

Caledon Central Pool to remain closed, for good

By Bill Rea

Caledon Central Pool near Caledon village has been closed since January, and it's going to stay closed; permanently.

Town councillors Tuesday accepted the recommendation from Parks and Recreation Director Kristene Scott that the facility remain closed and removed from the department's inventory.

The pool, on Kennedy Road and Charleston Sideroad was closed as a precaution in January after the discovery of mould and on the recommendations of the environmental inspection company contracted by the municipality.

In a presentation to council Tuesday, Scott said the pool was built in 1973, at a cost of about \$130,000. It was not designed as a large facility, and she said there have been a number of problems. She said women have been advised not to hang coats in the women's change room hooks because of humidity and condensation on the walls.

In addition to visible mould and poor air quality, Scott said there were indications of corrosion in the roof.

The environmental consulting company determined that fixing the problems is going to be expensive, on the order of \$990,000.

“This is the really ugly number that our consultants have come up with,” Scott observed. She said it would cost about \$265,000 to get rid of the mould, plus roughly \$350,000 to replace the roof. On top of that, she said the exterior walls of the building will have to be replaced. Those walls have been subjected to humidity over the years, and have no insulation, nor were they designed to deal with extreme weather.

Scott said there are other factors that need to be considered, including the fact the pool is on land belonging to the Peel District School Board (the same property as Caledon Central Public School). She also observed it's small by industry standards, being only 18 metres in length and able to handle about 100 people. The staff report said usage of the pool comes mainly from Caledon village, and usage has been on the decline over the years, meaning the pool has been closed Fridays and Saturdays. It's also been hard to find staff to work there.

The staff recommendations called for a community engagement exercise to be conducted to find out what recreational opportunities are wanted for the west side of Town. Councillor Richard Paterak successfully put an addition to the motion calling on Town staff to start working on a reserve fund in the 2015 budget to address the need for an indoor recreation facility in northwest Caledon.

The need was stressed by former councillor Lorraine Alexander, who called for a new health and recreation centre in that part of the municipality.

“Though we are disappointed at the pool closure, we fully understand that the Caledon Pool has reached the end of its useful life and that it would be financially irresponsible to continue to waste more money on it,” she said.

Alexander also took some exception to the staff comment that the pool mainly served Caledon village. She said the Aquifit group that met there had representation from Alton, Melville, Albion, Erin, Belfountain and Inglewood, adding in the past there had been people from Orangeville and Shelburne.

As well, she agreed more recreation amenities could attract families to the area. Alexander said youngsters in the area are deprived of recreation opportunities, unless they're lucky enough to have a parent willing to drive them half an hour.

Councillor Doug Beffort wondered how things got to this point with the mould. Scott said the facility was designed as an outdoor pool, adding had it been intended as indoor, things would be as bad.

Mayor Marolyn Morrison said she wasn't sold on the idea of more consultation, commenting that most people already know what the community wants. She suggested the Town keep its money and let staff come up with ideas. Scott said her staff is already overloaded with work for the matter to be dealt with in-house.

Councillor Allan Thompson suggested the work be done in conjunction with the needs of the whole west side of Caledon, including Mayfield West.

“It's going to cost a lot,” Councillor Gord McClure observed, agreeing the west side needs a wellness centre. “We need it where all the population's going.”

Beffort said a lot of the calls he hears from constituents deal with the need for facilities on the west side, as he stressed the need to work with groups in the community on this.

“The community wants to be involved in this,” he said. “This is a very emotional issue for the people of Ward 1.”

Town Treasurer Fuwing Wong said they might not be able to get a reserve fund going in time for the 2015 budget. He pointed out the existing facility is still going to be there, with costs involved and no revenue.