



STAFF REPORT

DATE: October 30, 2020

FILE:

TO: Chair and Commissioners,
Strathcona Gardens Commission

FROM: Dave Leitch
Chief Administrative Officer

RE: STRATHCONA GARDENS RESTART PLAN UPDATE

PURPOSE/PROBLEM

To provide the Strathcona Gardens Commission with information pertaining to the restart of Arena #2 and the leisure ice surface, updates on the aquatic operation and the access of spectators in the facility under the current COVID-19 conditions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last seven-months, staff have presented information to the Strathcona Gardens Commission around the restart of programs and services. This month's report coincides with some of the final steps in the Energy Efficiency Update project. It is with this at the forefront, that staff have spent significant time reviewing and understanding the requirements of activating the last recreational amenities within the facility, Arena #2 and the leisure ice surface. Making these facilities operational under the current COVID-19 restrictions comes with additional complications, particularly when treating these spaces as stand-alone services to comply with ministry orders and the guidelines set forth by various governing agencies.

Earlier this fall, the Arena #2 dressing rooms were open to accommodate modified game play under the viaSport phase 3 *Return to Sport* guidelines. In working through the fluidity in Provincial orders, protocols and guidelines, staff developed a plan to continue using the Arena #2 entrance and dressing rooms for the operational needs of the Rod Brind'Amour arena. A second entrance will be activated on the facility's east side, along with a permanent staging shelter and portable toilet facilities to ensure Arena #2 can function as an independent space, thereby safely increasing facility usage and accessibility.

At the time of this report, staff can provide the following leisure ice surface and Arena #2 updates:

- The leisure ice curtain has been installed this was completed the week of October 18 -25.
- The ice-in target date has been pushed until November 23 as the new dehumidifier will be commissioned on November 13.

Preparation of the activation of Arena #2 staff have initiated the planning of in-house programming. Gardens staff is pleased to announce that many favorites such as "Little Rascals" and "55 + hockey" will again be offered, providing programming for all ages.

At the October 23 ice user group meeting with Commission representatives in attendance, organizations and clubs were updated on how Arena #2 will function, so they could adjust their COVID-19 safety plans moving into the fall/winter season.

In working out the operational plan for Arena #2 during COVID-19 pandemic, the following are additional requirements and expenses:

- A four-season outdoor staging tent: \$8,800.00
- Rubber matting: \$3,520
- Portable toilets: \$650.00 monthly

AQUATIC UPDATE

On the aquatic side, all full-time staff for this area have been working since mid-September and part-time staff have been gradually returning to provide support for expanded programming. The cautious expansion of aquatic services continues to take place with the main pool extending its early morning hours to 6:00am Monday thru Friday, and evening user group options until 8:00pm on Tuesday and Thursday with the potential for evening lane swimming and/or fitness classes in the very near future. The initial focus of bringing back regular user groups such as the local swim teams and North Island College, along with offering physically distanced in-house programming has been well received by staff, user groups, the general public and our local Environment Health Officer. Following the successful expansion of hours in the main pool basin, Strathcona Gardens re-opened the leisure pool on Monday, October 26 for registered classes. Additional leisure pool options will be added the week of November 2 with pre-registered leisure pool access becoming available to those not wishing to take part in a class format (i.e. families with young children, etc.). After consultations with numerous other facilities throughout the province, the hot tub, steam room and sauna will continue to be closed for the foreseeable future. Similar to the activation of all current programming and spaces, all access or services offered in the pool will continue to be by pre-registration with no walk-in or drop-in opportunities available. The pool's changeroom facilities have also been opened on a pre-registered basis to help assist those individuals who may require additional time when entering or leaving the pool – these spaces still maintain the physical distancing requirements.

SPECTATORS

On October 13th Dr. Henry issued a preventative reminder about recreational sports for both players and spectators:

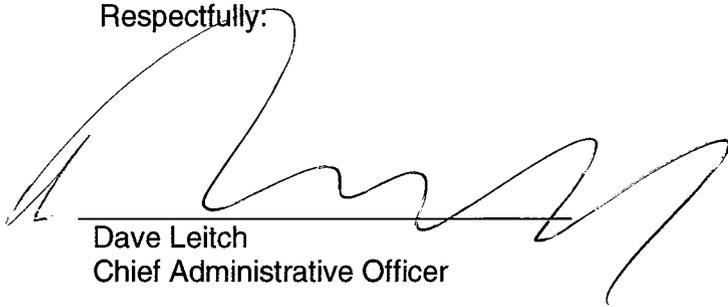
“As recreational sports like hockey and youth soccer return, we have seen an increase in COVID-19 exposures. In some cases, sport facilities have been closed. Like many other activities that have restarted, provincial sports organizations and sports facilities require COVID-19 safety plans to ensure a safe return to sport. Similar to the approach in the recent NHL playoffs, the plans have prioritized the players over the spectators, with restrictions in place in arenas and on the sidelines. We have to remember that spending time socializing or cheering with other parents and fans before, during and after games, increases the risk of transmission and exposure for you and your family. As much as we want to see the winning goal or celebrate the perfect pass after the game, we need to ensure we are keeping ourselves and our loved ones safe by always following our COVID-19 safety basics. It is important for all of us to think about our cumulative interactions.”

In addition, under the strong suggestion of the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association, spectators are not recommended at this time. Strathcona Gardens staff is committed to work with user groups to provide safe spectator access after all the facility's functional areas have been successfully activated. It is at this point that the requirements of a fully operational COVID-19 era Strathcona Gardens facility may be safely evaluated and further direction with regards to spectators may become available. Currently, both the Campbell River Storm hockey club and the Vancouver Island Amateur Hockey Association have indicated they will not be requesting spectators at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT the report from the Chief Administrative Officer be received.
2. THAT the Commission endorse a plan to restart Arena #2 based on options to fill ice times, train staff on the new protocols and equipment, that safety plan and control measures are in place and orientation and proper documentation from the users are received with secured bookings times from Minor Hockey and other ice users.

Respectfully:



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Leitch', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dave Leitch
Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared by: *Koreen Gurak, Senior Manager, Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex
Ryan Christison, Deputy Facility Manager, Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex*