

Presentation Request to North West Community Council

HALIFAX REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY

JUNE 01, 2021

MUNICIPAL CLERK

Group: Wolves Lacrosse Association

PURPOSE

Discuss the immediate and important need for a dry floor sport facility. With the rapid growth of lacrosse in Nova Scotia and the introduction and growth of other dry floor sports to the province the lack of a permanent facility is not only creating a road block for our youth and adults to participate in sport, but it is in fact putting all dry floor sports at risk of extinction due to lack of access to facilities.

CURRENT STATE

Lacrosse has been a “fringe” sport since the early 70’s in NS with a dedicated group of volunteers continually recruiting and introducing Canadas Official Summer sport to new families and youth. There have been fluctuating numbers over those years however in the past 5-10yrs we have seen a steady growth of people playing lacrosse across many different ages and gender.

Even with losing a full season in 2020 due to Covid we still saw record numbers of youth and adults register for the 2021 season. The fact that the numbers continue to grow even with long periods of not being able to play shows that the Lacrosse community is strong, stable and growing.

Lacrosse in the past five years has become a sport for life activity with programs and leagues being offered from U6-U22 along with Junior, Senior and Master’s leagues now established and stable. In addition to the Metro Minor Lacrosse league offering programming we have seen the addition of the Scotia Minor Lacrosse League to accommodate the growth of the sport outside HRM.

In addition to these youth programs the East Coast Junior Lacrosse League has seen an expansion and provides an opportunity for High Level Athletes to remain in the province to continue their development, attending school in the province vs leaving the province in search of the opportunities not found in NS.

With the increase number of athletes playing we have seen a growing demand for more development opportunities for athletes and have strong reputable groups like the Jr Privateers, Sr Privateers, Indigenous Players Association, Black Youth Lacrosse and the NS Sirens Female Lacrosse Club stepping up to offer programming however are limited due to not having a facility to use in the “off season”

With Lacrosse being included in the Canada Summer Games for the first time since 1985 we have also seen the growth across the entire country including the Maritimes with PEI, NB and NS planning on sending Male and Female teams to participate in the 2022 Games.

The NLL Halifax Thunderbirds arrival in 2019 introduced the sport of Lacrosse to many who had never seen the sport played. As witnessed by attendance levels throughout a shortened first season the community have embraced the team and sport and created unprecedented interest in the lacrosse community and opportunities to try the sport. Thunderbirds are focused on supporting grass roots level leaders in an effort to grow the sport. They introduced the Thunderbirds Inclusion and Equity program

which focusses on introducing the sport and supporting communities that may not have had the opportunity to play sport. They have partnered with the Indigenous Players Association, The Black Alliance group and the NS Sirens Female Lacrosse Club to offer programming and support to these specific communities.

THE NEED

The current youth lacrosse season runs yearly between May 1-July 1st. Every year clubs compete with each other, other dry sport groups such as Roller Hockey, Ball Hockey, Roller Derby and “For Profit” Spring Hockey groups to book facilities to get our seasons in. We must wait for the arenas to take their ice out in an effort to provide practices in April prior to season’s opening. We have always struggled to get a full season in around the ice programs but with the rapid growth and restricted facilities we are now seeing athletes playing 3-4 games a week with no opportunity to practice or development opportunities. With the lack of practice and development needs this has created the demand for programming that falls outside the season however currently is limited in what can be offered to youth and adults due to no facility to accommodate the programming. There just is not enough floor time to accommodate lacrosse’s growing numbers and the emergence of other dry floor sports and activities

THE OPPORTUNITY

Land has been offered to our group to build a specific dry floor facility as part of the community development proposal at the Bedford Commons. This would create a community activity hub with our facility joining the newly built Atlantic Tennis Center along with the proposed soccer and all weather football fields. With the proximity to the 102 and the soon to be completed Burnside/Sackville/Bedford interchange it would be accessible from all over HRM and public transit. This hub will no doubt be a jewel not only in the HRM area but provincially, encouraging youth and adults to remain active through sport and draw many people from Canada and the USA for tournaments and usage opportunities.

Municipal Clerks Office

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NWCC Chair and Vice Chair, STAFF,
Solicitor

Other: