SPORT AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

13 May 2019

6 Deputation - Memorial Park Sports Trust Board
   1. Memorial Park Sports Trust Board

7 Submission - Intention to grant a lease over reserve land 51 Amberley Avenue
   1. Submission Josh Kurene on behalf of Highbury Mixed Martial Arts (HMMA)
In the beginning

In 2003, a small group of sports involved volunteers got together around their mutual interests in Palmerston North's Memorial Park. They registered the Memorial Park Sports Trust Board with the Companies/Societies section of the NZ Government in August of 2003, forming a registered Charitable Trust at that time and pledging to work together with Palmerston North City Council to, at least initially, establish a competition size soccer/football field, surrounded by a paved track suitable for use by speed skaters, cyclists, etc, part of their overall mandate of establishing and/or renewing sports and recreation amenities within Memorial Park. They accomplished their initial objective raising $160,000.00 in the process helping to support the costs of the work involved. Records appear to indicate that the initial group ceased operations in 2009, while the registered Trust remained on the files of the Societies Branch.

Years passed....

.... Until early 2016 when postings on Facebook showed that there was an old outdoor roller skating rink, with an old grandstand, in Memorial Park. An energetic roller sports and Inline Hockey enthusiast undertook some research, discovering that said skating rink had initially been built in the 1950s, with lights and a sound system in place in those early days. That same enterprising volunteer spoke with locally based roller sports and Inline Hockey players and quickly assessed that after 60+ years of neglect, the infrequently used roller skating rink needed a facelift before it could be turned into an attractive, modern, exciting sports and recreation venue, accommodating the needs of several roller sports disciplines as well as providing, in essence, a "new" venue for the people of Palmerston North. Under the umbrella of the Rimutaka "Renegades" Inline Hockey Club Inc from the Hutt Valley, a proposal evolved and was presented to Palmerston North City Council during their Annual Plan Consultation in April, 2016. A request was made for $40,000.00 to start the upgrade by resurfacating the old rink.

And then

Council were in strong support of the initiative and voted to spend $50,000 to upgrade the rink surface. The funds were not transferred to any external organization. PNCC staff would coordinate the tender, the selection of the contractor and manage the work. We did most of the on-site work liaising with the contractor throughout the whole upgrading process.
From May 2016 to December 2017

1. Contact was made with 4 of the 5 initial members of the original Trust with respect to updating it, increasing the number of Trustees, renewing the trust deed. They agreed with one of the original group agreeing to stay involved.

2. Further contacts were made with pertinent interest groups asking them to become involved and to place one of their members on the Trust Board. Members of the wider community were contacted. Ultimately, the Trust Board was renewed with 12 members including appointed representatives from Artistic Skating, Roller Hockey, Speed Skating, Roller Derby and Inline Hockey.

3. Regular monthly meetings were put in place with internal decisions being made about the Officers of the renewed Trust Board. The Trust Deed was updated and submitted first to the Companies/Societies branch to update the Trust’s records. Liaison was undertaken with the Inland Revenue Department. This was completed and the former GST registration was cancelled. The process of becoming a registered charity was then pursued with that also being successfully completed by April, 2017. Priorities for the continuing upgrade were established, including the manufacture and installation of see-through rink boards, the re-installation of lights and a sound system and a vitally important rental skate accommodation.

4. Regular contact with the construction company during the re-surfacing was maintained. Work was quite slow at the outset due to unsuitable weather but it was projected that the rink surface would be ready for skating by the end of October, 2017, with work, by PNCC, underway on drainage issues. The work on the rink surface along with drainage updates and a new electricity feed was mostly completed by mid November, 2017. We acknowledge and are thankful for all the many hours of volunteer work put in to filling all the holes in the concrete surface prior to the final fine grind and the dust coating.

5. The first official Open Day event was held on the newly surfaced rink November 26, 2017. All our member groups were involved. With no skates of our own at that time, several other clubs from the Hutt Valley, Napier and from within Palmerston North, loaned us 70+ pairs of rental skates for the day with PNCC providing free food and water plus a music person. It was a great success. We learned a lot and became better enabled to move forward productively. We also got some really good support from the media.

6. While the initial $50,000 plus from PNCC has been hugely appreciated and motivating, it has always been clear that we need to find significant funds with which to complete our dream. Our search for support dollars to facilitate the purchase of our own rental skates included the successful grant applications to Sport Manawatu, NZ Community Trust and Eastern and Central Community Trust. We applied for and received a grant from the Lottery Board to help with start-up operating costs. We are now approaching identified grant sources for capital funds. Close on $150,000 is needed for rink boards, sound system and lights installation.
WHERE TO FROM HERE – short term

We continue to work hand in hand in a mutually beneficial manner with PNCC staff and politicians. Our Memorandum of Understanding with PNCC was signed off in early 2018 and is now due for a review and update. We are making contact with Palmerston North schools, (primaries and Intermediates) and plan to escalate that later in 2019 as we work toward more Open Day type events and the launch of regular daily programming. Important components of the rink rebuild won’t be completed quickly but should be completed by our target date of November, 2018. We want our member groups and residents of Palmerston North, including school students, to have access to this soon-to-be vibrant venue during the summer months and beyond.

Just under $15,000 was raised to purchase rental skates and the ordering process began. With a few unavoidable delays with importing skates, we finally managed to purchase what we believed we needed to operate successfully, with the exception of some really small pairs of skates which have since been received. With a large number of multiple sizes of rental skates in hand, we finally launched regular weekend public skating sessions in November, 2018.

WHERE TO FROM HERE – longer term

Each of our member sports groups have taken advantage of their opportunities to run their programs on the wonderful “new” rink surface. The ability to showcase their respective sports to the public and, through that, acquire new members, is exciting, challenging and rewarding. We project that sport disciplines will increase their participant numbers with the multiple exposures and the on-going outreach and promotion initiatives. Growth could be projected as follows

- Artistic skating – currently with the largest member base – increase of 5% to 10% annually
- Roller Hockey – currently a quite small member base (max 20) – projected 25% annually
- Speed skating – short track only on the outdoor rink – projected 10% annually
- Roller Derby – already launching a new Junior program – projected 20% annually
- Inline Hockey – currently only 5 members on their committee as no current venue had been available so they will likely move from zero to 40 or 50 members quickly then continue to build at an annual rate of perhaps 15% to 20%.

NOTE: while some current member numbers were not available for this document, we are basing some of the above projections on experiences and knowledge gained from other areas in NZ that have benefitted from new roller sports venues recently e.g. Napier and Timaru. To add to sport specific projections, we have acquired public participation numbers (recreation skaters) from both Napier and Timaru.
• With a well designed marketing and promotion campaign that will be sustained, we should see steady growth in public session skaters, possibly starting with a modest 20 or so skaters per session (2 sessions per week in fine weather) but growing quickly to 50 or more skaters per session, although these projections may not be reached till the upgrade is completed.

ISSUES THAT WE HAVE MET AND OVERCOME

The single biggest issue we have had to accept has been inclement weather in what was, in the summer months of 2018 and 2019, a sad and intermittent summer with some days being so scorching that it was difficult to stay on the rink surface. And, then there was the rain.

A large emotional let down came when we applied for capital funding support to Central Energy Trust. We were not only declined but we were told, unpleasantly, that Central Energy Trust did not support activities being undertaken by external groups on Council owned land. We were stunned. We went to Council to tell them about this. There was, we believe, a decision taken to try to help us get some money for lights, etc. Due to unexplained events, that initiative didn’t lead to any support. Again, we were stunned. We started to believe that we would never see our dream come true. But we recovered and we found instances of Central Energy Trust having funded other non Council groups operating on Council land. But we probably lost a year due to all the drama.

Ordering some of our rental skates became a big problem when Donald Trump put an embargo on all goods going into the USA from China. Most USA based skate companies had their manufacturing in China and we waited and waited for our skates. In the end, we went straight to China to order some of our own skates directly. This was done with the agreement of one of our funding supporters.

AND NOW WHAT WE NEED IS

1. Funds for the remaining capital items – see-through rink boards estimated at $70,000 including delivery and installation; a new state-of-the-art outdoor sound system and a new set of 9 lights set up with an expertly designed layout that provides consistent lighting all over the rink surface
2. More skaters, more members, more events, more excitement.
Submission presented by
Josh Kurene
Administration/Management
Highbury Mixed Martial Arts (HMMA)
Palmerston North.

Submission/Objection
To the lease of Recreation Reserve Land under Section 54(1) (a) of the Reserves Act 1977 (51 Amberly Avenue Palmerston North to Palmerston North Judo Incorporated (PNJ)).

Information
• After approx. 4 years lease of the PN Scout owned building "Scout Hall" at 51 Amberly Avenue the Tongan Group PN have been advised they are no longer able to utilise the property because it is on PNCC Land that is under the Recreational Act. The Tongan Group utilize the hall for Sunday Mass one day a week. A notice of eviction was served with an effective date of 31 May 2019.

• HMMA (Highbury Mixed Martial Arts) became aware the notification was served to be vacated and enquired to make application to become the new lease holder. HMMA was advised notification to approve PNJC (Palmerston North Judo Club) with the lease was at the final stages of consultation with submissions/objection deadlines being 6 May 2019 (attached).

• Discussions with PNCC Leisure Asset Planner Mr Jason Pilkinson and PNCC Property Manager Mr Bryce Hosking who advised PNJC had either purchased or were in the process of purchasing the scout building. HMMA were advised any submission to council for consideration of the lease would only be for the use of the land eg. empty field.
  o Contact with Matt Nathanson (Scouts NZ Property Manager) confirmed the Scout building was sold to PNJC as the PNCC lease of land was pre-approved. The condition of the sale to PNJC was to include the lease of the land from PNCC.
  o Bryce Hosking advised a preapproved lease had not been issued to PNJC stating their purchase of the building was ‘at their own risk’ along with a reminder that any submission by HMMA to apply for the available lease would need to be for the use of the land only.
  o PNJC advised the purchase of the building would not have been approved without a level of confidence provided by PNCC that the lease would be approved. PNJC advised PNCC believed the approval of the lease would be a straightforward process as there was minimal interest in the property. (*Note: Minimal interest because PNCC had not consulted widely with community in particular Highbury)
Scouts NZ have since advised (10/05/2019) the sale of the Scouts building to PNJC is now conditional on PNJC obtaining the Land Lease of 51 Amberly Avenue. When asked if another party would be considered as a potential buyer of the building Scouts NZ advised they would be unwilling to discuss until after the outcome of the lease approval process was completed.
  - Scouts NZ advised their preference is to sell the building and have entered formal negotiations with PNJC
  - Scouts NZ have advised their preference is to sell regardless of who is approved the lease. When asked if lease negotiations could take place with HMMA as lease holder Scouts NZ advised they were unsure as their preference is to sell.
  - Scouts NZ have approached PNCC to purchase the hall, PNCC were not interested but recommended the sale to PNJC

**Potential Solutions**

- PNCC withhold the land lease and move to negotiate the purchase of the Scouts Building (51 Amberly Avenue) to enable appropriate organisations to utilise the property. The benefits to this decision are listed below.
  - The match of the land and building owner being the same will eliminate the current situation from reoccurring.
  - Relevant community organisations (recreational groups) will be have access to the facility.

- PNCC approve the land lease of 51 Amberly Avenue to Highbury Mixed Martial Arts (HMMA) for the use of recreational training conditional to the following:
  - HMMA negotiate opportunities for other organisations to utilise the venue in partnership including on-going usage and partner organisations.
  - HMMA to maintain the upkeep of the property and surroundings and provide PNCC with an active calendar of use including if required the management of accommodation contracts.

**Key Questions Regarding Process**

- After approximately 4 years of constant lease to the Tongan Methodist Church the decision had been made to end their lease. Is there a better solution for this group to continue to deliver their activities.

- If the future use of the building owned by Scouts NZ is reliant on Palmerston North Judo obtaining the lease. What is the purpose of having the consultation process when no one else will be able to use the building regardless of being approved the land lease?
• If the building is sold, is Amberley Reserve still open to the public or restricted to
the organisation (in this case PNJC) who purchased the building?
If so, can PNCC explain how is this connecting communities, meeting community-
wide needs and rate-payer funded land allow to be allocated to one organisation?

• How is it possible that notification of the final stages of the consultation process
is made regarding the land lease when there was no notification or consultation
with wider community that the land lease was available?

• To avoid all of this. Why didn’t PNCC purchase the hall from the Scouts Group as
the existing land owner?