

Older Memorial Park courts to be upgraded for games

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The Local

Having to “reimagine” the Canada Summer Games, which were originally scheduled to be held in 2021, has turned out to be a benefit for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Games CEO Barry Wright spoke to councillors Monday night about a proposal to improve the tennis courts at Memorial Park. The tennis competition was originally planned to be held indoors at White Oaks Resort and Conference Centre, but with the change in date, there was “real enthusiasm for moving the games outdoors.” When they looked at sites around Niagara, the tennis courts in NOTL came up high on the list of possibilities, he said.

However, the courts need to be brought up to Canada Games standards, he said.

After discussions with Canada Summer Games representatives, town staff have recommended spending \$50,000

on the Memorial Park tennis courts, and the games organization will contribute \$40,000 for the upgrades that are required.

In August of 2022, the Memorial Park courts will be used for about two weeks to host the tennis competition.

The tennis club has recommended new lighting and poles on the expanded courts be a legacy project, and the older courts will be resurfaced and painted. Upgrades will include some minor park upgrades such as parking lot improvements and repainting the pavilion. The privately-owned Niagara-on-the-Lake Sailing Club will also be a venue for the games, but no money for upgrades has been requested. Town CAO Marnie Cluckie said she would be in touch with the club to see if any improvements are required.

Simcoe Park will also be host to an event, the Niagara-on-the-Lake 13 for 13 Cultural Festival Program, each representing the culture of a

province or territory across Canada. Each municipality, as well as the Niagara Region, is being asked to hold a special one-day celebration of the games, said Wright.

Each event will rotate nightly, changing from one municipality to another, to celebrate each province and territory’s cultural heritage and identities through entertainment, food, art, dance and more, with NOTL’s event planned for Simcoe Park.

Although no costs have been identified yet for the 13 for 13 event, the town is expected to provide parking and grounds, for the exclusive use of the event, as well as signage installed at the entrances and throughout the park. Any costs for the event will be included in the 2022 budget, said Cluckie.

Councillors approved the town staff report, agreeing the games will be something exciting to look forward to as we come out of the pandemic, with a positive impact for NOTL.



Parks and recreation manager Kevin Turcotte and NOTL Tennis Club president Hugh Dow check out the new courts at Memorial Park, which will be used for the Canada Summer Games. The older courts will be resurfaced in time for the August competition, and painted blue to match the new courts. (Mike Balsom)