



The Corporation of the Town of Parry Sound

Council Report and Recommendation

Open Agenda

Council Meeting Date:

Tuesday May 19, 2020

Subject:

Charles W. Stockey Centre for the Performing Arts & Bobby Orr Hall of Fame reopening plan.

TOMRMS File Number:

R00 - Recreation & Culture General

Spokesperson(s) Name and Title:

Nicole Mullen, Programming & Events Manager, Charles W. Stockey Centre

Department:

Administration

Purpose of Report:

To approve the identified course of action for reopening the Charles W. Stockey Centre & Bobby Orr Hall of Fame.

Determination for Council:

Resolution 2020 -

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario declared an emergency that applies to the whole Province of Ontario pursuant to section 7.0.1 of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (the Act);

AND WHEREAS the Province has issued various Orders under the Act (by Regulation) imposing measures to slow the spread of an infectious disease (COVID-19);

AND WHEREAS the above-mentioned measures include regulations restricting the gatherings of persons, imposing “social or physical distance measures”, affecting the closures of places of businesses, etc.;

AND WHEREAS Council has determined that it is in the interest of public health and safety (the “public interest”) to control and restrict access to places and/or buildings that accommodate large gatherings of persons;

Now therefore Be It Resolved:

That it is in the public interest that the Charles W. Stockey Centre Performance Hall remain closed to rentals until and including September 7, 2020.

Identify Relationship to Strategic Priorities:

Core Service - yes

Key Stretch Goal or Core Service Improvement Goal - no

New Service, Project or Program - no

Does This Item Relate to Council’s Strategic Priorities? Quality of Life

Background:

Since March 16th, the Stockey Centre and Bobby Orr Hall of Fame have been closed to public access. Scheduled events during this time have been rescheduled to later in the

year, or into next year. Very few events (both rentals and Stockey presents events) have been fully cancelled.

Culture and heritage play an essential role in Canadian society and in the Town of Parry Sound. They are a vital part of the social fabric of our communities. Culture generates solidarity, promotes social integration and tolerance and fuels a source of civic pride. During these uncertain and scary times, providing cultural services to our community, such as virtual programming, is extremely important.

While we continue to adapt to the provincial and Public Health Agency of Canada recommendations and orders, we are focusing on what we can do and not so much on what we can't do.

The facility houses many assets that require regular maintenance despite the closure to the public. This has allowed the facility to be made available for public health support, such as a testing site for long term care workers and a space for hospital volunteers to make personal protective equipment for front-line workers.

Staff have generated a list of other services we can offer to the community, whether virtually or in a smaller capacity once social gathering restrictions start to lift.

A few examples are:

Bands on the Bay At Home Experience (live streaming Bands on the Bay for our patrons to enjoy at home, this will also include the Festival of the Sound's Bands on the Bay artists)

Virtual Workshops for a nominal fee

Virtual Concerts for a nominal fee

The Department of Canadian Heritage recently announced support and funding for the Culture, Sports & Heritage sector, and the Stockey Centre is eligible to apply for this program, once more details are released. This funding is dependent on the facility still being in operation and the objective of the funding is to maintain jobs and support business continuity for organizations whose viability has been negatively impacted.

Our Recommendation:

Staff recommend that we continue to align our facility closures and restrictions with the Provincial Government's recommendations. With that in mind, staff propose the following, provided it aligns with direction received from the provincial government.

The Stockey Centre open on July 2nd for access to the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame (BOHF), gift shop and Visitor Information Centre (VIC). Restrictions and procedures would be implemented to ensure we are offering a safe, and comfortable experience to our visitors and patrons as outlined by the province such as limiting the number of visitors into the BOHF and VIC, increased hand sanitization, barriers between box office staff and the public, spacing markers on the floor, etc. Staff will continue to take direction from industry experts and the Public Health Agency of Canada in regard to the new standards of care for staff, patrons and visitors.

In order to ensure compliance with public health guidelines and more stringent health and safety protocols, staff recommend that no outside groups be permitted to rent the Performance Hall for events of any kind for the months of July & August. Stockey Centre in-person programming in the Performance Hall will only be offered when provincial restrictions have been relaxed and staff are confident that public health and sanitization requirements can be fulfilled. In-person programming refers to live streaming performances.

When provincial restrictions allow social gatherings, the Prelude Room and back deck will be made available for rental to outside groups provided they agree to comply with any restrictions in place. Staff will also begin to program workshops and other events in these spaces while ensuring compliance with whatever restrictions are in place.

Timeline:

Staff recommend an ongoing evaluation regarding extensions on facility restrictions. For example, a decision regarding the months of September & October be made by August

1st, a decision regarding November & December be made by October 1st. This will enable staff and Council to make informed decisions with current information and provide adequate time to plan for re-opening or closure extensions, while still providing a cultural service to our community.

Rental Partners:

The majority of rental events that were originally planned for July and August have been rescheduled to later dates in 2020 or moved into 2021.

Staff have been in conversation with the Festival of the Sound, they fully support the recommendation to not allow any outside rentals to occur in the facility for the months of July and August.

Bobby Orr Hall of Fame & Gift Shop

The Bobby Orr Hall of Fame has been engaging its audience online and operating the online gift shop throughout the facility closure. It is expected that pending provincial guidelines, we will be able to open our doors for public admissions and in-person shopping, with some modifications to ensure proper physical distancing and staff and public safety. We are currently exploring ways to modify interactive content in the Hall to reduce the number of high-touch surfaces while still delivering an engaging and informative visitor experience. As the home of the visitor information centre and one of the main tourist attractions in Parry Sound, we expect to see summer visitors, albeit not in the same numbers as a typical summer season.

Our annual fundraising golf tournament is typically held each year in August and is a major source of revenue for the facility. We assume that the tournament will not be proceeding as planned, however we are in consultation with our key stakeholders about an alternative fundraising event, either a small group in person or online. Once we have a clearer picture of the timeline for lifting restrictions, we will have a better idea of what shape the alternative fundraising event can take.

Staff are moving forward with the development of policies and procedures needed to meet best practice guidelines for museums and sport halls of fame. Additionally, we are taking this opportunity to move forward with the capital project to acquire a collections management database and work on cataloguing the Hall of Fame's artifact and archival collections.

Visitor Information Centre

The Stockey Centre is the home of the Town of Parry Sound's Visitor Information Centre. The VIC is focused on providing information on the West Parry Sound area to visitors. Businesses are encouraged to drop off pamphlets and any other information that would be beneficial to visitors. It is realistic to anticipate a less than normal summer, but it is important to still provide visitors to the Town of Parry Sound a resource to promote the surrounding businesses and attractions. All businesses are going to need as much promotion as possible and the VIC is equipped to provide that service to the community.

Bands on the Bay

While we are anticipating not being able to host Bands on the Bay this summer in person, we are currently investigating how to offer Bands on the Bay as a virtual experience for the community. The majority of the artists are agreeable to a virtual experience.

Other Performing Arts Centres in Ontario

Ontario Presents, the membership organization representing performing arts centres, hosts weekly update calls with theatres of varying sizes throughout Ontario that Stockey Centre staff participate in weekly.

In these weekly update calls, each performing arts centre shares the status of their facility closure, upcoming events, and plans for the future once restrictions begin to ease. Additionally, there is an ongoing survey between all member organizations of Ontario Presents. The majority of small theatres are reviewing their events calendars in

small chunks, rather than cancelling all their upcoming season, while awaiting guidance from the provincial government. The industry experience in Ontario seems to be consistent with what the Charles W. Stockey Centre has been experiencing, with events rescheduling rather than outright cancelling.

These calls also serve as a roundtable talk for performing arts administrators in Ontario to discuss next steps for when restrictions change in the future. Upmost in the discussions are sanitization and the procedures for re-opening to public access, which will be a valuable tool moving forward.

Staff Recommendation:

That its in the public interest that the Charles W. Stockey Centre Performance Hall be closed to rentals until and including September 7, 2020.

Advantages and/or Disadvantages of Staff Recommendation:

Aligns with how other performing arts centres are operating.

Provides a cultural and entertainment service to our community, at a reduced capacity, when the need is greater during this time of uncertainty.

Allows staff to actively proceed with programming virtual experiences.

Alternatives:

The facility remains closed for the months of July and August.

Cost/Financial Impact:

At this time, the majority of events that were originally scheduled for the months of March to June have been rescheduled to later on in the year or into next year. Covid-19 and the Provincial Orders are negatively impacting revenues. The Stockey Centre is forecasting a net loss of approximately \$290,000 by the end of the year. The Town has

put in place cost containment measures across the Town with the objective of maintaining an overall balanced budget.

Included in Current Budget:

No, however cost containment measures across the Town have been put in place with the objective of maintaining an overall balanced budget for the Town.

Attachments:

(Accessible format available upon request)

NA

CAO's Comments

Recommends Council Approval:

Yes

Recommends Council consider staff recommendation with the following comments: