

Item No. 17.4

| Request for Council's Consideration | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Included on Agenda (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Thursday) | <input type="checkbox"/> Added Item (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Monday) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request from the Floor |
| Date of Council Meeting: January 26, 2016 | | |
| Subject: New South End School Gym enhancements | | |
| Motion for Council to Consider: Request a staff report by Feb 16, 2016 regarding costs and opportunities for the possible enhancement of the proposed new South End School / Le Marchant St Thomas gym to be bigger in order to better accommodate adult use and different usage and configurations. | | |
| Reason: LMST SAC has written requesting an enhanced and expanded gym facility at the replacement school for LMST through a contribution by HRM. Last night it was announced at the SST meeting that the tender for design services would be posted today, giving HRM seven weeks to influence this design. There are no HRM gyms south of Quinpool Road other than Citadel Rec. There are two junior high size and three half court gyms in public schools available for HRM. These gyms have heavy use by Halifax City Soccer Club (HCSC), Sackville Badminton, Metro Hurricanes Basketball, Halifax South Soccer. HCSC, with approximately 850 winter participants, is actively looking for additional venues to support their U4 – U21 and adult programming. Sackville Badminton registration is full to capacity and needs additional gym space to enable additional players. New elementary schools normally receive a gym in range of 5200 sf, which is smaller than a full court gym. For a small investment the HRM and the community could have access to a gym with enough space at each end to allow safe basketball play by adult (less fear of running straight into a wall) and a wider gym would mean the possibility of small bleachers (also in short supply in gyms in the area) or configuring the floor to allow for four badminton nets side by side. The number of area gyms will fall over the next few years. It is likely that the junior highs and elementary will continue to be consolidated, and Canadian Martyrs Church has recently been put on sale. This will reduce the number of gyms by three over the next decade, while population is increasing. University facilities are not accessible due to heavy use. It is important to have flexible facilities for all user groups and age ranges as this consolidation continues. | | |
| Outcome Sought: Report that identifies costs for providing enhanced gym for possible consideration for funding by Council. | | |
| <i>Councillor</i> <i>Waye Mason</i> | | <i>District 7</i> |

From:
LMST SAC committee
November 4th 2015

To:
Waye Mason
Councilor, District 7

Dear Waye Mason,

We are writing to express our desire to enhance and expand the gym facility at the replacement school for LMST through a contribution by HRM. We acknowledge that we do not formally have any knowledge of the size of the gym (or other facilities) anticipated in the new school, but we believe that whatever the size, there are additional factors of consequence to HRM that require it to be larger than the typical size installed in a new elementary school in our region.

Firstly, there are poor HRM gym or indoor recreational facilities south of Quinpool Road. This is a large tax-paying component of HRM but the citizens receive poor facilities. Adding to the new school gym will provide a cost-effective and significant boost to indoor recreation facilities south of Quinpool Road.

Furthermore, many not for profit sports and recreation organizations (e.g. Halifax City Soccer Club (HCSC), Sackville Badminton, Metro Hurricanes Basketball, Halifax South Soccer) all suffer from a lack of access to sufficient large gym space for their activities. HCSC, with approximately 850 winter participants, is actively looking for additional venues to support their U4 – U21 and adult programming. Sackville Badminton registration is full to capacity and needs additional gym space to enable additional players. The religious, or private school, gyms are insufficient (too small). University facilities are not accessible due to heavy use.

The number of children attending HRSB schools south of LMST does not represent the total number of families in this area as many children attend a variety of private schools. However, these children, and their parents/guardians, need access to sports and recreation facilities within their HRM district.

There are environmental, traffic and safety benefits of placing the recreational facility within the community where good public transport already exists with sidewalks for children.

The new school will likely have near 500 students attending. This is nearly twice the size of a standard HRSB P-6 elementary school. Clearly such a populous elementary school requires a larger gym.

We look forward to HRM recognition of this community need and a firm commitment from HRM to provide additional funding to enhance the gym size.

Yours sincerely,

David Jakeman,
Chair, LMST SAC on behalf of all LMST SAC representatives.



January 18, 2016

Attn: Councillor Wayne Mason

wayne.mason@halifax.ca

CC: clerks@halifax.ca

For distribution to HRM Council.

Dear Wayne:

I am writing to express my support for the notion of expanding the gym facilities at a new LeMarchant St-Thomas School.

As you may recall, we met a few years back over a coffee at which time I started my personal lobby for more gym space in the southern end of the city. I am reiterating that request here – this time in my capacities as a parent of a LMSTS student, past-President of a minor basketball club in south-end Halifax, past-Executive Director of a local non-profit music & arts facility for youth, and current Board Member of Basketball Nova Scotia.

In the past few decades the number of City- and church-run recreation facilities on the peninsula has drastically fallen off resulting in few open gyms for kids during after-school and weekend hours. As a result, our children are losing – or not developing at all – their ability to engage in ‘free play’. Sadly, St. Andrews Rec Centre, the Community Y and a handful of other buildings are all that remain of a once-flourishing network of rec facilities that, with the help of dedicated directors, promoted unstructured play in healthy and safe environments in which kids ran, jumped and bumped into one another with basic supervision and brilliant smiles.

The expansion of the gym at LMSTS would, I believe, present HRM with an opportunity to rekindle those youth-driven athletic activities that foster friendships and build the community, while promoting creativity and encouraging competition.

Please feel free to bring my message, or at least the sentiment expressed herein, to regional Council. Meantime, thank you for your continued good work on behalf of me and your many other constituents.

Sincerely,

David M. Napier

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