



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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544 River Rd. W. site chosen for arena and library

Wasaga Beach – Today, members of Wasaga Beach town council selected the site for the community’s new twinpad arena and library.

Based on community input and following a formal review of all sites under consideration, council’s committee of the whole unanimously selected the 544 River Rd. W. site in the town’s east end. Council will consider the recommendation at its regular monthly meeting on Oct. 29.

“This is a great day for the people of Wasaga Beach,” Mayor Nina Bifulchi said. “I want to thank our staff for all of the hard work that has gone into reaching this point and commend our residents for sharing their site preferences with us. We are now truly on the path to building two new facilities under one roof that will serve our community for generations.”

The joint-use twinpad arena and library at 544 River Rd. W. is the best option to serve the needs of the community. Locating both facilities at this site will provide a selection of cost savings: project management for a single project, building duplication efficiencies, operational savings, plus the ability to meet some of the criteria of the Canada Infrastructure Grant Program.

From an operational perspective, a joint-use facility will enable management to share resources: staffing, meeting spaces, and programming.

From a user perspective, a joint-use facility will offer residents more services in one location, a positive for families with differing interests.

The cost of the 544 River Rd. W. site is approximately \$5.4-million. The town already owns a small portion of land where the Chamber of Commerce building is currently located.

Background

An assessment in 2013 determined the Wasaga Stars Arena, built in 1973, is near the end of its life as a full-service facility.

The library opened in 1994 when the town’s population was significantly less and library programming was far different than today. The library is 4,500 square feet and too small to accommodate programs, user groups, and so a new facility is required. The library is not just about books. It is about having a space for the community to gather and learn.

In January 2019, council identified the twinpad arena and library projects as priorities for this term. Since then staff and council reviewed the merits of many sites, culminating in a short list presented to the public in September, when the town launched a survey to gather input on sites under consideration. The survey was conducted using the town's community engagement website, www.letstalkwasagabeach.ca.

The town also held an open house on Sept. 30. This took place at the RecPlex. The public had a chance to review all relative information related to the sites, including price.

All the input was factored in with the other criteria and resulted in the joint use facility at 544 River Rd. W. being recommended as the preferred site.

Next steps

Financial modelling of the capital costs previously presented to council will be refined and presented to council for inclusion in the Canada Infrastructure Grant application. The grant application is due Nov. 5.

Projected operational costs for the new facilities are being developed and will be presented to Committee of the Whole as part of a budget meeting on Oct. 24.

The purchase of the 544 River Rd. W. site must be finalized by Oct. 31.

As well, staff must review project management proposals and recommend a firm to council.

Construction timing must be determined but late 2022 is a goal date for the facilities to open.

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