

Councillor Kiernan wants to see a community pool built in Ward 1

By Zachary Roman

A Caledon councillor would like municipal staff to dive into research on the feasibility of building a community and therapeutic pool in Caledon's Ward 1.

Councillor Lynn Kiernan brought forward a motion at Council's May 17 General Committee meeting, asking that staff be directed to investigate the feasibility of constructing and operating a community/therapeutic pool in Ward 1 and report back on potential locations, proposed budget and projected usership.

In her motion, she explains that the Caledon Central Pool was demolished in 2014 due to structural issues and mold growth. She added that a Northwest Caledon Indoor Recreation Facility Reserve Fund was created to meet community needs following the closure of the pool, and that \$1,038,350.16 is currently in that fund.

Kiernan's motion goes on to note Caledon's 2017 Facility Needs Assessment Study recommends one indoor aquatics centre per 25,000 population and that Caledon is expected to grow to 160,000 residents by 2041. It also notes that the Town's Age Friendly Caledon Plan says the Town will build, support and advocate for local programs that promote social participation with an emphasis on health and friendship.

Kiernan said her constituents have expressed a need and desire to have an indoor aquatics centre such as can be found in other areas of Caledon. She said Caledon community service staff have been seeing the same thing, reporting an increase in requests for therapeutic programs such as therapy classes in an aquatic setting.

Speaking to her motion at the meeting, Kiernan said she was very happy to have her motion come forward. She said even when she was campaigning to be Ward 1 area councillor in 2018, she heard the need for a pool from residents in her ward.

"It's been a big issue for the residents in Northwest Caledon, we have families that go to Orangeville and Georgetown to take their children to swimming lessons, the seniors have definitely lost their pool and really did miss some of that aquatherapy or aquafit," said Kiernan.

She said she put together a business plan in November of 2021 and met with Town Staff to discuss making the pool financially viable. She said she's explored potential partnerships with parties such as Hills of Headwaters Collaborative (an Ontario Health Team), sports clubs, or private partners. Kiernan said she learned it's not about the cost of building the pool, rather the cost to maintain it. She explained she's not seeking a high-level athletic pool, rather a warm, accessible community pool that all Ward 1 residents can enjoy.

Councillor Ian Sinclair supported Kiernan's motion and said it was well-researched. He suggested a friendly amendment to it; he proposed a concrete deadline for staff to report back by being added.

An amendment to Kiernan's motion to give Town staff a deadline of the third quarter of 2023 was passed unanimously.

The motion itself was also passed unanimously.