

Some changes eyed as Complex complaints continue over reno

By Brock Weir

Renovations rarely go without a hitch and, as the community knows, the Aurora Family Leisure Complex is no exception.

Concerns, however, continue to mount from members of the Complex (AFLC) as well as Council, as crunch time nears for a completion target in less than a month.

These members were represented by Aurora resident Jim Jackson, who appeared before Council in open forum with a laundry list of issues he and others have encountered at the newly-renovated recreation complex.

"It is good to see an attempt to improve facilities [but] what I am concerned about right now is that the design of the building is quite poor for certain things," he said. "You really have to wonder why and how a design like this was passed by some authority."

Among his concerns were privacy in some exercise rooms, remaining wall cracks, a lack of racks on which to hang clothes in the men's change rooms, and a reduced number of shower stalls available for female members, in contrast to the men's change rooms which have remained largely the same.

"Who is responsible?" he asked. "Why wasn't there better planning for facilities and the men's and women's washrooms? Some things can be fixed, hopefully."

These complaints didn't come as news to Council members, many of whom said they had already received several emails outlining similar issues as Mr. Jackson. The big question, however, is what municipal staff, and the contractors still working on the building, plan to do about it.

"I want to have a better understanding of how we're tracking these issues because we all see emails and run into residents who are using the facility and they're sharing with us the challenges they are seeing, hearing and experiencing," said Councillor Michael Thompson.

All deficiencies identified by users, as well as staff and architects are being tracked and reviewed as completion nears, said Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure. Some issues, however, are easier fixes than others.

"Requests such as the size of change rooms, the number of stalls, or things that are constructed based on the design we have, we can't actually make those changes because they require additional space or physical changes to the facility," said Mr. Simanovskis.

Highlighting issues with the change rooms, lockers, and hair dryers in the locker rooms, Councillor Wendy Gaertner, a member of the Club Aurora fitness centre in the AFLC said "often I don't exercise, I just hear complaints and suggestions. A lot of people are unhappy, but it is a reality."

"There are some opportunities [for change]," replied Mr. Simanovskis. "Issues with regards to the size of lockers, there may be an opportunity to make some changes, but the larger the lockers we install, the fewer lockers that will be available. We need to just look at that and see what the best balance is to address the concerns we have been hearing."

As far as balance goes, Councillor John Abel said he believes the AFLC is on the right track.

"I get a sense that people are very pleased with what is there," said Councillor Abel. "Membership is up, a lot of people that were not there have returned. Some of the people are concerned that the change rooms are small, especially if you compare it to a fitness centre. We provide for a different demographic. We provide for the needs of all people, those with special needs, and it is a different sort of facility."

?What I am hearing is very positive around there. Some of the people that were there before and inconvenienced do have comments, but overall they are not overtly complaining or too unhappy, but they do make comments like it would be good to have the shade there and they realise that will be addressed.?