

Work to start on twin pad
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Published on Mar 13, 2009

"I am working to ensure that we get a cut of the pie," said Ward 15 councillor Margaret McCarthy Tuesday after announcing that the City of Hamilton will proceed with the construction of a new twin pad arena near Waterdown.

The twin pad, modeled after the Burlington twin pad at the Appleby Ice Centre, will be located northwest of the current arena at Clappison's Corners. It will feature two National Hockey League standard ice rink surfaces, six change rooms per arena, one community room, two meeting rooms, a skate sharpening shop and a concession stand.

The large 85-by 200-foot arena, explained the city's recreation manager, Chris Herstek, is a "real innovative design" and is barrier free, allowing athletes and spectators with physical disabilities to easily access the facility.

The \$17-million project has been on the books since pre-amalgamation, noted McCarthy. "It was raised as a need in the community," she said, adding that money has been allocated for the project year after year.

Through development charges, approximately \$13 million was allocated for the project. The \$4-million shortfall will not fall on Flamborough residents' shoulders, assured the councillor.

To date, \$2 million has been secured from a \$48-million provincial grant, which was directed to the City of Hamilton.

The remaining \$2 million has been prioritized under the city's federal grant for infrastructure. Local big box store, RONA, has also shown interest in making a financial contribution to boost the construction of the twin pad.

McCarthy stressed that the construction of the project will not result in a tax increase to local residents.

"And that's what my goal was," she said, adding that the need for a new arena in the community was identified long ago.

"I am securing what is due to us through the City of Hamilton grants that come by way of provincial and federal funds to ensure that this does get built in the community that has long awaited it and that it won't be turning to Flamborough residents to pick up any shortfall," said McCarthy.

The new twin pad, said Herstek, "is going to be a real asset to the community, a real focal point to the community."

Construction is expected to begin by late September and should take approximately 18 months, noted Herstek. The completion date is targeted for February 28, 2011.

"The team is getting there and working hard to meet our construction deadline," he said.

North Wentworth Arena will remain open to continue servicing local hockey and skating organizations as well as members of the community until the twin pad project is complete.