

December 11, 2006

For Immediate Release

Town of Sackville Charts a New Direction for the Provision of Parks and Recreation Services

At a public council meeting held December 11, 2006, Council laid out a new model for the provision of parks and recreation services for the Town of Sackville.

A key element of the new model is the centralization of our operations to the Tantramar Veterans Memorial Civic Centre. Currently, the Town provides this service for our residents through two separate independent delivery systems, namely through the municipal parks and recreation dept as well as the civic centre operations. Under the new model, the operations will be combined and the existing parks and recreation facility will be decommissioned.

“Our existing recreation facility is some 40 years old and essentially is in need of replacement.” says Mayor Jamie Smith “The Tantramar Veterans Memorial Civic Centre is our flagship facility and is the ideal base for the provision of parks and recreation programming for the community.”

The Town Council has been reviewing the operation for many months. With the growing number of programs and services that the Town is providing, it became increasingly apparent that the Town had to combine resources to continue to build on the momentum. In an assessment of the financial input into programs and facilities, and when adding the budgets of both the parks and recreation dept with the civic centre budget, more than \$1.0 Million was invested in the 2006 budget year, as a combination of tax dollars and user fees.

“As a council, it was important for us to answer the basic questions....Does the current system address the parks and recreation needs for our residents? Will the current system address our future needs in a timely fashion? Are we making the most of our fiscal, facility, and human resources?” says Mayor Smith “And it was the overwhelming sentiment of Council that we could accomplish much more by moving to a new model where the Civic Centre became the focal point, and where all of our staff are working together under the one direction with common goals and objectives.”

He continues “In keeping with the new model concept, two new key positions will be created in the expanded parks and recreation dept..... namely a Manager of Recreational Programs, Special Events, and Services who will be directly responsible for existing programming and existing special events as well as the creation of new programs and special events for our residents; and secondly a Manager of Parks and Recreation Facilities who will be directly responsible for the full operations of the Civic Centre, all parks, and other facilities.”

Under the new model, the Civic Centre Board will continue to play an important role. The Board will continue to meet regularly to provide input and advice back to Council on important issues and policy with respect to the operation of the Civic Centre. The liaison councillor, the Director of Parks and Recreation, and the Manager of Facilities will be assigned to attend these meetings. Mayor Smith noted “The work of the Civic Centre Board has been invaluable in setting the high operational standard that is in place at our Civic Centre.” He continues “We will be forever grateful for the dedicated commitment from the board members and we look forward to their continued input into the operations.”

On the 27th of November, Council had discussions with the Civic Centre Board on the new model. The board will no longer have to be responsible for the fiscal and administrative operations of the facility, and they can now focus on the important role of bringing forth new ideas and providing input to Council.

The board will continue to operate under the existing model through to the end of April, 2007. The Town will be making all necessary preparations to implement the new model by the first of May, 2007.

Key Points Under the New Model

- ✓ **Town’s Parks and Recreation Facility will operate out of our flagship facility.**
- ✓ **A realignment of staff to better accommodate the needs of the community, with all staff working in one department in a coordinated fashion. A staffing plan is attached.**
- ✓ **Staff will be relocated to the Civic Centre; and some renovations will be required to accommodate offices.**
- ✓ **Use of the existing recreation building to be determined.**

- ✓ **Eliminates the need for the building of a second major indoor facility. Option to invest in additional flexibility for the civic centre complex.**
- ✓ **All invoicing, payables, budgeting, and accounting work to be incorporated into the Town's operations.**
- ✓ **Snowclearing, and some maintenance work to be done in-house.**
- ✓ **All special events to be coordinated in-house, with a focus on the Civic Centre.**
- ✓ **Civic Centre will better accommodate youth summer programming; and will be better suited to accommodate programs that are currently being run from the existing building.**
- ✓ **The Parks Advisory Committee, the Recreation Advisory Committee, the Sackville Waterfowl Advisory Committee, the Civic Centre Board, as well as other committees will continue to provide invaluable input into our operations.**
- ✓ **The Town will take over operations of the Civic Centre on May 1, 2007.**

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For more information, please feel free to contact:

Jamie Smith

Mayor

Town of Sackville

Tel: (506) 364-4930

or

Mr. Barry Carroll

Chief Administrative Officer

Town of Sackville

Tel: (506) 364-4932