



CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

TITLE: SERVUS PLACE & FOUNTAIN PARK FREE MEMBERSHIPS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

On January 21, 2019 Councillor Hansen provided notice in accordance with Section 23 of Procedure Bylaw 3/2018 of her intention to make the proposed motion below.

In order for Council to debate the motion, it must be formally moved.

POSTPONED FROM APRIL 23, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

PROPOSED MOTION(S):

"That further, Servus Place and Fountain Park offer free full memberships to St. Albert residents who are 80 years and older."

On April 23, 2019 Councillor Joly put forth an amending motion that is currently on the floor:

"That the motion be amended to read "Servus Place and Fountain Park offer free full memberships to St. Albert residents who are 80 years and older, or are recipients of any of the following provincial benefits: AISH, the Alberta Seniors Benefit, Alberta Child Health Benefit, Alberta Adult Health Benefit, or Alberta Income Support."

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Front Counter Services - Client Services at Recreational Facilities

Provision of assistance and advise through front desk, in-person and phone operations at Grosvenor Outdoor Pool, Fountain Park Recreation Centre and Servus Place. Admission, Membership and Miscellaneous Sales.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

N/A

BACKGROUND:

At the February 19, 2019 Council meeting, the following motion was debated:

“That further, Servus Place and Fountain Park offer free full memberships to St. Albert residents who are 80 years and older.”

After further discussion, Council passed the following subsequent motion:

“That the motion be postponed to receive consultation from the Seniors Advisory Committee, the Youth Advisory Committee and the Community Services Advisory Committee”

Administration attended each of the three advisory committee regular monthly meetings, Youth Advisory Committee on March 6, 2019, Seniors’ Advisory Committee on March 21, 2019, and the Community Services Advisory Committee on March 26, 2019.

At the April 23, 2019 Council meeting, Councilor Joly put forth an amending motion that is currently on the floor:

“That the motion be amended to read “Servus Place and Fountain Park offer free full memberships to St. Albert residents who are 80 years and older or are recipients of any of the following provincial benefits: AISH, the Alberta Seniors Benefit, Alberta Child Health Benefit, Alberta Adult Health Benefit, or Alberta Income Support.”

Administration is providing the following information in respect to the programs included in the amending motion. The 80+ free membership does not align with the provincial subsidy programs as it is reflective of the age of a participant, not the individuals financial/economic/social position.

Provincial Programs Related to Subsidized or “Waived” Membership Fees

The Province of Alberta currently offers several programs in addition to AISH, which provide subsidies and support for low income individuals facing challenges and hardships in their daily lives.

The income threshold used to determine eligibility for each specific provincial support program is set by the province and is specific to the individual. It does not necessarily take into consideration the total family income for the household. As the threshold value may only consider the specific client’s income, it may be somewhat lower than Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) depending on the specific parameters of the program.

Provincial programs may also change periodically based on need, priorities, or changes in provincial leadership.

Municipal Programs Related to Subsidized or “Waived” Membership Fees

The City currently has a subsidy program in place governed by Council Policy C-CS-18 - Recreation and Culture Subsidy Program. Within this Council Policy, residents who are receiving AISH benefits receive free access to Servus Place and Fountain Park on an on-going basis.

Through this program, new refugees to St. Albert are also eligible for a free annual membership to Servus Place for a period of one year. And residents whose annual household income falls at or below the LICO also receive either six-month free access to Servus Place/Fountain Park or can purchase an annual Servus Place membership at 60% off the regular rate. This includes all age groups.

Children under 18 whose household is eligible for the subsidy program are also provided the option to register in up to two Recreation or Culture classes up to a maximum value of \$150 per year.

The LICO rate was chosen as the indicator for low income as it is determined by Statistics Canada and includes seven family sizes. In the 16 communities reviewed from across Canada in the research for the development of Council Policy C-CS-18 - Recreation and Culture Subsidy Program, 75% identified that they used LICO as their qualifier for eligibility for their subsidy programs.

The residents who may be eligible for support in the provincial support programs would most likely be eligible to participate within the current City subsidy program and would receive at minimum, a six-month free membership to Servus Place/Fountain Park. As the current intake process does not specifically ask applicants what additional provincial programs they are involved in, statistics for each program mentioned in the motion are not available.

The following statistics are from the 2018 City of St. Albert Recreation and Culture Subsidy Program:

- 206 AISH recipients received free annual Servus Place memberships.
- Four (4) residents with refugee status received a one-time free annual Servus Place membership.
- 296 households, representing a total of 884 residents, participated in the Subsidy Program (not including AISH).
 - of the 296 households, 156 households were new to the program.

Recommendation

1. That the 80+ free membership be debated as a stand alone program as it does not align with the provincial subsidy programs as it is reflective of the age of a participant, not the individuals financial/economic/social position.

2. If Council would like to review the subsidy provided to the recipients of the Alberta Seniors Benefit, Alberta Child Health Benefit, Alberta Adult Health Benefit, or Alberta Income Support under Council Policy C-CS-18 - Recreation and Culture Subsidy Program, Council direct Administration to complete a review of the Recreation and Culture Subsidy program and if the review supports changes, then amendments to Council Policy C-CS-18 - Recreation and Culture Subsidy Program be brought forward for Council's consideration.

Report Date: May 21, 2019

Author: Anna Royer/Kelly McConnell

Department: Recreation & Parks

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble