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Town looking at what is best location for new arena and library

Wasaga Beach – Members of Wasaga Beach Town Council will take a closer look at what is the best location for a new arena and library.

“How we handle taxpayer dollars is vitally important so we need to give careful consideration to where these new amenities should be built,” Mayor Nina Bifulchi said.

The previous council considered building a new arena and library as part of a community hub at Main and Beck streets. The project was part of the proposed new downtown. According to the Community Hub Economic Analysis of March 2018, the total capital cost for the public sector components of the hub would be in the range of \$45-million, inclusive of land.

However, at the Jan. 8 Committee of the Whole meeting, the new council passed a motion to pause the community hub process for now and consider all potential sites in town.

“We don’t have any provincial or federal dollars committed towards the community hub, and we’ve now been told by the province that all funding for hubs has been suspended while it undertakes a review, so it’s important to consider other options, especially when we don’t own all the land,” Mayor Bifulchi said. “It’s also important that the new council considers all factors in making one of the biggest decisions of this term of council. The pause will allow us to do that. We have a responsibility to do our due diligence on this file.”

Council has directed staff to look at a variety of sites that might be suitable. Staff will provide a report on their work to members of council in February.

Revisiting the location of a new library and arena is in-line with direction council took in December, when it decided to undertake a review of the development of town-owned lands in the downtown and at the beachfront.

“We need to ensure that we get this right. Ultimately, we want development that is acceptable to our community,” Mayor Bifulchi said.

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