



## REPORT

### COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2011

---

**FROM:** Parks and Open Space Department

**DATE:** November 28, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Natural Ice Rinks

**LOCATION:**

**WARD:** Town wide

Page 1

---

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the report entitled Natural Ice Rinks from the Parks and Open Space department, dated November 3, 2011, be received.

#### KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Update report to Council on natural ice rinks that are established each winter throughout the town.
- In accordance with the Parks, Recreation and Library Facilities Master Plan - Parks staff has been establishing neighbourhood and community natural ice rinks town wide
- Staff no longer maintain natural ice rinks on ponds or creeks due to safety, liability concerns and previous Council direction

#### BACKGROUND:

Outdoor natural ice rinks remain a very popular recreational activity for residents. As part of the 2006 Parks, Recreation, Culture and Library Masterplan, a household survey of 500 Oakville residents was conducted by Leger Marketing. With respect to a question on Needs and Preferences, and *What Should the Town Do More*, the provision of outdoor ice rinks ranked the highest at 68% (tied with on-road bike lanes). In light of that information, it was recommended the Parks and Open Space establish outdoor natural ice rinks in each of the (twelve) communities either through town operated rinks, or operated through volunteers. Based on the number of requests received from groups of residents to partner with Parks and Open Space on natural outdoor ice rinks, this form of outdoor recreation, continues to be very

From: Parks and Open Space Department  
Date: November 28, 2011  
Subject: **Natural Ice Rinks**

popular with Oakville residents. Residents who wish to establish a neighbourhood rink, can complete an application form (attached as Appendix A) and in most cases, partner with Parks and Open Space to establish a rink. The most recent (Draft) Parks, Recreation and Library Facilities Masterplan reiterates that the town should continue establishing rinks on a geographic basis and partnerships with volunteer associations. Furthermore, the town should also consider designing new full basketball courts so they may be used as ice surfaces in winter months.

It has been a number of years since staff reported on outdoor natural ice rinks so this report will update Council on the current locations of outdoor natural ice rinks. In addition, rinks are maintained by Parks and Open Space and many are maintained by area residents. Even though area residents maintain a local neighborhood ice rink in a town park, staff considers them available for all to use.

### **COMMENT/OPTIONS:**

One of the primary requirements for an outdoor natural rink is a *winterized* water service. While many neighbourhood parks and parkettes have a water service, most do not have a water service with a meter below frost and a waterline below frost that connects to a rink hydrant for flooding the rink. Over the years winterized water services has been added to several locations, and as new parks are constructed, the provision of a winterized service is considered on a geographic basis. Where a winterized water service does not exist in a park that is requested for an outdoor natural rink, an adjacent local neighbour typically provides the water through a garden hose.

In consideration of the masterplan direction to provide natural outdoor ice rinks across the town, either maintained by staff, or neighbourhood volunteers, the following rinks are going to be available during the winter 2011/2012.

#### **Ward 1**

Bronte Marsh	(Town operated)
Queen Elizabeth Park	(Volunteer operated)

#### **Ward 2**

Forster Park	(Volunteer operated)
Wilder Park	(Volunteer operated)
Suffolk Park	(Volunteer operated)

#### **Ward 3**

Clearview Park	(Town operated)
Wallace Park	(Town operated – but volunteer group has been formed)
Annapolis Park	(Volunteer operated)

From: Parks and Open Space Department  
Date: November 28, 2011  
Subject: **Natural Ice Rinks**

**Ward 4**

Nottingham Park	(Town operated)
Windrush Park	(Volunteer operated)
Langtry Park	(Town operated)
Fairmount Park	(Volunteer operated)
16 Hollow Park	(Town operated)
Old Abbey Lane Park	(Volunteer operated)
Bloomfield Park	(Town operated)

**Ward 5**

Martindale Park	(Volunteer operated)
Millbank Park	(Town operated)
Sunningdale Park	(Volunteer operated)

**Ward 6**

Falgarwood Park	(Town operated)
Glenashton Park	(Town operated)

Over the last several years, the number of natural ice rinks across the town both operated by Town staff and those operated by volunteers, has increased. Even though many volunteer groups maintain rinks, Parks and Open Space still supports the rink through rink boards, supplying of hose and nozzles (if required) and in some instances installation of a water service. Several of these rinks are highly organized with installing boards, developing flooding schedules, and ensuring that the rink is enjoyed by all. In instances of particularly heavy snowfalls, town staff assists in clearing off the rinks as snow left on a rink can hasten melting.

As Town staff has established more rinks town-wide, and developed partnerships in developing neighbourhood rinks to serve the growth of the town, it also means that staff have not been maintaining a rink on the 16 Mile Creek. Warmer and shorter winters, liability and safety concerns, and the number of staff it requires to maintain a rink on a creek, equates to not providing an ice rink on the creek. Parks staff that are available to maintain ice rinks are fully utilized in providing rinks on a town-wide basis, rather than concentrate almost all resources on one location, as was the case many years ago when the town was much smaller and operated a rink on the 16 Mile Creek.

Natural ice rinks continue as one of the favoured outdoor recreational activity for Oakville residents. While the season can often be short, the number of requests for neighbourhood rinks increases as the town grows. Parks and Open Space are pleased to partner with so many dedicated residents and resident groups, who provide the community with natural ice rinks. Parks staff continue to remind

From: Parks and Open Space Department  
Date: November 28, 2011  
Subject: **Natural Ice Rinks**

residents that volunteer operated rinks on town parkland, are open to all, and not private rinks.

The natural ice rink program is a community wide effort and Parks staff will continue to provide natural ice rinks as the town expands and working with residents as opportunities arise.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

**(A) PUBLIC**

Natural ice rinks are very popular with the community. Many residents, individually and in groups participate in maintaining natural ice rinks in many locations across the town.

**(B) FINANCIAL**

The costs associated with operating natural ice rinks is included in the base budget of the Parks and Open Space department

**(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS**

None

**(D) CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS**

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal to:

- continuously improve our programs and services
- be accountable

**(E) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY**

Outdoor natural ice rinks in many cases bring members of the community together to work cooperatively in delivering a neighbourhood facility that is shared by all. It provides recreation, fitness and an opportunity to work cooperatively that assists in making our community more livable.

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – Application for Natural Outdoor Ice Rink

Submitted by:

Chris Mark, Director