

Staff Report 2023-0460

Meeting Date: September 12, 2023

Subject: Community Centre Access for Older Adults (Ages 55+)

Submitted By: Ryan Giles, Supervisor, Community Supports and Events,
Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Community Centre lounges be provided to older adults (age 55+) at no charge, for unstructured use, provided the space is unoccupied by another user, as outlined in Report 2023-0460; and

That Staff monitor and evaluate options for free use of space for further improvements and adjustments, including similar options for youth.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Staff Report 2022–0434: Southfields Village Seniors Group – Facility Access Pilot Program, was approved by Council on December 6, 2022, authorizing access, free of charge, to the Southfields Community Centre from January 1 to April 30, 2023, for the Southfields Village Seniors Group, provided space was unoccupied.
- The Pilot Program for the Seniors Group at Southfields Community Centre was a success for the Seniors Group and staff.
- Various strategies and plans, including the draft Parks and Recreation Strategy, supports expanding such program town wide for older adults (ages 55+).
- Staff propose that no cost daytime use of facilities be available to older adults, provided the space is not occupied by another user.
- Explore sponsorship opportunities to expand program to youth.

DISCUSSION

2023 Southfields Community Centre Pilot Program – Background and Update

Staff Report 2022–0434: Southfields Village Seniors Group – Facility Access Pilot Program, was approved by Council on December 6, 2022, authorizing access, free of charge, to the Southfields Community Centre from January 1 to April 30, 2023, for the Southfields Seniors Group, provided space was unoccupied.

The Pilot Program for the Seniors Group at Southfields Community Centre was a success for the Seniors Group and staff. The Pilot Project was requested by the community to provide indoor space for older adults to gather socially when the weather was not conducive to being outdoors. The success of the pilot was measured by the consistent use of the space and positive feedback from residents, as well as staff.

Recommendation for expansion of the program

Based on the success of the pilot program, community demand, and the strategic support for social gathering spaces; it is proposed that the open use of recreation facilities by older adults be expanded include the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness and the Caledon East Community Complex as well as Southfields Community Centre. This would provide a consistent service level for the community in the three largest community hub centres.

No cost access would be offered in the “Lounges” in the three community hubs from 10am to 4pm, Monday through Friday, September to the end of June. Staff would note that, should there be a need for the facility (ie: program use or special event), the space will not be available. All efforts will be made to provide advanced notice to those who attend on a regular basis.

This approach differs from the Pilot Program at Southfields Community Centre; staff recommend the space be open, at no cost, to all older adults (ages 55+) and run as a drop-in program.

Strategic Support for Social Gathering Spaces

The Community Services team has been working on a variety of strategies to establish a model for delivering recreation programs, services, and supports as well as, community and cultural development. This work includes the Parks and Recreation Strategy (currently in development to be presented to Council in early 2024); the Illuminate Caledon Cultural Placemaking Engagement Report (presented to Council in June 2023); the Age Friendly Action Plan (adopted by Council in 2021).

The Community Services team worked collaboratively on a proposal that meets the needs highlighted in these strategies specifically:

- Parks and Recreation Strategy “draft” highlights the important role of social gathering spaces in individual and community life and further defines the need to provide spaces in our main facilities that will support the older adult community in congregating safely. The draft Strategy proposes that the pilot program at Southfields Community Centre be expanded town wide.
- The Illuminate Caledon Cultural Placemaking Engagement Report included themes directly related to offering open, no cost, space during the day. Including, “more culturally diverse and culturally responsive programming” (e.g., adapting service model to meet the needs of the community), and facilitating “places and programs that foster social connection across generations and cultures” (e.g., providing space for social gathering).

- The Age Friendly Action Plan includes specific actions that; enhance and promote Age-Friendly health, fitness, social and recreational programming; ensure program discounts for Older Adults achieve the appropriate level of affordability; work with local resident groups to create comfortable and inclusive spaces to support social participation among friends and neighbours, including accessible spaces that support passive recreation.

NEXT STEPS – Youth Programming

Staff recognize the importance of a similar program for youth. As programs and services are established at the newly expanded Caledon East Community Complex and program schedules return from a post-pandemic state, staff will utilize the findings of the Parks and Recreation Strategy to peruse a youth program that similarly provides space for social gathering and multi-generational connections.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The impact to the Community Services budget is minimal at this time. The current drop-in fee for the “Seniors Billiards program” at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness eliminated resulting in approximately \$675 of lost revenue (based on 2022 participation).

COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Connected Community - Promote community enrichment through support of local groups, enhances partnerships and events.

Improved Service Delivery - Community hub models for service delivery

ATTACHMENTS

None.