

Gym at arena searching for accessibility

By Kristena Schutt-Moore

The Bancroft Family Health Team and the North Hastings Community Centre Arena Commission have been working to create a gym in the upstairs room at the arena. Councillor Val Miles, who is council's representative on the NHCC board, reported during the Tuesday, May 10 meeting of Bancroft council that they have had some issues ensuring that the gym would meet accessibility standards to the second floor. There are two stairways up to the second floor, however neither of them are wide enough for an accessibility lift to be put in.

Miles said that the committee has looked into several ideas, a lift on the stairs didn't fit, a platform lift was cost prohibitive and block off one of the stairs and removes the fire exit, and a possible lift outside. The committee is still looking and they are trying to meet with an engineer to find more options. A lift or elevator is needed for accessibility and emergency needs. The desire for a gym is in the community and the family health team and the arena committee are not giving up. However it may take more time than originally expected.

Building permits tripleThe year 2021 is only into the month of May and already the Town of Bancroft has triple the amount of residential permits that were submitted, in comparison to last year. In 2020 the town only gave out seven building permits, while so far this year they have given out 20. that is almost double the 2019 amount of 13 permits. In 2021, there has also been an increase on the dwelling units added permits with a total of 10 so far this year. At the time of the meeting chief building official Matt Aldom said that he had an additional four residential building permits being reviewed and were not included in his report. This year there are also four commercial permits that were approved.

Roll off truck purchasedThe council approved the purchase of a roll off truck back on March 9 of this year. Treasurer Bill Davie brought forward a report laying out how the town is financing the purchase for information purposes. The town is paying for the truck with debenture financing with Infrastructure Ontario in the total of \$190,000. The payments will be made twice a year for the next five years with an interest rate of 1.31 per cent. There are three drivers, that are within town staff, that drive the roll off truck for the town's recycling program and to transport the recyclables collected to a recyclable facility. There are also talks happening to rent the truck out to other townships to help them with their recycling programs.

Town says no to tentsThe North Hastings Community Trust brought forward a request to council in regards to housing support. They asked for a designated area on town property for three tents that would allow six community members to live in. Mayor Paul Jenkins spoke first that the County of Hastings brought forward the proposal that would have seen them take over the operation of Woodview Lane and they would have constructed 18 new affordable housing units under the rapid housing initiative that was operated by the federal government. Jenkins said the county did quite a bit of work, approved it and believed that they would have been able to help the immediate need of area residents. Jenkins then said that the governing board of Woodview Lane, called North Hastings Non-Profit Housing Corporation, turned down the offer after the county had assumed that they were in an agreement. He said, "This was viewed as a sustainable option, unlike what we are seeing with a tenting area." Jenkins explained that he brought up what would have happened on Woodview Lane to provide some background about what has gone on in the past and how "close we were to something, and how it sort of disappeared." Council voted against the request for several reasons. One was that they believed that they didn't have property appropriate for a tented living area. The other was that a tenting location was not a permanent solution. Councillor Wayne Wiggins suggested that the Trust talk with the county, and Jenkins said that there was more of a concern as it was more than "just a tent, there is public health, building code, fire and safety, that all have to be taken into account." He referenced a portable shelter that popped up on town property before last winter and said the town had, "gone through all the requirements for this and it wouldn't work." Council unanimously voted this request down.