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Shelburne Soccer Club requests field upgrades

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The Shelburne Soccer Club has approached Town Council advocating for upgrades to the fields.

Representatives from the Shelburne Soccer Club Board - Junior Brown, Kyle Murray and Bart Wysokinski- presented a project proposal to Town Council during their meeting on Monday, April 22. The proposal highlighted various projects spanning years, which aim to improve the conditions of the fields at Greenwood Park and support the growing demand for soccer facilities in the community.

?Right now, we have an area but could it be better; absolutely,? said Kyle Murray. ?If we could make it a priority of this town, we could have something that potentially could really benefit not just Shelburne but Dufferin as a whole.?

The project proposal to Council included a four-phase plan to improve the fields at Greenwood Park.

The first step in the project proposal from the Shelburne Soccer Club is an expansion of the soccer fields, which would meet the increasing demands for soccer facilities.

According to Shelburne Soccer Club, in 2023 the league saw nearly 400 players register for their house league, a roughly 40 per cent increase in the number of registered players.

The Shelburne Soccer Club has also seen an increase in the number of players registered for their travel team from last season, with more than 50 players registered for the 2024 season.

?Shelburne is a growing community and with that brings us challenges with registration for soccer. Every year our registration is full and we have limitations where we can't take all the kids,? said Junior Brown, treasurer for Shelburne Soccer Club. ?With closing registration off we have issues with parents and families leaving to neighbouring clubs. We want kids to stay in Shelburne and play soccer here. This is where we want them to play, this is where we live and this is our community.?

The second project proposed by the Shelburne Soccer Club is to resurface Thunder Field with AstroTurf to mitigate issues such as uneven slopes, poor grass conditions, and surface irregularities caused by rain settling.

Murray explained to council that the conditions of the fields are causing barriers for players developing their skills and has also resulted in bad reception from travel teams visiting the community.

?We're hearing feedback from other rec clubs that are coming to our town and are stating this is the worst field in the league ? they don't want to come,? said Murray. ?Not only is it impacting the perception of our town, but we're not providing a service that is conducive to kids developing skills that would allow them to participate in high level of sports.?

A survey completed by the Shelburne Soccer Club showed that 50 per cent of residents, who completed the survey, don't feel safe playing on the fields.

Murray added, ?As we continue to utilize the field, if we don't have a major investment into the area, we can assume that it is likely to deteriorate, especially with more kids coming onto the field.?

The third improvement to the soccer fields is the installation of lighting on Brigands Fields as a way of extending playing hours and

accessibility to more ages.

?There may come a point where having one evening field isn't going to cut it and while that's okay midseason when the sun is out later, as we get closer to the end of the season, we eventually will need those services,? said Murray.

The final project proposal to Council is a long-term vision for recreation in the community and introduced the prospect of constructing a sports dome in the area. The sports dome would provide a multipurpose indoor facility that would be able to accommodate various sports including soccer, baseball, cricket, and field hockey.

The Shelburne Soccer Club noted at the end of the presentation that they did not expect immediate action from Council, but asked for the project proposal to be considered in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The Shelburne Soccer Club offers programs for children ages 3 to 17 and is run by a team of volunteer executive members and coaches. All house league games are played at Greenwood Park's Thunder Field.

The Town of Shelburne announced in early April, that Thunder Field would be undergoing spring maintenance and grass repairs to prepare for the upcoming soccer season.