

**MINUTES  
CITY OF IQALUIT  
RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING #01  
MARCH 21, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**PRESENT FROM COUNCIL**

Councillor Samuel Tilley, Chair  
Deputy Mayor Kimberly Smith  
Councillor Amber Aglukark  
Hillary Casey, Member at Large  
Joanne Smith, Member at Large  
Robin (Rob) Strutz, Member at Large  
Laura Thompson, Member at Large

**ABSENT**

Mayor Solomon Awa, Ex officio Member  
Jakub Garbarczyk, Member at Large

**PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION**

Steve England, Chief Administrative Officer – Staff Support  
Breton McNeil, Acting Director of Recreation – Support Staff  
Jeanie Eeseemailee, Senior Interpreter/Translator

Councillor Tilley opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed the new members to the Committee.

Councillor Tilley asked all members to introduce themselves.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**Motion RC 24-01**

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Smith  
Seconded by: Councillor Aglukark

Adoption of agenda as presented.

**Unanimously Carried**

1. **MINUTES**

a) **Recreation Committee Meeting #02 Minutes dated September 13, 2023**

**RC 24-02**

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Smith  
Seconded by: Councillor Aglukark

Committee defers approval of Recreation Committee Meeting #02 Minutes dated September 13, 2023 until the next meeting.

**Unanimously Carried**

The minutes from the Recreation Committee meeting #02 held on September 13, 2023 were not attached to the agenda and therefore could not be approved.

2. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None

3. **DELEGATIONS**

None

4. **DEFERRED BUSINESS AND TABLED ITEMS**

None

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

a) **Introduction and Committee Onboarding – Committee Terms of Reference**

Steve England, Chief Administrative Officer, asked the Committee to provide input on any changes to the Recreation Committee Terms of Reference. He noted that members could provide suggested changes after the meeting or at the next meeting.

Deputy Mayor Smith made the following comments:

- Section 4.1 – Meeting held monthly
  - Noted that in the past, meetings were held twice a year, which is not sufficient and should be changed to quarterly

## **b) Outdoor Sports Complex**

Mr. England pointed out that Council began discussions regarding an outdoor sports complex approximately six months ago. He explained that discussions should start to determine the framework for an outdoor sports complex.

Mr. England noted that he was part of the team that developed the outdoor sports park in Arviat, that became the focal point for the community during the spring, summer and fall. Mr. England indicated that the park has three playgrounds, outdoor turf for a soccer pitch and softball field and ball hockey, basketball and tennis courts.

Mr. England noted that Council would like to start working on developing an outdoor sports park and asked the Committee for ideas and input. He explained that Council would hold public engagements to determine what the community was interested in and noted that corporate sponsorships were being considered.

Hillary Casey asked if the concept of the outdoor sports park was the same as the one presented in the Recreation Plan and if the elements were still what was being envisioned for the project.

Mr. England explained that the elements may be the same, but since it had been some time since the Recreation Plan was adopted, consideration should be given to determine if the same elements should be included.

Ms. Casey asked about budget and planning cycles.

Mr. England explained that Council does have the flexibility to approve amended budgets if there were funds available. He suggested that money could be included in the Capital Spending Plan for 2025.

Ms. Casey asked what type of feedback staff and Council were looking for.

Mr. England explained they were looking for any suggestions by the Committee regarding sporting activities, location, public consultation and any other information pertaining to the complex. He noted that location of the complex would be the most difficult to determine.

Joanne Smith asked if it was Council's intention to construct one large facility or to renovate existing facilities that were located across the community.

Mr. England noted that all suggestions were worth discussing. He felt that it would better suit the community if the outdoor sports complex was located in a central location, but finding a parcel of land was difficult. He pointed out that there were preliminary discussions regarding Inuit Owned Lands by the hotel that could be used. Mr. England explained that if one large parcel of land was not available, then different sports venues

could be used. He gave the example of the existing softball field and whether that was sufficient or whether the venue should be upgraded.

Ms. Smith asked if consideration was being given to winterize the complex or keep it as a three-season complex.

Mr. England noted that during the design phase, consideration would be given as to what options were available. He noted that in the beginning, budgets may be limited, but having flexibility to add or change things in the future would be beneficial.

Deputy Mayor Smith hoped that one or more organizations or businesses in the community would provide funding and have naming rights to the complex.

Deputy Mayor Smith commented that the land in the West 40 would be a good place since there was no land available in the downtown area. She noted that consideration should be given to locating the complex in another part of town in order to provide all the sporting activities in one place.

Rob Strutz asked when the outdoor sports park was constructed in Arviat.

Mr. England advised that construction started in 2016 and took two summers to complete. He noted that a big factor was the cement work for the various sport courts and companies were brought in to lay the artificial turf.

Ms. Casey noted that sports organization that use city fields are able to leverage fundraising opportunities in a way that municipalities and government organizations cannot. She felt that engaging the groups early would be helpful, as some only operate for a season or a few months.

Mr. England noted that City staff could provide assistance by helping to complete funding applications. He indicated that the former Director of Recreation was working on a funding application to submit to the Jays Care Foundation Field of Dreams program. Mr. England noted that having a minor baseball league in the community was a requirement of the funding application.

Ms. Smith asked if there was any information available regarding maintenance, as the basketball court in the downtown was not in very good condition. She wanted to ensure that the outdoor sports complex continued to be viable as the community grew and maintenance would not be a deterrent.

Mr. England noted that the thought was “build it and they will come”, unfortunately, this did not happen and the Recreation Department had to become involved in running programs. Mr. England did not feel that this would happen with an outdoor sports complex.

Mr. England explained that the community of Arviat respected the facilities and the Hamlet was advised if anything happened. He noted that the yearly budget included funds for repairs and maintenance, and that was ten percent of the value of the sports park.

**Motion RC 24-03**

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Smith  
Seconded by: Councillor Aglukark

Committee recommends that Council start an Outdoor Sports Park Reserve Fund in the amount of \$500,000.

**Unanimously Carried**

Mr. Strutz felt that the idea was very exciting and work should be done to find a location to keep all of the sporting activities in one place, which would be a recreation hub. He noted that a healthy community has several different sport activities. He commented that even with having all of the sporting activities in one place, it may be worthwhile to also upgrade the existing softball field and basketball court.

Councillor Aglukark felt it was important in the planning stages to include Inuit and youth who could potentially be employed at the complex. She noted that a mentorship program for the complex for all aspects would be a worthwhile venture.

**c) Aquatics Programming – Access for Youth Under 18**

Deputy Mayor Smith commented that there were always children at the pool asking other people to pay for them to go swimming. She pointed out that recreation was not a money making venture, but an investment in the community, which makes healthier and happier people. She expressed concern that any child in the community should not have to pay to go swimming.

Deputy Mayor Smith suggested that swimming fees for children under the age of 18 should be removed. She felt that more families would go swimming if children were free as it would not create a financial barrier.

Laura Thompson commented that removing barriers was very important for both physical and mental health. She noted that children, regardless of their background, should not have barriers. She suggested a solution for Inuit children would be to submit a group funding application to Indigenous Services Canada to remove the fees.

Mr. England noted that staff were currently looking for funding sources and were working on a funding application to submit under Jordan's Principle for recreation activities, and a community organization was submitting an application for food security.

Mr. England agreed that it was important to reduce barriers for all children in the community.

Ms. Casey asked if staff maintained a record on the number of people using the pool. She suggested that a few free swim times could be included in the regular schedule to determine how many people would take advantage of free swimming, which could then be used when submitting funding applications.

Mr. England advised that providing free swim sessions was a good idea and staff would include free sessions when planning the monthly schedule.

Ms. Thompson asked if the funding request submitted to Indigenous Services Canada included aquatics.

Mr. England explained that the funding request was a broad spectrum request, including all sports offered at the facility, sporting equipment that children can use, and free Internet access in all City buildings. Mr. England noted that he could e-mail a copy of the funding request to all Committee members.

Ms. Thompson noted that swimwear was also a barrier. She indicated that consideration must be given to a broader aspect to include swimwear, goggles, etcetera.

Ms. Smith asked if staff had explored funding possibilities through Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) to fully subsidize the program or offer beneficiary families a discounted rate.

Ms. Smith asked whether there was sufficient staff and lifeguards to offer swimming lessons to ensure that children were safe in the pool if additional swimming was provided.

Mr. England explained that part of the process was to meet with all of the agencies regarding funding. He advised that there were staff vacancies in all departments, which has been the trend post COVID. Mr. England noted that finding lifeguards was a challenge, and staff were bringing back the lifeguard courses to provide training opportunities for youth.

Breton McNeil, Acting Director of Recreation, advised that both swimming lessons and the National Lifeguard certification would be offered in the next couple of months. He noted that brochures were handed out at the high school to recruit youth to take the National Lifeguard certification.

**d) Sauna Operation Request from Community Member – Gender-Neutral Sauna – One Hot Sauna and One Colder Sauna**

Deputy Mayor Smith noted that the aquatic centre has a gender-neutral change room. She explained that the saunas were located on the pool deck with glass doors and were

not gender-neutral. She noted that the saunas were quite hot and suggested that one could be changed to be a bit cooler.

Breton McNeil, Acting Director of Recreation, asked for the specifics for the cooler sauna.

Ms. Thompson noted that the Finnish have a practice of using a hot sauna and then jump into cold water and then back to the hot sauna. She felt it was important to have a safe space for women and to dedicate a sauna for them.

Mr. England suggested that a schedule could be developed and rotated to accommodate everyone.

Ms. Smith felt that a schedule would be complicated and suggested that one be allocated for gender-neutral and the other one for women, and staff could adjust the temperature.

Deputy Mayor Smith agreed that a schedule would be complicated. She suggested that one sauna be dedicated for gender-neutral and the other one for women and people identifying as female for a trial period to determine if this was the most effective way to use the space.

Mr. England noted that this was a complex issue and a recommendation should be made to Council.

Mr. Strutz commented that the hot tub was not operational and inquired about the status.

Mr. England explained that there was a major change in the chlorination system in the aquatic centre. He noted that last year, the chlorination system was scheduled to change from powder to gas, which required storing a dangerous good. He indicated that a decision was made to revert back to using a powder product. Mr. England noted that the hot tub was broken and some changes were made and had to be changed to use the powder product. He advised that a contract had been awarded to repair the hot tub and understood that repairs would be completed by the end of March.

Mr. England commented that anyone paying membership fees was not getting the full use of the facility and the Committee could make a recommendation to Council regarding membership fees.

Deputy Mayor Smith noted that there were private spaces for women. She hoped that the remainder of the facility, including the pool area, elders' facility and gym were a safe place for women. She hoped that if there ever was an issue where a woman was made to feel unsafe, that staff would deal with it promptly and in an appropriate manner.

Deputy Mayor Smith felt that both saunas should be gender-neutral with the two different temperatures.

Ms. Casey felt that making one sauna gender-neutral would be acceptable. She noted that determining the level of heat in a sauna was determined by the user. Ms. Casey commented that previously, there was a scheduled time for a women's only swim, which was welcomed for people who were not comfortable going in a public space in a bathing suit.

Ms. Casey suggested that a scheduled time for a women's only swim and a gentle swim time for people with physical or mental impairment be offered when there was sufficient staff capacity.

Ms. Thompson commented that women were using the saunas during dedicated women only swim times, early mornings and lunch swims. She explained that last fall, there were times when women felt uncomfortable and stopped going to both the pool and sauna. She advised that she contacted City staff and they addressed the gentlemen's behaviours and she has not seen the gentlemen back at the pool. She noted that there were months that women did not go to the pool.

Ms. Thompson noted that having private spaces for women provided an opportunity for religions where men and women do activities separately.

Ms. Thompson commented that looking at scheduling specific swim times would provide access to a larger number of people.

Ms. Smith noted that it was difficult to deal with an unsafe situation at the swimming pool as the majority of the staff were teens and young adults. She suggested that a policy be drafted and staff understand the policy and have training and support on how to deal with unsafe situations.

#### **Motion RC 24-04**

Moved by: Joanne Smith

Seconded by: Hillary Casey

Committee recommends that Council designate one sauna in the Iqaluit Aquatic Centre as gender-neutral and one dedicated space for women.

**Unanimously Carried**

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

#### **Motion RC 24-05**

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Smith

Seconded by: Councillor Aglukark

Committee adjourns at 6:56 p.m.

**Unanimously Carried**



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Councillor Samuel Tilley  
Chair

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Breton McNeil  
Acting Director of Recreation – Support Staff

Approved by the Recreation Committee on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024.

