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To City of Fort Saskatchewan City Council,

The Fort Gymnastics Club is wishing to update council on our facility situation as well as request some assistance.

Last fall the club entered into an agreement with Haro Developments for the old Canadian Tire location (approx. 14,700 square feet). This agreement had some conditions for both parties. One of our conditions was obtaining the development permit. Working with planning and development, the permit was approved and included a reasonable number of parking stalls (38). March 31 was our deadline for condition removal and the gymnastics club was able to remove all of our conditions.

Haro had two conditions - Approving the amount of parking required by the city was one of Haro conditions of the agreement (as parking on the site was limited) and the other being approval of our budget for the build outs. Both came in very reasonable. Haro did not remove their conditions and this has made the original agreement null and void.

Haro has indicated that they would renegotiate on a smaller space. They would like to shrink the original square footage by 3650 square feet to allow them to lease that extra space to a doggy day care.

We could make the smaller square footage work for our basic equipment but that leaves us no extra room for expansion or adding the new equipment required for the additional programming we would need to be able to support the lease costs. We were hoping that our next move would be our final move into a permanent location where we would be able to offer new programming which we don't currently have, specifically a boy's competitive program which we have numerous requests for but have no space or equipment to host. The smaller square footage would mean it would not be as permanent as we had hoped it would be and we anticipate that, similar to our current location, we would outgrow it quickly.

Along with the decrease in square footage offered, Haro has proposed a new pricing structure for the smaller space which would cost substantially more, so in the end, rather than saving money in a smaller space, we would pay more than the larger space was going to cost us but receive less. Unfortunately, the smaller space doesn't allow us to offer as many programs meaning that we cannot financially make the increase cost work for our budget and we feel it is not a financially responsible option for the gymnastics club.

The club's current space is at risk as we lease from the Life Church and they are currently in a legal battle with Haro about the space and should the church be removed, then we will also be removed and without a new space to move to, we have no place to call home and run classes.

This leaves 25 paid employees and 300 children per session disappointed and having to travel for gymnastics classes as they will have no gymnastics in Fort Saskatchewan.

To give you some history on the Club and it's growth in the community, Fort Gymnastics was originally run out of the Fort High School back in 1988 (this is the earliest meeting minute records that we were able to obtain, but the club was registered back in 1975) and had 91 members which included both athletes and coaches.

In January 1991, the club moved into the Old Jail Gymnasium and in 1992 had 115 members which included both coaches and athletes.

In the fall 2004 session, the club moved to the Dow Centennial centre where it had 204 registered athletes. This jump in registration was due to the fact that people were expecting the new facility to be fully set up unlike the set up/take down that happened at the jail gym. This was not the case and they club saw a drop back to 127 gymnasts by January 2005 session.

In fall 2007 session, which was Leanne Cameron's first session as head coach, the club had 88 athletes registered and was running only two evening a week (which had been the schedule for many years).

In January 2009 session, the club added Friday evenings to their bookings and by Spring 2010 session the registration was up to 110 gymnasts. The club maintained 120-140 gymnasts per session (three sessions a year) while in its last few years at the DCC.

When the club moved to its current location in the Fort Mall, registration jumped to 170 for the fall session, 181 for the winter session (2013) and 210 in the spring of 2013.

This 2015/2016 season, each session has maintained over 300 athletes and the club now runs four sessions a year which includes fall and winter 12 week sessions, spring 10 week session and summer day camps and summer session recreation and competitive classes.

On top of the number of children we provide gymnastics to, we also provide full time or part time employment for students, and stay at home moms needing additional income as well as full time career coaches. Many of our retired competitive gymnasts become coaches as Fort Gymnastics has strived to create a nurturing and positive atmosphere where the students love for the sport grows and develops so that they wish to pass on their knowledge and passion to the next generation.

We currently employ 25 people who range from 14-50+ in age and coach 4-35 hours a week. Many of our coaches have been part of Fort Gymnastics for 15+ years.

Other municipalities have assisted their gymnastics clubs by providing facilities or financing assistance for a facility.

Sherwood Park's Salto Gymnastics Club is in a building owned by the County and they pay a reasonable sum for rent each year (approx. \$60,000 for the year). Their facility has over 11,000 square feet of gym equipment space and additional space for offices, change room/bathrooms, birthday party/preschool and dance room.

Red Deer's Exelta Gymnastics Club is in a multi-use recreation facility (similar to our Dow Center), which contains a pool, ice surface, soccer pitch, rock climbing, fitness facilities and more. The Gymnastics Club has 21,500 square feet of space which includes 17,000 square feet of equipment space and the additional square footage contains offices, dance room, party

rooms, viewing, etc. The Club paid 1 million to be part of the facility and they have exclusive use of their space.

Airdrie Edge Gymnastics is in a similar set up to Red Deer and has a similar history to the Fort Gymnastics. They were in schools and renting space as a set up and take down gym. Their growth allowed them to obtain their 6,000 square foot facility which they quickly outgrew and were then able to move to their current space in the multi-use recreation facility owned by the City. Their current space is 24,000 square feet.

Spruce Grove is the most recent facility that has had their municipality's assistance. They had initially wished to be part of the Tri-Leisure Center but were unable to get the Tri-Region (Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain and the County of Parkland) to agree on this. The City of Spruce Grove then agreed to build them a separate building which was 33,000 square feet and the club leases just over 22,000 square feet. They have entered a long term (20 year) lease and pay \$13,000 per month which covers all their utilities and rent and allows them exclusive use of the space. They have 17,000 square feet of gymnastics space and the remainder of their square footage is dance room, party rooms, offices, bathrooms, etc. The City maintains ownership and use of the remaining 11,000 square feet where they have offices for recreational facility staff as well as their own rental facilities. The total building cost was 10.4 million and the Gymnastics Club pays rent for their space (so the City maintains ownership of the entire building).

Fort Gymnastics members are not limited to Fort Saskatchewan. We have members from Lamont, Bruderheim, Gibbons, Bon Accord, Sherwood Park and Edmonton. Our current Level 6 competitive team is made up of 10 girls, and of these 10, 4 of these girls are residents of Fort Saskatchewan and the others travel three to four nights a week into our City to attend gymnastics classes. As with our recreational families who also travel in from surrounding areas, the parents typically do not wish to drop off their child and drive all the way back home just to return again a short while later. These families will spend their time (and therefore their money) in our City where they will shop for groceries, go out for dinner at one of our many restaurants and do their shopping.

We understand that there is a surplus in the budget and it has been "put in the bank for a rainy day" and that the Land Purchase Reserve can help cover land for a future fire hall and recreation facilities. We are a recreation facility that is having a rainy day. We would like the City's assistance to build a suitable facility. We have made this request in the past and wanted to be included in the rec master plan, however, our request has become more urgent. We have a few options and are very willing to work with the City to come to an agreement about the facility. We need both land and a building. The gymnastics club has stood on its own for a long time and now we are asking the City to step in to help as they have with every other sport by providing them facilities.

The club is unable to finance such a large purchase alone (as we are a not for profit and do not have a down payment large enough), however, we have prepared a budget and business plan that show we are able to make payments on a loan.

Option 1: The City and the gymnastics club together, obtain a loan for the building which the gymnastics club will be responsible for paying for. The building, when paid for, would then be an asset of the FSMSA.

Option 2: The City finances the building and the gymnastics club pays rent on the facility as a lifelong lease. The club has exclusive use of the facility and the building would then be the City's asset.

Option 3: The City provides the down payment for the club to obtain the building loan on their own. The club and the City could agree on the terms of this down payment, whether it is a loan which the club repays or whether the City provides it without the expectation of repayment.

For all options we are asking that the City provide the land in which to build the building on. We are also open to other suggestions or options which the City believes are feasible for both parties.

The club has been vigilant in applying for grants for the build (this process began when the initial agreement with Haro was signed) and we already have a few sponsors lined up as soon as we have a confirmed location and we will be obtaining more when all is finalized. The club has also increased fundraising efforts and is doing all it can to bring in the funds required for a new facility but we still need your help.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to being able to present in front of council as soon as possible.

Yours truly,

Susan Carson

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