

Twin pad facing \$4m shortfall
Dianne Cornish, Review Staff
Published on Sep 26, 2008

The proposed Flamborough twin pad arena is facing a \$4-million funding shortfall. The gap in funding for the \$15-million project was anticipated a year ago, but has since jumped about \$2 million since last summer.

Delays in construction, attributed in part to finding an appropriate site for the facility, have resulted in the cost overrun, Flamborough councillor Margaret McCarthy said last week. But the project remains in Hamilton's capital budget, where \$11 million has been allocated for it, and the arena is expected to be completed either next year or in 2010.

"This isn't the Cadillac model either," McCarthy said, noting that the new facility is being modeled after the 65,000-square-foot arena on Appleby Line in Burlington. Besides two regulation-sized ice surfaces, it will include viewing and meeting hall space for community groups.

McCarthy has asked Flamborough's former recreation director, Peter Curtis, to volunteer his time to explore the possibility of accessing gap funding through a provincial grant. Curtis said he is working with Ancaster-Flamborough- Dundas-Westdale MPP Ted McMeekin's office, as well as waiting for a tri-ministry report expected before the end of year that contains recommendations on funding opportunities for recreational and cultural facilities.

If grant money doesn't become available, McCarthy said the shortfall could be made up through a combination of debenturing and community fundraising.

Other funding options include naming rights, partnerships and work-in-kind agreements.

The project was delayed several months due to an exhaustive search for a site. Last year, city staff investigated the possibility of building the new twin pad at Joe Sams Leisure Park at the corner of Centre Road and 5th Concession Road East, just north of Waterdown, but the province's greenbelt legislation, which limits development in the area, and the absence of piped water to the building quashed that option.

It was decided, instead, that the new facility would be built behind the North Wentworth Arena at Clappison's Corners. The current arena, built in 1973, will continue to operate during the twin pad's construction but will be demolished when the new building is operational.

While it had been hoped that construction of the project would get under way this year, timelines weren't met because of cost overruns and transportation issues at Clappison's Corners, a recent e-mail from McCarthy's office stated. The city owns the 22-acre site occupied by the North Wentworth Arena but will lose the front corner of the property when the MTO (Ontario Ministry of Transportation) proceeds with plans to build a cloverleaf at the intersection of highways 5 and 6. As a result, plans had to be made to find an alternate access to the twin pad. A new road, running parallel to Hwy. 6, will be built east of the arena.

While a recent consultant's report to city council suggests that consideration be given to closing Carlisle Arena after the Flamborough twin pad is up and running and an assessment

of Flamborough's ice utilization is completed, Councillor McCarthy dismissed the recommendation.

"That won't happen," she said, noting that the Carlisle facility, built 30 years ago, is helping to meet ice time demands that are projected to grow over the next decade.

"There is too much of a need there to facilitate demands right now; it's only going to build," she said.

'The justification is there to keep it going.'