but it is anticipated that the location on the water will make this attractive to potential private investors. Parking will be a challenge for the property and has been a focus of discussions. Each plan allows for 750 cars to be parked at the facility, which will triple the amount of vehicles the current site can accommodate, although for major events it is expected that traffic will cause issues and there will need to be some off-site parking. Significant on-site parking and development will need to be a focus if the project moves forward and it was suggested that the City look into investing in a traffic study for the location.

All options were previously discussed in depth with the Event Centre Committee and were further evaluated by the following criteria; accessibility, user needs and programming, efficiency and sustainability, strategic alignment and partnerships, community plan, tourism profile, and impact (fulfilment of goals and objectives of project). It was determined that the option of only adding a second ice surface did not represent the requirements of the community according to data gathered at public sessions held prior to the design stage of the project.

After presenting all of the possibilities, the most feasible plan was reviewed. The design includes a second ice surface that is NHL regulation size, two club rooms, a restaurant/bar/retail area and several multi-purpose spaces including a large integrated auditorium/multi-purpose gymnasium and various smaller work spaces and meeting rooms. It was indicated that the main aspects of the design are the 1700 seat arena and flexible multi-purpose centre, which would provide Kenora and the region with the opportunity to host larger tournaments and events, including concerts and performing arts. It was noted that multiplex facilities are the new standard and trend and are subject to eligibility for government funding. In the preferred design the proposed hotel facility would be unattached and on Laursen Creek, further down the creek from the boat launch. It is felt by Stantec/Nelson that the proposed facility concept fills the gap on what is desired by the community and is cost effective. It would enhance the programming for all demographics and ages.

Drawings and pictures were shown to demonstrate what the proposed facility could look like. The design includes an accessible atrium at the front of the building where the public would enter, whereas athletes would use an alternate entrance to the facility. The entire facility would be 80,000 square

feet, with the multi-purpose area encompassing 14,000 square feet of that area.

Warren indicated that there are some financial challenges related to the capital and operating side of the concept. The overall cost for the multi-use facility is estimated at \$24.9 million, which includes real full project costs so there are no anticipated surprises. It was noted that \$13 million of these costs could be eligible for government funding. \$1 million could be raised through community fundraising, \$300,000 could be obtained through sponsorships, and \$150,000 through foundations. The remaining \$10,467,500 would be subject to mortgage by the City, and the possibility of a debenture model was suggested. The increased operating subsidy that would be required by the taxpayer is \$13,000.

On the operating side the project would maintain the same tax payer element, with efficiencies and increased revenues offsetting the incremental operating costs. It is anticipated that it would be a sustainable model, providing that the City can obtain the \$13 million in leveraged dollars. It was stressed that the programming and community interest would be a strong supporter and the events centre would enhance tourism. It was noted that ticket sales have not been yet considered if a junior hockey team is attracted to the area.

A phased approach option was discussed in which a twinplex could be built first followed by the addition of a multi-purpose area during second stage. Costs would be \$17 million for first phase with no guarantee of provincial funding as currently hockey rinks alone are not fundable while multi-use facilities are. Although this would lower the overall cost to the taxpayer compared to today due to anticipated revenues, overall the facility would not be as accessible and does not address all needs. There would also be the risk that things could change over time and the facility will become eliminated from future programming. It is recommended if the project moves forward to go with the full model as this is the option that allows the greatest potential for government funding dollars.

A timeline for the project was reviewed and completion with occupancy would be by late 2017. Cost certainty would be narrowed down as time passes and as the project nears the tendering phase, with an anticipated two year timeline to tender, build and open. Next steps include an open house this evening for the community to review the design, receipt of feedback and review with the Event Centre Committee, revisions and submission of a final report to Council.

Council shared concerns regarding parking at the location. It was agreed that the parking at the site is not sufficient. Significant on-site parking and development will need to be a focus if the project moves forward and a traffic study by the City was suggested.

Council referenced the existing baseball diamonds and how they will require a new location due to the expansion and provision for additional parking. It was indicated that there is another opportunity for Kenora to develop a four-plex for baseball and how this could become another major attraction for the City being that slow-pitch is extremely popular. It was mentioned that this

will be another project expense that Council will need to plan for if the event centre expansion moves forward.

Council inquired as to whether the 10-15 year demographics of the area were reviewed and how this could affect the usage of a new events centre. It was confirmed that this was reviewed and that there is a demand and strong support for hockey in the community and in turn would not negatively affect the usage of the centre. It was mentioned that Keewatin Arena will eventually reach the end of its life which is why there is a footprint for the third surface in the plans. The age of the Keewatin facility and the costs for maintaining it were discussed, as well it was discussed that need not regulation size for all activities.

There was discussion of funding for the project and the overall cost to the taxpayer. The City's current financial concerns were discussed as well. Karen Brown indicated that before making any decisions it is important to ensure the completion of a feasibility test, and that it is important for Council to have a good opportunity to review all the details.

The meeting closed at 12:55 p.m.