

Growing Aurora Sports Hall of Fame is on the move to SARC

By Brock Weir

Since the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame was established more than two years ago, the achievements and exploits of our most notable athletes, coaches, and sports builders have been tucked away in a quiet corner of Town Hall.

But, as the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame prepares to welcome four new members next week, the inductees will soon be trumpeted to a much wider audience at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC).

Council is set to approve a budget of \$7,500 to carve out a new area for the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame (ASHOF) outside the West Arena of the SARC. It is an area already home to a large display cabinet and a move to the new location would expose the ASHOF to significantly more people and be accessible for much longer periods of time.

“Staff have investigated potential locations at the SARC to accommodate the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame,” said Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Parks and Recreation, in a report before Council. “Staff evaluated the potential site with a concern for general use of the building, traffic patterns, visual accessibility, complimentary uses and minimal upgrade.

“Using these parameters, staff recommend that an area outside the west arena be considered. This is a public area, in the flow of traffic, but not in a high traffic or public gathering area.”

The plan received an enthusiastic thumbs-up from Councillors last week who considered the recommendation at the Committee level last week.

“What we have upstairs is a great start, it is accessible, but it is not very accessible and it is certainly not very visible,” said Mayor Geoff Dawe, of the limited hours at Town Hall. “It is a great opportunity to tie this in with what we're looking at with the overall museum process. I think it is a good opportunity to look at the synergy with what we are doing.”

Putting the ASHOF in this area would also be a good reason to investigate signs on Highways 404 and 400 to promote the presence of the Hall, Mayor Dawe noted, echoing the concerns of other Council members, particularly Councillors Sandra Humfries and John Abel, expressed earlier in the meeting.

“I think this will look spectacular at our SARC,” said Councillor Abel. “I think this is a great way for moving forward and it is good that we can move it to high traffic areas. This is the first step going there. We should have a sign promoting where the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame is.”

As the ASHOF gets ready to induct its four new members in the Class of 2015 next week on November 4, members of the community are stepping up to support the cause.

Many individuals and organizations have contributed to their fledgling “Friends of the Hall” campaign which encourages contributions be made to the Hall in exchange for being permanently commemorated within it.

“This year, besides hosting the event on their magnificent properties, St. Andrew's College, a charter donor of the Hall of Fame, put their support behind the media category inductee Lowell McClenny,” says Nancy Black of the ASHOF. “In his role as host of the local TV program SportsBeat, Mr. McClenny has likely interviewed half of the dinner attendees.

“Storm Volleyball, home to honoured member Bruce Stafford, immediately confirmed its support of Mark Heese, who is being inducted into the Athlete category for his dominance and accomplishments in beach volleyball. Sinclair-Cockburn Financial Services promptly confirmed their support for Kenneth Sinclair, who will be inducted in the builder/contributor category for his outstanding work developing tennis in this community.

?Rounding out the support at this level is PACE Credit Union, also one of the Hall's Charter Donors. Alan Dean is being inducted into the builder/contributor category for his exceptional and long-standing contributions to sports for the disabled. PACE asked that funds be use in a meaningful way and supporting Mr. Dean's induction fits the bill.?

Other community partners include Highland Automotive Professionals, the Rotary Club of Aurora, Nothers Signs and Recognition, the Mayor's Charity Golf Classic, Seneca College, Magna International and the Town of Aurora.