

DATE: November 10, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Walter Babicz, City Manager

SUBJECT: Naming of New Downtown Pool

ATTACHMENT(S): Naming Rights Policy
Commemorative Naming Policy

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council considers the following options and provides direction to Administration:

1. That Council DIRECTS administration to pursue a naming rights agreement through a Request for Proposal process, for the new downtown pool currently under construction; or
2. That Council DIRECTS administration to engage the community in selecting a name for the new downtown pool currently under construction.

PURPOSE:

For Council direction on a naming process for the new downtown pool currently under construction.

BACKGROUND:

Public City facilities are an important fabric of the community and their name contributes to creating a culture and identity within the City of Prince George.

The name of a City facility should reflect the unique location, geography, or community of where the facility is located or recognize the exceptional contributions of individuals or organizations to the community.

The Prince George Aquatic Centre has always been called “the aquatic centre” and this was easily distinguishable from the “Four Seasons Leisure Pool” or “the pool”. The new downtown pool is also an “aquatic centre” by modern definition, as the new facility will include multiple swimming pools and other recreational amenities. This may cause some identity confusion. An opportunity also exists to potentially generate revenue by obtaining a naming rights agreement for the new facility to assist with its operating expenses or any other lawful purpose.

DISCUSSION:

Staff presents the following two options for Council’s consideration.

Option 1 – Request for Proposal for Naming Rights

Administration recommends initiating a Request for Proposal (RFP) process using internal resources to determine what interest may exist in naming rights for the new facility. The alternative is to engage an external consultant to assist with the RFP process for valuation of naming rights. Engaging an external consultant could potentially generate more interest and possibly gain naming rights at a higher value, but would come at a fairly significant cost. Accordingly, administration recommends starting the process with an RFP using internal resources to garner interest in the proposal.

The City has a Naming Rights Policy (attached for reference) that will guide the process for obtaining a naming rights agreement for the new facility. In accordance with the Naming Rights Policy, administration will evaluate Naming Rights proposals received in response to the RFP and bring the recommended proposal to Council for approval. There is no obligation for administration or Council to approve any proposal.

Option 2 – Community Engagement to Name the Facility

If Council does not wish to pursue naming rights for the new facility, administration recommends engaging the community in suggesting a name for the facility that will portray a strong positive image of the City of Prince George, and have geographic, historical, cultural, indigenous or social significance.

The City has a Commemorative Naming Policy (attached for reference) that will provide guidance if the community suggests naming the new facility in honour of an individual or organization.

Currently there is no policy in place to guide the naming of a facility that is not a commemorative name. A proposed policy to address non-commemorative naming will be brought to Council for approval in the coming weeks. However, as the new facility nears completion and signage materials need to be ordered, administration recommends proceeding with a community engagement process pending Council approval of the new policy.

A staff naming committee will lead the community engagement process and administration intends to return the top three suggested names to Council for a decision.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Naming rights for the new aquatic centre support the goal of sustainable fiscal management.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Naming rights will generate revenue that can offset operating expenses of the new facility or be used for any other lawful purpose. The annual amount is unknown at this time. Naming rights will also require signage, uniform and/or stationary expenses be provided by the proponent.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

As the new downtown aquatic centre is scheduled for completion in 2022 a name should be selected so signage can be ordered soon. The new aquatic centre could be named through a naming agreement with a third party to generate revenue. This process will be guided by the Council Naming Rights Policy. Alternatively, the name could be selected through a community engagement process as described.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Julie Rogers, Manager of Communications

Meeting Date: 2021/11/22