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Town of Aurora  
**Memorandum**  
Community Services

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**Re:** Feasibility of a Permanent Liquor License at the Aurora Community Centre

**To:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

**From:** John Firman, Manager, Business Support

**Date:** October 19, 2023

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## Recommendation

1. That the memorandum regarding Feasibility of a Permanent Liquor License at the Aurora Community Centre be received; and
2. That the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee comments regarding Feasibility of a Permanent Liquor License at the Aurora Community Centre be received and referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.

## Background

At the February Council Meeting the following Motion was passed:

1. Now Therefore Be It Hereby Resolved That staff be directed to investigate and report back to Council on the feasibility of a permanent liquor license at the Aurora Community Centre arena; and
2. Be It Further Resolved That staff report back with the recommended amendments to the Municipal Alcohol Policy that would need updating to facilitate this opportunity.

## Analysis

Staff have surveyed other municipalities and found a variety of existing scenarios:

- Some do not allow alcohol under any circumstances.
- Some allow alcohol only through Special Occasion Permit (SOP) for special events.

- Some have permanent liquor licenses through restaurants or other vendors in place at major centres, usually where high-profile teams play,

The latter being most comparable to the Aurora Community Centre where we have a large seating area and is home to the Aurora Tigers Jr. A Hockey Club.

The municipalities surveyed did not identify any major concerns, however, it should be noted that in almost all cases the liquor license was associated with a full-service restaurant on the premises. These are typically located in larger facilities that have multiple amenities (arenas, gymnasiums) and multiple teams/groups that can sustain this type of business.

Staff also surveyed regular user groups of the Aurora Community Centre's McAlpine Ford Arena. While none of the user groups had any objection to the Town obtaining a liquor license, only one group expressed interest in utilizing the license to allow alcohol at their events. One group specifically requested that alcohol not be offered during their permit times.

While it may be feasible to proceed with obtaining a liquor license, the challenge will be in presenting a business case to support the expense and identify the appropriate operating model. There is limited opportunity to generate enough revenue to offset costs, which may include:

- Purchase and storage of alcohol.
- Ensuring food is available for sale at the same time.
- Hiring, training, certification and scheduling of staff.
- Security and/or Paid Duty Police during events.

In order to make this financially viable it may be necessary to waive permit fees for the Auditorium for licensed events.

If the Town were to proceed, it is recommended that a 3rd party operator be contracted to provide this service, as this would be more efficient and cost effective compared to the Town managing the service.

The Legal & Legislative Services team is currently reviewing this matter and will provide comments related to risk management in the upcoming Council Report.

Based on the information gathered to date, staff do not recommend proceeding at this time, as it is anticipated that the Town would operate this service at a financial loss. If Council wishes to proceed, it is recommended that we undertake a pilot project by obtaining SOP's for selected Aurora Tigers' games only and partner with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party operator to assess the viability of providing alcohol sales.

Obtaining a permanent liquor license may require minor amendments to the Municipal Alcohol Policy, and may require an amendment to the Fees and Charges Bylaw to waive permit fees, resulting in lost revenue.

## **Attachments**

None.