



**The Corporation of the Municipality of Wawa
Staff Monthly Report**

Office of Community Services and Tourism

Prepared For: Corporate Planning Committee	Report No.: AP 2018-02
Agenda Date: February 20, 2018	File No.: 9.32

Preamble

This report details the activities of the Department of Community Services and Tourism in the month of January, 2018.

General

In January, staff focused on the budget process as well as improving facilities and services at the MMCC. These included budgeting for the 2018 operating season, preparing for winter special events such as the Winter Carnival and Wawa Ice Fishing Derby, as well as finishing the Outdoor Ice Rink. In addition, regular winter programming is running at full capacity with hockey, figure skating, curling, dance, and fitness, all being served nightly by the MMCC Canteen.

Capital Projects

MMCC Retractable Wall

The retractable wall was completed mid-January, with the installation not interrupting any regular programming. The new wall is functioning perfectly, bringing a much needed safety and cosmetic upgrade to the banquet hall and lounge at the MMCC.

Olympia Ice Resurfacer

The Olympia Ice Resurfacer continues to be delayed, and has yet to be delivered. Staff are inquiring with other resurfacer builders regarding other options. Unfortunately, there is only one other manufacturer in North America, and no other Canadian manufacturer. This lack of competition in the industry makes for a frustrating experience for staff. Staff are also investigating a discount based upon the increased operating costs of the old machine and the issues that have been experienced.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Prepared By:

**Alex Patterson, Director,
Community Services and Tourism**

Wawa Waterfront Project

The Wawa Waterfront Project officially began January 2nd, with the Engineer beginning the process of taking the preliminary drawings created in the application process and developing them into construction ready plans. Over the last winter months, another round of public consultation and information sessions are being planned by Municipal staff as part of the Environmental Assessment process. The project is currently on schedule and barring any major delays in the EA process ground will be broken shortly after the spring melt in April.

MMCC

MMCC Upgrades and Repairs

Upgrades have been started in the canteen areas, providing additional seating to better serve parents and children who attend nightly and weekend programming at the MMCC. These will be followed in February with the installation of additional seating in the lobby. This has received a great deal of positive response from the public.

Arena and Curling

MMCC Ice Usage Increase

The 2018 ice season has been busier than previous years, with an increase in ice being booked and used. The following illustrates this:

Ice Booking	January 2017	January 2018
All <u>Invoiced</u> Ice Bookings	159 hrs. of ice \$7,402.87	178 hrs. of ice \$11,158.75

Note: This does not include pre-paid ice bookings (a less significant amount)

Staff attribute this to an increase in use from educational user groups, as well as the addition of increased ice time from the Wawa Mustangs that has not been present in the past. Municipal programming is well attended, however this is not yet consistent and dependent on several factors. In the future staff will focus on promoting municipal programming alongside regular programming to encourage residents to take advantage of the ice allocated for these activities.

Curling Rink – Ice Condition Issues

In January, staff received several complaints regarding the ice conditions in the curling rink. Specifically, users reported a lack of pebble throughout the surfaces, with almost no pebble reported on the outside sheets. Staff worked diligently to pinpoint these

issues, and the problem proved quite challenging. Based upon observations from staff, it appeared that a combination of dishing and low humidity airflow caused the issues. With the temperature fluctuation between two extremes, the lack of effective insulation on the walls created significant dishing in toe form of differential freezing. This was corrected by a hose flood and ensuring a consistent heavy scrape. The pebbling issues were more challenging to isolate but in correlating very low temperature days with the issue staff determined that very low humidity air circulating around the outside of the ice surfaces was evaporating a significant amount of pebble. As curling maintenance is done in the morning, by the evening when programming occurs most of the pebble was evaporated. Staff corrected this by pebbling a second time shortly before the games to ensure the ice quality persisted in the evening. These actions have corrected the issue.

Parks and Trails

Nothing to Report.

Community Events and Recreation

Fitness Memberships and Classes

Staff have prepared a comparison of statistics between the beginning of 2017 and the beginning of 2018 to capture the differences in membership and participation of fitness activities at the MMCC.

Fitness Membership Purchases – January 1st until February 15th, 2018 – 2017

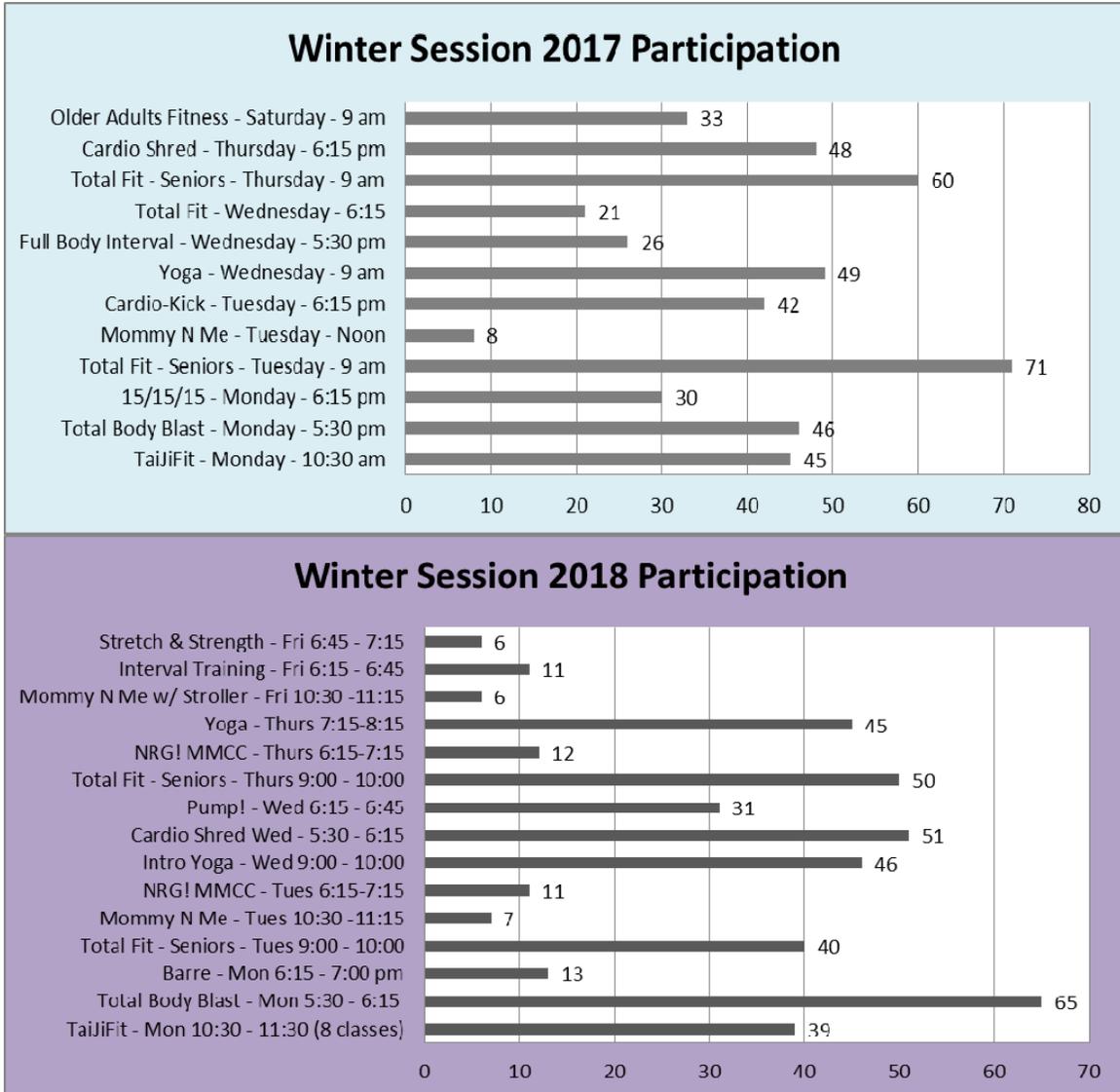
Category	2018	2017
Adult Monthly	111	75
Senior Monthly	91	89
10 pass	12	9
Day Pass	25	9
Total	239	182

As you can see, there has been a 25% increase in fitness membership purchases from the same time period last year. This has not been completely related to fitness class participation however:

First 4 weeks of Classes

Participants in 2017 = 479 (no cancellations or schedule changes)

Participants in 2018 = 433 (with 1 class cancelled and some schedule changes)



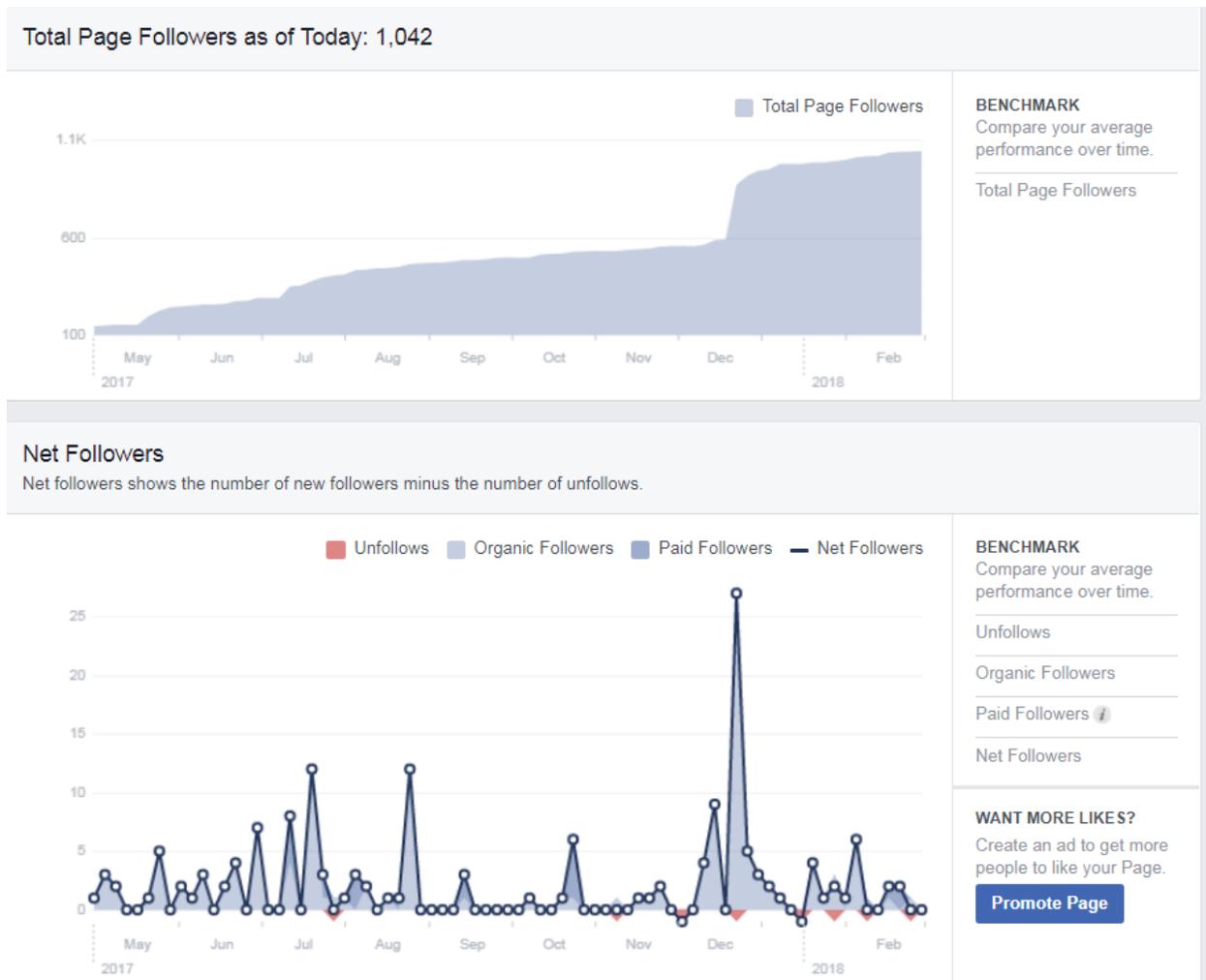
As you can see, class participation has remained effectively the same over these two periods, with an increase in memberships. Staff attribute this to the upgrades done to the MMCC gym. These upgrades have diversified the offerings at the MMCC and have proven to be effective in appealing to a wider range of community members. This means that as we continue to serve seniors' and older adults through fitness classes, we

have also begun to see many younger adults take advantage of the gym as well. Therefore, the investments in the MMCC gym have paid dividends by providing a better, more diverse community service as well as increasing revenue to offset the initial investment cost.

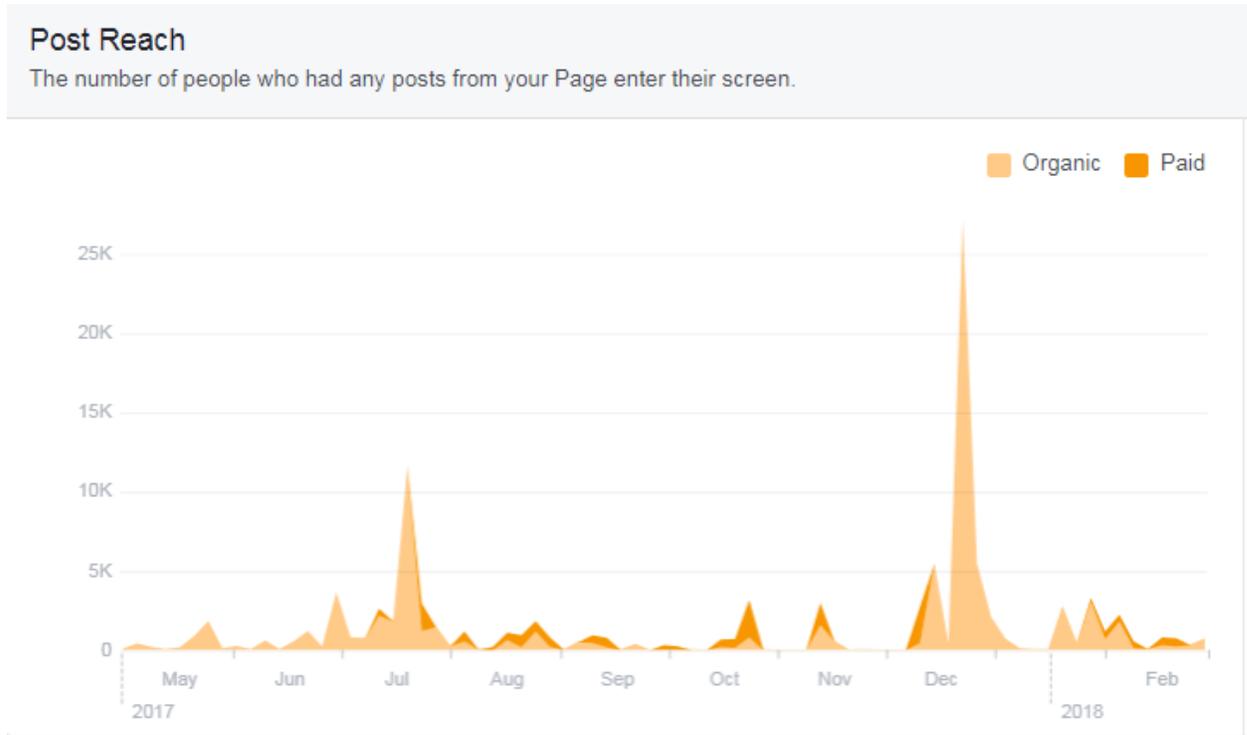
Tourism

Social and Mixed Media Effectiveness – 2017 results

Staff have been working hard over the past year to develop and take advantage of mixed media, with an emphasis on using social media to increase the effectiveness of our communication. This applies to both residents and potential visitors through a variety of avenues and platforms. While we continue to maintain a traditional media presence, staff have found through investigation and experience that if used properly, social media can be a very powerful and cost effective tool. The following is a snapshot from our Wawa Tourism Page:



In just under a year, we have grown this page from 100 to more than 1,000 followers, and peak post reaches range into the 25,000 views range for the cost successful posts:



The relative costs to the reach here is an important note: Some of our most successful posts cost the Municipality only staff time, and other posts in the 5,000 views range that we have boosted are costing between 15 and 25\$ to attain these levels. Staff will continue to build on these successes and work on other platforms in the coming years.

Auxiliary Services

National/Greyhound

November continues to see a steady amount of bookings, with 20 this month. Greyhound package services were very busy, expected during the holiday season.

Ontario Northland and Greyhound

In January, the community welcomed a competing bus service – Ontario Northland, which will stop at a local business. This is excellent news for Wawa, as it gives residents additional options regarding transportation into and out of our community. While Ontario Northland had reached out to the Municipality regarding the service, they found a local business to operate it in short order. Staff have reached out to both Ontario Northland and the local business regarding their interest in taking on or combining the services. Ontario Northland operates several combined terminals and would be happy

to see the partnership in Wawa. Staff are in the process of determining interest from the local business and will appraise council further into the process.

Other Projects

Tourism Strategic Plan

Staff is currently in the process of working with regional marketing professionals to create a five year plan as the successor to the 2002-2008 work plan for Wawa's tourism industry "The Trail". Previous plans will be evaluated and updated with the latest travel and tourism trends and insight from District Marketing Organizations (DMO). This will allow Wawa to shift our tourism efforts along with the shift in trends brought about by the new age of social media marketing and renew a focus on product development. Staff will also take advantage of funding programs to supplement this plan through additional resources and guidance.

Funding and Grants

Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund

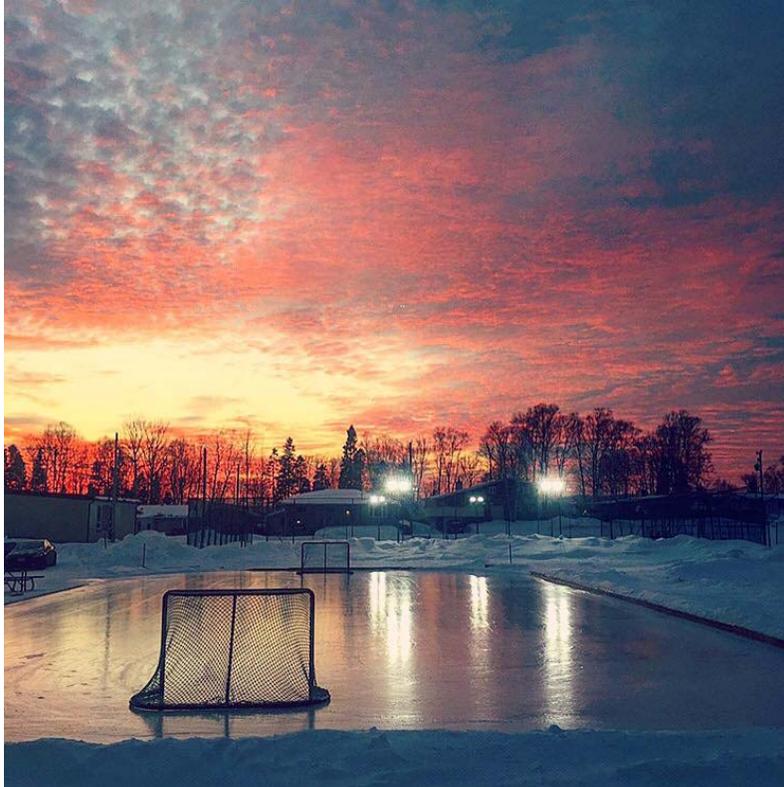
Staff have applied to the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund with an emphasis on Age Friendly Planning Outreach Initiatives. This grant focuses on programming, physical activity development in youth and seniors and accessibility for all age groups. The goal of this grant is to grow physical activity, development fundamentals in physical activity and create a lifelong enjoyment of physical activity in the community. This will help the Department access additional training for fitness instructors, as well as cover costs to expand programming in diversity, scope, and reach. This program is funded at 80% and the municipal contribution will be covered by existing spending as part of the fitness operating budget.

NOHFC Internship – Tourism and Recreation Planner

Staff have also applied for a grant to hire an intern to assist the Department with updating the Tourism and Recreation plans. These plans were last updated in 2002 and 2007 respectively, and are in need of a significant update to keep pace with our changing community. It is a good time to complete this update, as the community is also updating the strategic and business plans, both of which will be complete in 2018. Both these plans will work in conjunction with each other and be guided by the strategic and business plans.

Conclusion

January saw additional challenges for staff to surmount related to extremely variable weather conditions. As the climate continues to change staff must be flexible and adapt to the new realities of variable weather and its effects on an aging facility. Facility upgrades will have to account for these variances to effectively perform in the future.



Aside from the weather, staff have evaluated many new and changing programs and strategies implemented in 2017 and will use the lessons learned from their success or failure to continue improving the Department in 2018. We look forward to completing several funded projects and beginning to update the department plans in 2018.

We would like to end the report with a picture from the outdoor rink at the MMCC, taken by a staff member after preparing the ice surface:

Attachments

No Attachments.

End of Report.