



Bayfield Ratepayers Association

**Municipality of Bluewater's
Bayfield Arena Working Committee
Request for Ideas for Future Use of the Bayfield Arena
Prepared by Paul Hill and Ainslie Willock for presentation
at the Varna Complex at 6 pm, on November 28th, 2013**

Introduction:

Thank you for this invitation to speak to Bluewater's Bayfield Arena Working Committee. We appreciate this opportunity to let you know Bayfield Ratepayers Association members' input regarding the Bayfield arena's future use, to better fit Bayfield's current needs and examples of how it might be implemented.

The Bayfield Agricultural Fair Grounds, Community Centre and Arena are all important and integral components of our community. Thus, we suspect that it's best to include the Community Centre in the same discussion as the Arena. Importantly, we recognize that their future use will contribute to the economic future and viability of the Village and the entire Municipality of Bluewater.

As it is the Municipality of Bluewater that will make the decision on the future use of the arena, it is important to note that Bayfield's Arena/Community Centre is the oldest in Bluewater and consequently, undersized for current uses, both as a hockey ice surface/change rooms and exercise facility. And, that none of Bluewater's Arenas/Community Centres operate at a profit or break even, they are part of the services that holds each of our communities together. We are pleased that the Bayfield Arena/Community Centre is now getting the attention it needs.

The BRA would like an Arena/Community Centre that meets the profile of our community, the demographics of the population, and, at the same time, one that would also attract the ever increasing younger demographic. The Splash Pad, in Clan Gregor Square, was a good beginning to attracting young families and it has broad community support, including from the Virtual High School. The BRA believes that the Arena/Community Centre offers Bayfield the same opportunity.

Our members advised us that:

1. Assess Arena & Community Centre Structures:

- Have a professional/qualified staff assess the structures. The arena was built in 1954, the Community Centre in 1977.
- If in good shape, have a professional/qualified staff advise on what can be done with the existing structures to meet our current needs.
- Explore what other communities have done to bring old, substandard arenas up to code to meet current community needs, for example, Strathroy's West Middlesex Community Centre. Opened in 1953 and renovated in 2011 see here: <http://www.strathroy-caradoc.ca/en/communitylife/westmiddlesexmemorialcentre.asp>

2. Assess Current Community Needs

- Invite the YMCA in to assess/study our current and future needs.
- Outline how meeting those needs will contribute to economic development.
- People come to live in Bayfield because it is an active community; we need to build on that.
- Bring forward three plans that can be implemented in stages (Gold, Silver, Bronze), including costs to implement, to the community for public comment.

3. What to keep:

- A large open space to ensure that local fundraisers i.e. Pioneer Park's Rummage Sale, Anglican Church's Antique Show, Home and Garden Show and the Agricultural Fair can still occur in the community.
- A space and kitchen for our senior's Thursday Diners lunches.
- Room for exercise classes that are currently crowded and over-booked so new participants are being turned away.

4. What to improve:

- Better venue for large fundraisers, events, private and public functions with access to a kitchen/serving area.
- Divided spaces to ensure that multiple functions could take place at the same time

- Dedicated larger space for exercise classes without functions competing for use of the space at the same times, and with far less space taken up for tables and chairs and with flooring conducive to exercising.
- Better washrooms/change rooms.
- Better 1st Floor surface/flooring, now that skates won't be on them.

5. What to add:

- **A multi-use double gym with partitions and lines on the floor, hoops and holes for poles for: badminton, tennis, lacrosse, ringette, roller skating, basketball, pickleball, shuffleboard, soccer/field hockey, golf practice with whiffle balls.**
- **Elevated indoor walking track with a surface to minimize impact.**
- **Aquatic Fitness Centre with a heated saltwater swimming pool with handicapped access. Note: The Municipality doesn't have a public indoor pool.**
- **Space for an indoor Farmers Market.**
- **Large space for weddings and other private celebrations.**
- To make the arena space more accessible, inviting and transparent, **two main walls could be punched open and large roll up, insulated, clear garage doors, could be installed, that open into the Arena.** St. Catharines has a farmers market with large clear garage doors - see here: <http://www.niagaragreenbelt.com/listings/40-farmers-markets/671-st-catharines-farmers-market.html> See rates here: <http://www.stcatharines.ca/en/experiencein/MarketSquare.asp>
- weight room
- have it be a "Sports Complex"
- have some multi-purpose rooms so that it provides space for small conferences.
- design it so that it could be used as a much larger concert space than the Town Hall.
- free play area for preschoolers.
- indoor roller blading for all ages.
- card playing area.
- have a 2 year trial outdoor ice surface, on the concrete area immediately south of arena, to meet some of the needs of local skaters.
- work with Bayfield and Area Chamber of Commerce to have centralize ticket sales for events in the Village including the Arena/Community Centre. A "Village Ticket Box Office" [Note: Need to consult with Bayfield Historical Society re plans for old archives building on Main St.]
- space for entertainment centre incorporating a movie theatre, mini put, ping pong, billiards, laser tag and music room.

6. How to implement:

- Implementation would depend on what choices you make to move forward with.

- Moving the current Community Centre uses at the Varna Complex to nearby Bayfield, would be a good fit for Bluewater and Bayfield and would make financial sense.
- Note: As your Facilities Review report shows, none of Bluewater's communities centres operate at a profit or break even. They are part of the cost of having a community and contribute to the economic viability of the community as a whole. At the same time, moving forward should not be a financial burden.
- We have been advised both that the facility be run privately and that it be run by the municipality.
- One person suggested that the space should be sold or rented out to a private operator, as you've done with the marina. Then the operator would make the appropriate choices based on the Bayfield market.

Conclusion:

The decisions that this Committee and Council make, will set the tone for the future economic development of Bayfield. We attract residents and visitors because we are an active community, both physically and in holding events etc... Having an Arena/Community Centre that is a **multi-purpose space** will **enhance year-round living** and be a significant contribution to our development. It's a basic need for a vibrant community. Thank you again for this opportunity to speak with you.
