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**MUNICIPALITY OF THAMES CENTRE
ADMINISTRATION SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION**

REPORT NO. A-007-20

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
FROM: M. Henry, Chief Administrative Officer
MEETING DATE: May 25, 2020
SUBJECT: **COVID-19 – 2020 PROGRAMMING AND POOL OPERATIONS**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended:

1. THAT Council receive Report A-007-20 for information;
2. AND THAT Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to implement measures to suspend operations of the Dorchester Pool and the Thames Centre Playground Program for 2020 as identified in Report A-007-20;
3. AND THAT Council directs Staff to monitor the key public health indicators in adherence to provincial orders of re-opening, in order to potentially offer modified recreation services later in the season.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Report is to consider the suspension of operations for the Dorchester Pool and the Thames Centre Playground Program for 2020 and to outline the health measures necessary to consider a modified program should a provincial order be lifted.

BACKGROUND:

On May 19th 2020, the Province announced that publicly funded schools are closed for the rest of this 2019/20 school year. The government stated that it is planning for the reopening of public schools for the 2020-21 school year, the gradual reopening of child care when the Province is ready to move to Stage 2 of the *Framework for Reopening the Province*, and the opening of summer day camps subject to the continuing progress of key public health indicators. Overnight camps will not be permitted to operate in the summer of 2020.

Re-opening Phase I (to be reviewed June 2, 2020)

This phase saw very little impact to the Municipality with the only change notable was the re-opening of outdoor courts and sports fields. This phase still requires physical distancing measures and maximum 5 person gathering limitations.

Phase II (officially undetermined date, 2020)

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Summer day camps are under review but still undetermined at this point. The release date of Phase II is conditional to Phase I completion and not being extended.

COMMENTS:

Staff have been monitoring Provincial announcements and the continued extension of the State of Emergency. Parks and Recreation Ontario conducted a survey of 159 municipal parks and recreation departments across Ontario in order to assist in informed decision making regarding cancellation of programs, events and the continued closure of facilities. Below is an overview of those results;

- Most municipalities indicated that they are waiting until June 2 or until there is further direction from the province before making the final decision on summer programs.
- Smaller municipalities were more likely to have partially or fully cancelled summer programs.
- Most small municipal programs/services are currently cancelled through the end of July, there is still the possibility that there could be more extended cancellations based on how restrictions are lifted.

The municipality is monitoring the surrounding area and in collaboration with our neighbouring lower-tier municipalities within the County. Most larger municipalities regular summer camp programs have already been cancelled.

Being a smaller municipality, Thames Centre would generally require less time to restart operations and open facilities. Staff could begin working on a plan for a "modified recreation program" that could be offered for a smaller number of children starting as early as mid-July. This would of course be subject to two important conditions;

- First, we must see continued improvement beyond where we are today in the COVID-19 public health numbers for Ontario and our region.
- Second, the provincial order, which would at present preclude such programs in this report, would have to be modified or lifted.

Further consideration in moving forward, it would be necessary to properly train staff, incorporate public health measures designed to reduce the risk of virus spread. These measures would include physical distancing, assigning smaller group sizes and performing daily health assessments. The implementation of a more extensive cleaning program and enhanced hygiene measures would be mandatory as well as a large procurement of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

These soft services would also need to determine what level of quality service would be possible to delivery under these restrictions.

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CONSULTATION:

The Director of Finance was consulted on the preparation of this report.

The Parks & Facilities Supervisor was consulted on the preparation of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

In 2019 the Dorchester Pool operated at a net cost of \$ 96,253.47

In 2019 the Thames Centre Playground Program operated at a net cost \$ 23,088.77

There would most undoubtedly be an increase to the operational net costs in 2020 by potentially providing service of these programs. The uncertainty of reopening combined with inevitable cost of PPE and the undeterminable registration levels associated with these programs will all be contributing factors.

REFERENCES/ATTACHMENTS:

None

Prepared by: Mike Henry, Chief Administrative Officer