

# Funding formula is next step as three councils work together to improve local recreation opportunities

BY CHARLENE PECK

While municipal representatives in Seguin, Parry Sound and McDougall work on a regional funding formula for capital items recommended in their joint Cultural and Recreation Master Plan, the future of a proposal for an indoor aquatic and multi-purpose recreation facility in the area, remains in limbo.

"I do realize it's difficult trying to come up with a funding formula with three municipalities involved – and it will be even worse once we get even more municipalities involved – but it's not impossible by any means," said West Parry Sound Recreation and Wellness Centre Committee Co-chair Maxine Davidson. "We're feeling totally tied. We'd like to help out, but there's nothing we can do until someone takes the lead role on it, and then we're more than willing to participate in whatever needs doing."

The committee's proposal for an aquatic facility/recreation complex in the Parry Sound area – representing 2-and-a-half years of gathering background information – was included in a study for a joint Cultural and Recreation Master Plan for the Town of Parry Sound, Seguin Township, and the Municipality of McDougall.

Peter Hopkins, who also co-chairs the Recreation and Wellness Centre Committee, said the group was pleased with the

completed master plan document which recommended further discussion and study for aquatic centre/recreation complex.

### Regional funding formula for capital items

Although the area culture and recreation master plan was accepted by all three municipalities in July, it will not be adopted by the councils until participating municipalities have agreed upon a regional funding formula for capital items. According to Area Economic Development Coordinator Nicole Sullivan, recommendations will then be reviewed by all participating councils for approval on a project-by-project basis, and the recommendation to conduct a feasibility study for the aquatic/recreation complex will only be acted upon once these processes have been completed.

Ms Sullivan also pointed out that the master plan recommends that either the municipalities or the YMCA be the project lead, which means that the municipalities may not be the organization commissioning the feasibility study.

"We have to let the YMCA and the municipalities take the lead and come up with this feasibility assessment," said Mr. Hopkins. "Let them do their due diligence on site, capital costs and operational costs, management and those types of things. That's really up to the YMCA with their template on how they build facilities, and then, how municipalities build with a

partner, and whether the school board is going to be involved or not – because what they're going to do with schools is not really settled. Hopefully, in the next eight months some due diligence will be done and they can come up with a positive feasibility study that can get us into a steering committee and we can get going with it."

Seguin Mayor David Conn believes it wouldn't be fair to describe the lack of a regional funding formula as a "stumbling block" precluding the councils from adopting and beginning to implement the Cultural and Recreation Master Plan.

continued on page 15A

## Three of four master plan recommendations support further study into aquatic complex for area

### Recommendation 1

Undertake formal discussions with the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka to identify their interest and willingness to participate as a partner in a feasibility assessment for an indoor aquatic facility/recreation complex for the area;

### Recommendation 2

Undertake formal discussions with municipalities within a radius of approximately 40 km. of the Town of Parry Sound, to identify their interest and willingness to participate as a financial partner in i) cost sharing and ii) feasibility study for an indoor aquatic facility/recreation complex for the area; and

### Recommendation 3

Prepare a full feasibility study to assess community and market support for new indoor recreation facilities, particular an indoor aquatic facility/recreation complex; to evaluate site and management options and opportunities; and to fully assess financial viability of options among the Town of Parry Sound, Seguin Township and the Municipality of McDougall.

### Recommendation 4

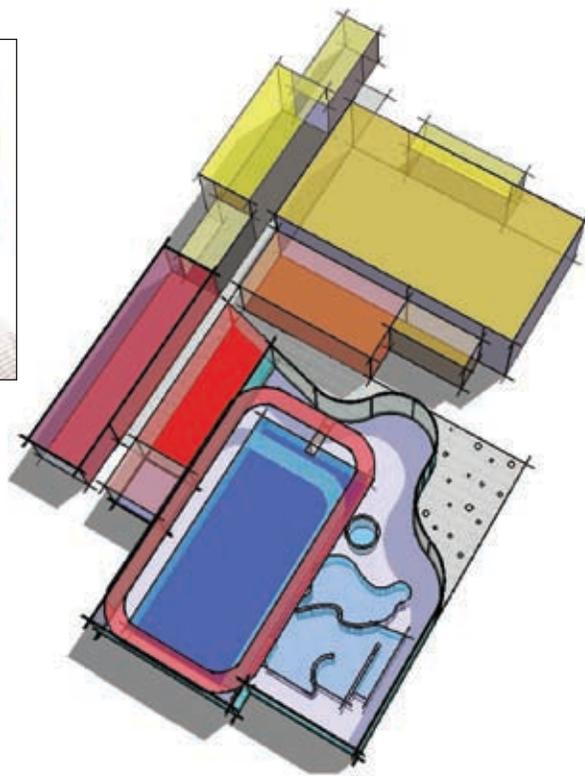
Pursue opportunities to participate in the Near North District School Board and Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee investigation of sites for the new 'in-town' school, as an option for developing a true community use school for the area.



*"I think it is fair to say that all municipalities, particularly Parry Sound, McDougall and Seguin, who are members of REDAC (Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee), recognize that time and attention has to be paid to figuring out how we decide to fund any major plan. It hasn't gone any further than that. It's something that has to be done, and we understand that it's a complex issue, one which we will address whenever it becomes appropriate."*  
 –Seguin Mayor David Conn

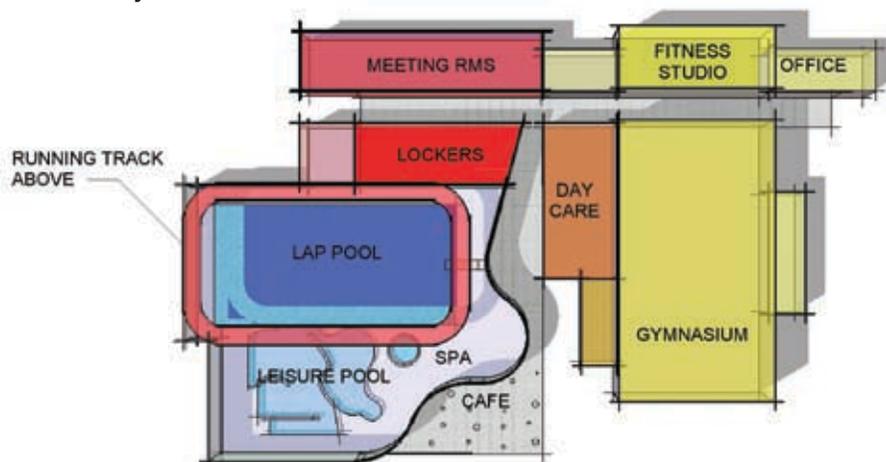


*"If it's a large project, we're only kidding ourselves to think that three municipalities can bite the bullet, there has to be co-operation among all the municipalities, as far as I'm concerned."*  
 –McDougall Deputy Reeve Kim Dixon



These schematic drawings, at right, and below, are a visualization tool to generate excitement for the types of spaces that could potentially be included in the complex proposed by the West Parry Sound Recreation Complex Committee. It was drawn up by FAD Group Architects in Parry Sound.

Many of the ideas for the complex have been derived from visits by local committee members to the new Wasaga Beach full-service YMCA Recreation Complex, and are also based on interest studies conducted by the WPS Recreation Complex Committee.



Schematic Building Program Study for West Parry Sound Wellness Complex by FAD Group Architects – Furniture/Architecture/Design

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# Pool committee waits for municipalities to take the next steps in recreation plan

continued from page 3A

"I think it is fair to say that all municipalities, particularly Parry Sound, McDougall and Seguin, who are members of REDAC (Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee), recognize that time and attention has to be paid to figuring out how we decide to fund any major plan," he said. "It hasn't gone any further than that. It's something that has to be done, and we understand that it's a complex issue, one which we will address whenever it

The master plan was funded through REDAC with a formula of 40 per cent by the Town of Parry Sound, 40 per cent by Seguin Township and 20 per cent by the municipality of McDougall. Based on this formula for one-time capital costs, the aquatic complex/recreation complex study, for example, at an estimated cost between \$50,000 and \$75,000 would represent approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000 in costs for the Town of Parry Sound and for Seguin Township

my perspective in McDougall, we're anxious to see this funding thing resolved."

"There's also the fact, that if it's a large project, we're only kidding ourselves to think that three municipalities can bite the bullet, there has to be co-operation among all the municipalities, as far as I'm concerned," Mr. Dixon stresses. "These projects shouldn't be bitten off by one, two or even three municipalities without the support of the rest. I certainly think, from my perspective, that we don't need more liabilities, we want more projects with teamwork and that are not a burden on the taxpayers."

The area Recreation and Wellness Centre Committee also remains hopeful that other municipalities will participate.

"You've still got only three municipalities involved," said Mr. Hopkins. "They need to get as many as they can involved, because it's collaborative process with the YMCA and the current municipalities that are involved with the study."

"Hopefully, the other partners will come on board, like Carling, Whitestone, McKellar and The Archipelago, but we don't know, that's up to them to make that decision," he says, pointing out that trying to come up with a regional model for regional projects is suggested throughout the masterplan study. "And everybody agrees with that, it's just a matter of getting the municipalities to agree to it and what the formula will be. But that's really up to the municipalities to deal with."

**"You have to sit down and hash it out, because if we're moving ahead there has to be that clearly defined who-pays-what decision. Otherwise nothing will happen. Certainly from my perspective in McDougall, we're anxious to see this funding thing resolved."**

—McDougall Deputy Reeve Kim Dixon

becomes appropriate."

Like Mayor Conn, McDougall Deputy Mayor Kim Dixon doesn't view the lack of a funding formula as a stumbling block.

"It's only been a few months since the master plan has been received, so it's just a matter of getting back together," he explained. "Summer is a busy time for councils, so I don't think it's a stumbling block or a stop in the process. It just takes time. It's not something we can get to overnight."

"There are lots of issues to get over, when you talk funding formula, it's a hot issue," he says, explaining that each municipality naturally wants a formula that is beneficial to themselves. "I would hope that they're working on coming up with a proposal because the initial proposal was 40-40-20 and that wasn't acceptable by Seguin or the town."

and approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000 for McDougall.

"The proposal by the consultants was to extend that funding for a lack of any other formula sitting in front of them," explains Mr. Dixon. "So that's what they put forward. We always knew that it would have to be the councils that decided what that funding formula would be, not a consultant."

"So I think that from the committee's (REDAC) perspective, we have to come up with something that works," he says. "You can't just say that 'your funding formula doesn't work, therefore I'm not in favour of doing anything'. You have to sit down and hash it out, because if we're moving ahead there has to be that clearly defined who-pays-what decision. Otherwise nothing will happen. Certainly from

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Please join the Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee for *Going Live*, a presentation of the committee's exciting first year including the official launch of the highly anticipated Parry Sound Area Development Community Website.

*Going Live . . .*

[www.cityfree.ca](http://www.cityfree.ca)

DATE: Tuesday September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
TIME: Reception begins at 5 pm  
Presentations will commence at 5:30 pm  
PLACE: Charles W. Stockey Center for the Performing Arts

The Parry Sound Area Website provides practical area information for current and prospective investors, developers and businesses. As a key marketing tool, the website promotes development and diversification of the Parry Sound Area Development Community as it continues to evolve into a progressive economic center.

For more information, please contact:  
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