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Item No. 15.3.1
Halifax Regional Council
April 8, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Councillor Janet Steele, Vice Chair, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

DATE: March 20, 2025

SUBJECT: Dartmouth Curling Club Partnership Opportunity

ORIGIN

March 20, 2025 meeting of Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, Item 10.3.1.

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to engage with the Dartmouth Curling Club on options and opportunities for a new curling facility and potential municipal involvement and return to Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee with a staff report.

BACKGROUND

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee received a presentation from Ralph Jacob and Susan Burris, Representatives of the Dartmouth Curling Club to consider a partnership proposal for a new curling facility and potential municipal involvement.

For further information refer to the attached presentation dated March 20, 2025.

DISCUSSION

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee considered the presentation and approved a motion to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no Financial implications associated with this report. Financial implications will be explored in a future staff report.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no Risk consideration associated with this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no Environmental implications associated with this report.

ALTERNATIVES

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee did not provide alternatives.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order One, Schedule 3 Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference:

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee is to recommend to the Council directions to support Community and Economic life “making HRM the most livable community in which to live, work and play”
2. The specific areas of oversight include:
 - a. the Municipality’s Regional Plan and community planning programs;
 - b. the Municipality’s Economic Strategy and Economic Prosperity Outcomes including the implantation of “Capital Ideas” and the Immigration Action Plan;
 - c. Community building initiatives in the areas of arts, culture, recreation and heritage and related facility strategies; and

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Presentation dated March 20, 2025.

Attachment 2 – Presentation request dated November 14, 2025.

Curling in Dartmouth

Help Us to Protect a Valuable Community Recreation Resource

A Presentation to the
Community Planning and Economic Development Committee
March 20, 2025



Overview

- Who We Are
- Why We Are Here
- Development & Climate Change Issues
- Options We Have Considered
- What Can We Bring to the Table?
- How Can You Help?
- What is Our Ask of You?

Presenters: Susan Burris and Ralph Jacob



Who We Are: The Dartmouth Curling Club

- Not-for-profit
- Our mission “**To foster and grow the sport of curling in the community of Dartmouth**”
- In operation since 1936 , and from 1948 onward, at 35 Canal Street in Downtown Dartmouth
- We serve over 500 curlers, ages 5 to 88, providing:
 - Subsidized “Little Rocks” Programs for children 5 to 11 years and Junior Programs for 11 to 21-year-olds
 - Large Daytime Programs for senior women and men
 - Evening and Weekend Programs for all
 - “Learn to Curl” Programs targeted at those new to the sport



Why We Are Here

- Curling is a sport where you can participate for your entire lifetime
- Curling provides positive physical, mental health and social benefits, making it a valuable resource to maintain in our community
- Demand for the sport is growing, and we are near capacity
- Changes to meet new climate regulations and impending residential development in Dartmouth Cove threaten the viability of our existing location
- If we are to continue to provide curling for the community of Dartmouth and surrounding areas, we need to find a new home





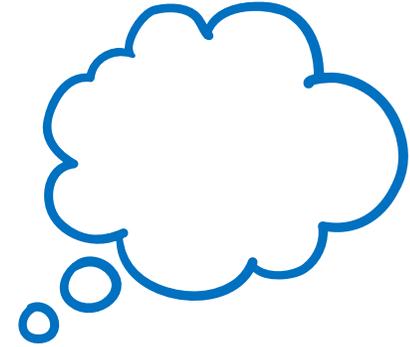


Development & Climate Change Issues



- Development-Parking
 - In the 1970's, the City of Dartmouth expropriated most of our parking lot for the construction of Alderney Drive and Mill Lane
 - Most of the on-street parking is disappearing with the current Sawmill Creek Daylighting project and the Dundas Street Extension
 - Our pool of rental parking spaces is shrinking as adjacent properties are developed
- Climate Change
 - HRM policy related to sea level changes is forcing the city to raise Canal Street by +2.5 ft
 - Our property will soon be in a hole surrounded by higher land on all sides.
 - Grade changes will present an issue for accessibility
 - Even with a well-designed drainage system our risk of flooding is greater

Options We Have Considered



- Facility refurbishment, approximately \$1M+. Challenging, but still doesn't address the grade change issues and parking
- The Club and HRM had discussions about repurposing the Bowles Arena in 2017, but this did not come to fruition
- Merger with another club – no other clubs in Dartmouth, the other clubs are at capacity (Mayflower is adding sheets, but out in Timberlea)
- Move to a new facility – here we are!



What Can We Bring to the Table?

- A 24,000 square foot lot in a high-density development area.
- An initial evaluation by CBRE indicated a property value of \$4 - \$5M
- We can help with fundraising at other levels of government – Sydney Curling Club received \$10M from the Federal Government and Mayflower Curling secured \$3M from the province
- We have an 80-year history of self financed continuous operation and day to day facility management
- A new facility would provide off-season community recreation space for other uses

How Can You Help?

- A new stand-alone 5-sheet curling facility would cost about \$15M (2024 dollars)
- A 6-sheet facility would cost about \$18M
- Financially we cannot undertake this on our own
- We would like to create a partnership between the Dartmouth Curling Club and the City of Halifax, with the goal of building a new curling facility in Dartmouth
- We foresee operation similar to the existing HRM curling facility in Sackville with the Lakeshore Curling Club leasing from HRM



What is Our Ask of You?

- That the CPED Committee request HRM staff to investigate and report on the opportunity to build a new curling facility in Dartmouth, in partnership with the Dartmouth Curling Club, to replace the existing facility at 35 Canal Street
- The new facility ideally should be:
 - Designed for 6 sheets to accommodate growth
 - Co-located with an existing or new recreation facility to maximize efficiencies in terms of building uses, systems, equipment and parking
 - Designed with the best green practices to minimize impact on the environment
 - Be fully accessible to allow for such uses as wheelchair curling
 - Contain a social area to foster the spirit of community and promote the mental health benefits associated with the sport of curling

Thank you for the
opportunity to make our
presentation!

Questions or Comments?

Attachment 2

HALIFAX REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY

November 14, 2024

MUNICIPAL CLERK

From: Redacted
To: [Ross Siegel, Simon](#)
Cc: Redacted
Subject: [External Email] Dartmouth Curling Club, CPED agenda request
Date: Thursday, November 14, 2024 1:46:16 PM
Attachments: [Dartmouth Curling Club Discussion Document June 2024.pdf](#)

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Dear Mr. Ross-Siegel,

Further to our discussion in September, the Dartmouth Curling Club is seeking an audience with the CPED subcommittee to make a presentation on a potential partnership opportunity between HRM and the Dartmouth Curling Club.

Attached please find a background document. This has been shared with HRM Parks and Rec staff previously this year as well as a number of Dartmouth area Councilors.

We would like to discuss replacing our existing curling facility, located in the Dartmouth Cove Growth Area. Ideally, we would like time on one of the CPED's agendas in February or March. Once we receive a confirmed date, we will submit the names of our presenters and a presentation deck in plenty of time for review and inclusion in the Councilors' briefing package.

Thank you,

Doug Stewart on behalf of
Dartmouth Curling Club

Cc

Long Term Planning Committee Chair – Roger Plant
Club President -Cathy Dalziel

Municipal Clerks Office

Date Distributed: March 14, 2025
Committee members, Claire Gillivan,
Maggie MacDonald

Meeting: CPED

Meeting Date: March 20, 2025

Item Number: 10.3.1

The Dartmouth Curling Club Needs Your Help!



May 2024

The Dartmouth Curling Club is about to enter a redevelopment phase.



A Little Background



Figure 1-Junior Curlers in the Provincial U11 Tournament Hosted by the Dartmouth Curling Club

Who We Are

There is no greater illustration of curling as an intergenerational and intergender sport than within the walls of the Dartmouth Curling Club. The club first became an incorporated entity in 1946.

In 1949, a group of women got together and formed the club's ladies' division and the women have never looked back. The day women's leagues are the most vibrant in the province, currently with over 100 members playing every weekday morning.

The day men currently number around 130 and play every afternoon through the week, and on Saturday mornings.

The juniors, aged 5 to 18, currently number over 70. They get ample ice time and instruction every weekend, and they host and play in tournaments across Nova Scotia. Their membership fees are subsidized by the club such that juniors' fees for an entire curling season are between \$125 and \$150 – the price of a hockey stick.

Open curling is enjoyed every weekday evening, mostly by the 25-55 age group. We have two evening draws every Monday to Friday, and the numbers keep growing, especially with the introduction of learn to curl clinics, mixed doubles curling and social/developmental leagues.

The club is busy with weekend rental leagues and junior play but still manages to host competitions organized by the Nova Scotia Curling Association. In the past couple of years, we have hosted competitions for the age bookends: Under-11 and Grandmasters (70+).

In total, the Dartmouth Curling Club boasts over 500 members. As our website says, we offer opportunities for curlers aged 5 to 95 (and we boast, at last count, 23 active octogenarians, and a young member currently ranked first in Canada for the 6-8 age group in the Hit Draw Tap Competition!

Why We Matter

The Social Connection

It cannot be overstated how important a strong social connection is, to seniors, to youth, and to the busy ones in between.

Seniors:

The abstract to a 2018 article in the *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, entitled *Curling for Confidence: Psychophysical Benefits of Curling for Older Adults*, states:

While physical activity is increasingly promoted for older adults, there is a paucity of sport promotion, which has distinct benefits from exercise and remains stereotypically associated with younger age. Curling is a moderately intense and safe sport that continues to gain popularity.... Although further research is necessary, the results suggest that any level of curling experience can enhance older adult psychophysical well-being and warrants consideration for physical activity promotion and falls prevention programs.

In Dartmouth's long winter months, where else is a senior going to find the "psychophysical benefits" – confidence, camaraderie, exercise, community – that membership in the curling club provides?



Figure 2-Senior Men, Dartmouth vs. Scotland in the Strathcona Cup

Youth:

Curling is a sport of integrity, teamwork, athleticism, and intelligence. With a dedicated youth program developed over several years, our young members have thrived at the Dartmouth Curling Club. We subscribe to the True Sport principles:



Figure 3-True Sport Principles

What better messaging can be had? What better sport to exemplify these principles? What better club to grow up in?

The Busy Middle Folk

Those juggling work, family, and life commitments need a break. Curling offers that break, and throws in some fun, exercise, competition, new social connections, and perhaps a libation. Our club's "middle age group" numbers have grown significantly in the past few years, with evening and weekend slots filling up. Our social evenings, such as trivia nights, cribbage tournaments, and a recent karaoke night, consistently sell out, and it is the busy middle folk who make up the bulk of the crowd.

In short, the Dartmouth Curling Club matters to a whole raft of people and needs help to continue to provide this wonderful social sport.



Figure 4-Competitive Curlers in our Club Championship

Our History and Horizon

Curling has been a part of the fabric of Dartmouth for over 175 years.

Dartmouth curlers have always been a hardy lot. Consider the notice for a match on January 12th, 1853, between the Halifax Curling Club and the Dartmouth Curling Club:

"Play to commence at 11:00 a.m. and to end at 4:00 p.m."

Outdoors on a frozen lake. For five hours!

It is that kind of hardiness and independent spirit that has allowed the Dartmouth Curling Club to thrive all these years. Moving off the lake and into an indoor facility meant building that facility and maintaining it on its members' dime. It is a legacy that virtually no other sport played in Dartmouth can claim (okay, we'll concede golf). While paddlers, hockey players, softball players, soccer players, tennis players and now pickleballers continue to enjoy the benefits of facilities run by or subsidized by municipal funds, curlers in Dartmouth have been left to grow their sport on their own. Why is that?

- Is it because curling is thought to be an obscure or lesser sport? Well, the IOC and the World Curling Federation beg to differ.
- Is it because curling caters to a small class? Well, not if you consider that Dartmouth Curling Club members range from age five to ninety-five, hailing from all walks of life and from as far away as Meagher's Grant.
- Is it because it is an independent business to be left alone? Well, Dartmouth Curling Club is indeed an incorporated entity, but like a paddling club or a hockey club, or any other sport club that comes under the Sport Nova Scotia umbrella, it operates as a not-for-profit, sustained primarily by membership fees.

And while we are at it, a correction is in order. Dartmouth Curling Club has *not* been left alone at 35 Canal Street:

Starting in the 1970's, outside entities began to shape the current situation of the Dartmouth Curling Club. The then city of Dartmouth constructed Mill Lane and Alderney Drive, resulting in the

loss of most of the club's parking to the city for the new streets. Sometime later, developers began buying up the existing businesses as they closed, for future development. With the advent of zoning changes and the HRM Center Plan, high rises were permitted in Dartmouth Cove and high-density development began. The final parking challenge arose when HRM decided to raise Canal Street in front of the club, necessitating a retaining wall and the removal of the on-street parking. Many of the club's members come from throughout the eastern side of the harbour, and drive to the club. At peak times, 80 curlers are present. The loss of parking is becoming a critical issue.

With the new Dundas Street extension and municipal sea level guidelines forcing the increased height of Canal Street, the curling club will become the lowest elevation in the area and could result in our land becoming a pond. HRM have proposed initial drainage changes and then reworked their plans to try and mitigate impacts on the club, it remains to be seen how problematic drainage and the Canal Street modifications will become.

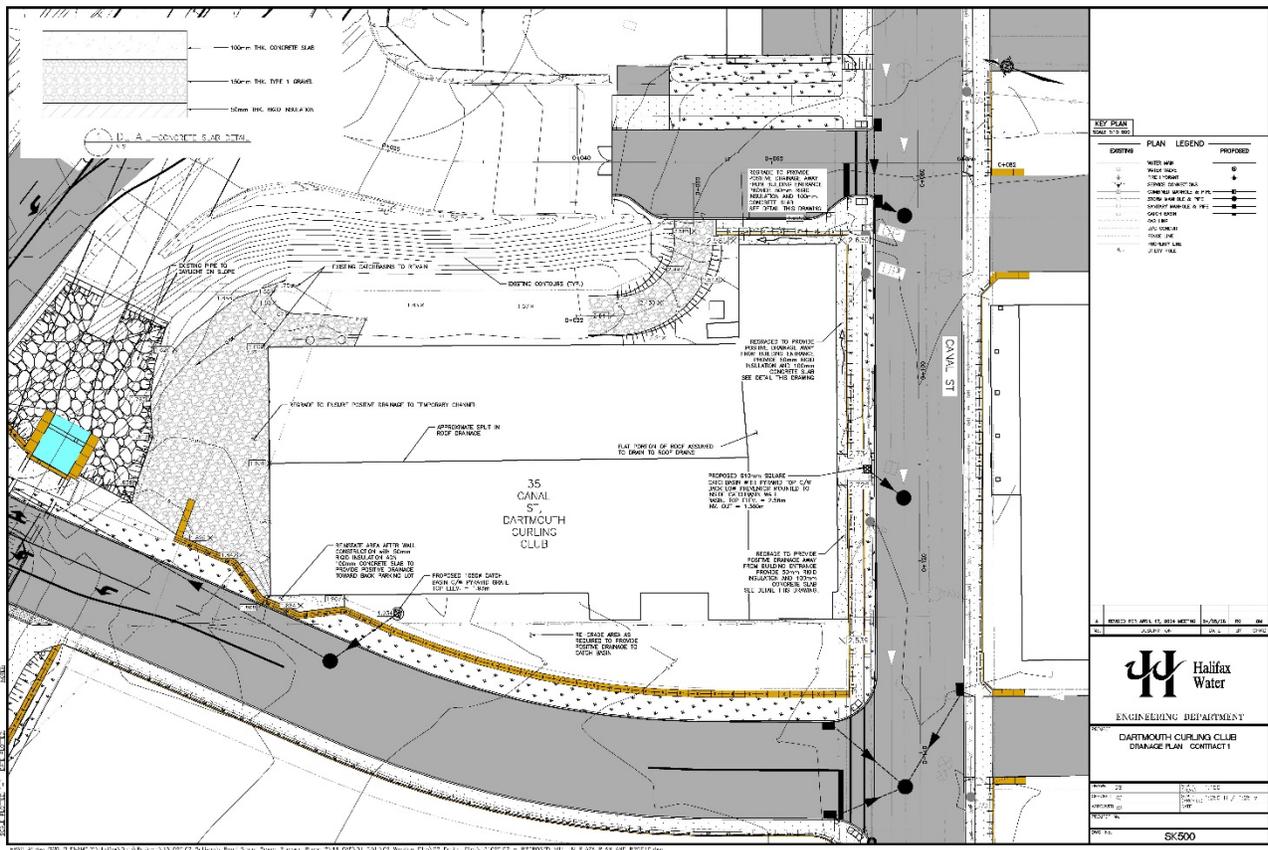


Figure 5-Sketch of Drainage Around the Dartmouth Curling Club with the New Dundas Street Extension

So, what does the future hold for Dartmouth Curling Club?

For ages, the Dartmouth Curling Club got along just fine on its own, in its nook on Canal Street. That time is passing. It is becoming increasingly clear that the club needs a new home in Dartmouth, and we need help getting there.

Options

The club has investigated several different options, in addition to the possibility of simply staying put. These include:

Conversion and occupation of an existing public ice rink

This appears to be the most cost-effective solution and is being employed in Windsor, Ontario, with the Roseland Curling Club moving into one of two municipally owned ice pads in the Capri Pizzeria Arena, at a fraction of the cost of building a new totally new facility. The club explored this several years ago with the, then, surplus Bowles Arena in south Dartmouth, but that opportunity fell through at that time. For details on the Windsor example, See:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/roseland-curling-moving-south-windsor-capri-pizzeria-1.7056169>

Co-existing with a public municipal facility

There is already a similar arrangement within HRM: Lakeshore Curling Club operates in one of the ice pad areas of the Sackville Sports Stadium, under a recently negotiated long-term licence. We have examined the financial obligation of the Lakeshore Club under that licence and are confident the Dartmouth Curling Club could meet a similar obligation.

Conversion of an existing warehouse or retail space

In Traverse City, Michigan, an old KMart was converted into a beautiful new 5 sheet curling facility, at a reported cost of \$7 million (USD). Even with proceeds of sale of its existing property, the club would be unable to convert and own such a facility without entering into a partnership or other third-party investment. A long-term lease might be possible, but low availability and high commercial lease rates are daunting.

A new build

A recent example is the West Prince Curling Club, in Prince Edward Island. Two clubs merged and sold their respective properties, and the new construction was built on land donated by Mill River Resort. Even with the “donated” land, the pooled sale proceeds of the club properties, and a plan to build a modest four-sheet ice shed, the clubs could still not swing the reported \$5.5 million cost. The project was accomplished with two-thirds of the funding coming from the federal and provincial governments.

Can we talk?

Very recently, Dartmouth Curling Club received a preliminary evaluation of \$4.5 million for its current property. This would be a sizeable contribution toward a new facility.