

Westside Weekly

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Curling Club moves closer with energy plans but further from municipality

Five-hundred-fifty-eight Peachland residents signed their names in opposition to the municipality co-signing for a construction mortgage with the Peachland Curling Club, enough to invoke referendum. In accordance with the alternate approval process, council must now decide, Feb. 9, whether it wants to go take the issue to resident voters or leave the Curling Club to find another co-signatory.

Furthermore, Terasen Gas will become the district energy system utility for the Sixth Street loop in Peachland, in which the new curling rink is the starting project.

A memorandum of understanding, agreed to last week by council, sets the framework for Terasen to handle the energy component of this civic area.

Planner Dave Smith said the involvement of Terasen Gas means the infrastructure will be provided at their cost and not financed by either the Peachland Curling Club or the town.

Part of the MOU involves a feasibility study that Terasen will complete, and provides direction for designing a system for the 1,567-square-meter curling rink to be built at the end of Sixth Street, either as a stand alone system or as a system designed to be integrated into a larger system to service adjacent developments.

Smith's report noted Terasen is "becoming the leading utility for district energy systems in B.C." It is working with the cities of Kelowna, Trail and Langley and the Delta School District on their district energy systems.

He said working with Terasen would encourage efficiency and long-term savings.

It fits with the town's policy, which had signed on to the B.C. Climate Action Charter in 2007, pledging to manage energy consumption and cut greenhouse gases.

"The District of Peachland has adopted a sustainable development strategy" (2008) as part of the official community plan and is working on energy management issues and other sustainable development initiatives - not just the curling rink," said Smith.

The curling club received more than \$2 million in funding under the Canada - B.C. Economic Stimulus program recently.

Smith noted that if council doesn't encourage sustainable development, it would be failing in its commitments. Those commitments require council to push new development to be green by being more energy efficient and by reducing GHG emissions.

One component of the plan is for the curling rink to use a heat recovery system, known to be more efficient than conventional designs in most existing rinks. It will be designed so in the future it could be integrated into geothermal technology for a larger area.

Geothermal technology could encompass the rink, a retrofit of the community centre which has a 30-year-old mechanical system, a major new seniors' housing project and the Primary School renovation nearby. Possibly the Seniors +50 Centre across Cousins Park could be included.

Last year council included \$15,000 in the budget to be spent on energy management assessment and a sustainable action plan.

A report is expected next month from Dr. Donna Senese of UBCO on an inventory of green and sustainable content in municipal bylaws.

Council received one letter of objection regarding the curling rink from a neighbour, who said the building planned is too large, council was catering to special interest groups, there was a lack of hard numbers in the curling club's plan and expressing a desire to protect the historical character of the area.

Council approved the MOU and the development permit for the curling club, subject to the club having construction funding in place.

The development permit approval included waiving of development cost charges of about \$50,000 and cash in lieu of parking as generally required, and a request to go to the regional district to waive sewer cost charges. This is common practice for a building that the town will eventually own.

The building will include Energy Star labelled thermostats and real time energy meters, energy efficient appliances and light fixtures and water saving fixtures.