

DATE: August 28, 2020

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Chris Bone, Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships

SUBJECT: Connecting Residents to Recreation Opportunities

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated August 28, 2020, from the Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, titled “Connecting Residents to Recreation Opportunities”.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of three initiatives designed to better connect residents to comprehensive information about recreation activities in Prince George. The initiatives reflect the collaborative work of many City divisions.

BACKGROUND:

Over the past three years, the City of Prince George has increased online service delivery and digital access to information. The re-development of the City’s website to be more service-oriented, mobile friendly and easier to navigate, has resulted in its growing popularity. Visits to the website have more than doubled, the City’s social media channels are frequently accessed, email subscriber channels have grown significantly, and online registration in PerfectMind (the City’s online registration system) is up 76% since 2018. The convenience of online access to information and registration services, supplemented with the ease of dialing 311 to reach a service representative for assistance, prompted the redevelopment of the City’s Recreation and Activities landing page, the introduction of a subscription based Community Recreation E-newsletter, and the transition of the Community Clubs and Organizations listing to a searchable, Community Recreation Directory.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the value of online tools, supplemented with the support of 311 personnel, to promote recreation opportunities provided by the City of Prince George and non-profit organizations.

A brief overview of the three recently launched initiatives follows. The enhancements can also be viewed at www.princegeorge.ca/recreation.

Recreation and Activities Landing Page

The 'Recreation and Activities' landing page has been replaced with an updated version that includes new visual and display elements. The layout is similar to the City's Parks, Trails, and Sports Fields page. The new page features extensive use of mobile device-friendly "cards" designed to compartmentalize content and limit the amount of on-screen text to essential information that helps users get to where they want to go.

Community Recreation E-Newsletter

On Friday, September 11, the City will launch the first edition of the Community Recreation E-Newsletter. It is a special edition designed to replicate the in person Fall Active Living Market. Subscribers will be able to scroll through a mobile friendly listing of organizations offering fall recreation programs, and easily link to additional information and registration services.

The Community Recreation E-newsletter will be promoted on the City's website and social media channels to build the subscriber base, and ensure residents are aware when a new edition is available. Efforts to encourage residents to subscribe have been well received. A new subscriber said, *"Excellent! Low cost and easy to access the events and things you want to do. This is a nice inexpensive way to communicate [with] the citizens. Nicely done. Subscribed"*.

The Community Recreation E-Newsletter will be issued at least three times per year (Fall, Winter/Spring and Summer), with the opportunity to add special issues tailored for specific audiences, seasonal events, or emerging program opportunities.

Community Recreation Directory

On September 11, the City will also launch its new online Community Recreation Directory. The Directory replaces the former Community Clubs and Organizations listing. It features a searchable database, organized by recreation activity, of Prince George non-profit organizations. Each organization listing is hyperlinked to an associated website or Facebook page, so those consulting the directory can easily access detailed program descriptions and registration information. The directory also includes a second column with a short overview of each organization's offerings is mobile friendly.

Businesses that offer recreation activities on a for profit basis, are able to promote their services on the Prince George Business Directory and/or the Support PG "Open Now" Directory.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The 2020 Work Plan includes the enhancement and expansion of the current community service delivery model, as a key priority. Ensuring residents can easily access information about community recreation activities and associated registration processes, is an important step toward achievement of this desired outcome.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Many City divisions have come together to leverage the growing popularity of the City's website and its social media channels. The collaborative work has resulted in the redevelopment of the City's Recreation and Activities landing page, the introduction of a subscription based Community Recreation E-newsletter, and the transition of the Community Clubs and Organizations listing to a searchable, Community Recreation Directory.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Chris Bone
Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships

APPROVED:

Kathleen Soltis, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2020/09/14